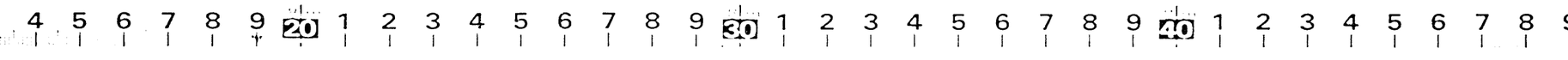
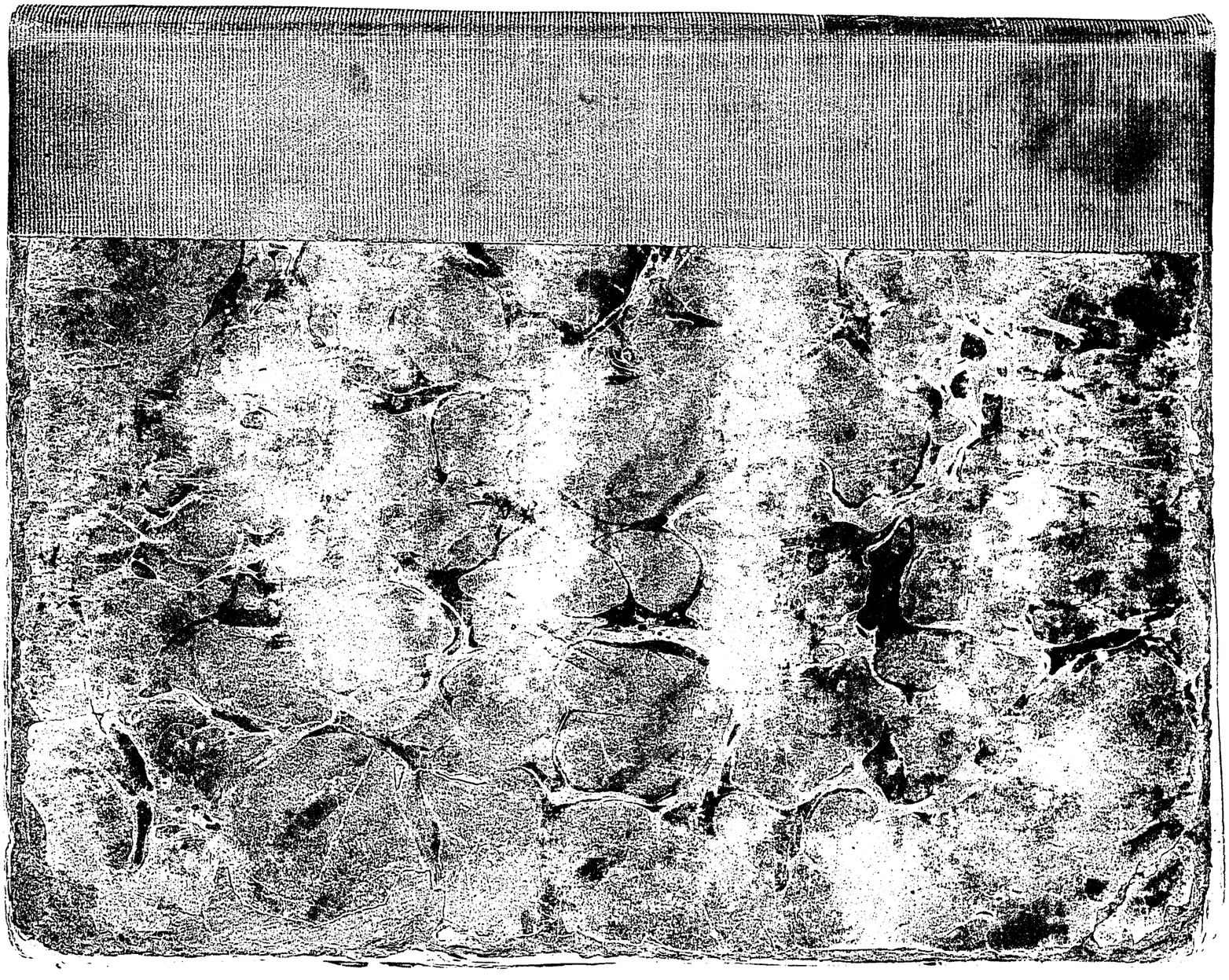
An essay on the principle of population, or, a view of its past and present effects on human happiness

Malthus, Thomas Robert 1803





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AN ESSAY

ON THE

PRINCIPLE OF POPULATION;

OR,

A VIEW OF ITS PAST AND PRESENT EFFECTS

ON

HUMAN HAPPINESS;

WITH AN INQUIRY INTO OUR PROSPECTS RESPECTING THE FUTURE REMOVAL OR MITIGATION OF THE EVILS WHICH IT OCCASIONS.

A NEW EDITION, VERY MUCH ENLARGED.

By T. R. MALTHUS, A. M.
FELLOW OF JESUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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PREFACE.

THE Eſſay on the Principle of Population, which I publiſhed in 1798, was ſuggeſted, as is expreſſed in the preface, by a paper in Mr. Godwin's Inquirer. It was written on the ſpur of the occaſion, and from the few materials which were within my reach in a country ſituation. The only authors from whoſe writings I had deduced the principle, which formed the main argument of the eſſay, were Hume, Wallace, Dr. Adam Smith, and Dr. Price; and my object was to apply it to try the truth of thoſe ſpeculations on the perfectibility of man and ſociety, which at that time excited a conſiderable portion of the publick attention.

In the courſe of the diſcuſſion, I was naturally led into ſome examination of the effects of this principle on the exiſting ſtate of ſociety. It appeared to account for much of that poverty and miſery obſervable among the lower claſſes of people in every nation, and for thoſe reiterated failures in the efforts of the higher claſſes to relieve them. The more I conſidered the ſubject in this point of view, the more importance it ſeemed to acquire; and this conſideration, joined to the degree of publick attention which the eſſay excited, determined me to turn my leiſure reading

towards an hiſtorical examination of the effects of the principle of population on the paſt and preſent ſtate of ſociety; that, by illuſtrating the ſubject more generally, and drawing thoſe inferences from it, in application to the actual ſtate of things which experience ſeemed to warrant, I might give it a more practical and permanent intereſt.

In the courſe of this inquiry, I found that much more had been done, than I had been aware of, when I firſt published the eſſay. The poverty and miſery ariſing from a too rapid increaſe of population, had been diſtinctly ſeen, and the moſt violent remedies propoſed, ſo long ago as the times of Plato and Ariſtotle. And of late years, the ſubject had been treated in ſuch a manner, by ſome of the French Economiſts, occaſionally by Monteſquieu, and, among our own writers, by Dr. Franklin, Sir James Steuart, Mr. Arthur Young, and Mr. Townſend, as to create a natural ſurpriſe, that it had not excited more of the publick attention.

Much, however, remained yet to be done. Independently of the compariſon between the increaſe of population and food, which had not perhaps been ſtated with ſufficient force and preciſion; ſome of the moſt curious and intereſting parts of the ſubject had been either wholly omitted or treated very ſlightly. Though it had been ſtated diſtinctly, that population muſt always be kept down to the level of the means of ſubſiſtence; yet few inquiries had been made into the various modes by which this level is effected; and

and the principle had never been ſufficiently purſued to its conſequences, and thoſe practical inferences drawn from it, which a ſtrict examination of its effects on ſociety appears to ſuggeſt.

Theſe are therefore the points which I have treated moſt in detail in the following eſſay. In its preſent shape, it may be conſidered as a new work, and I ſhould probably have publiſhed it as ſuch, omitting the few parts of the former which I have retained, but that I wiſhed it to form a whole of itſelf, and not to need a continual reference to the other. On this account, I truſt that no apology is neceſſary to the purchaſers of the firſt edition. I ſhould hope that there are ſome parts of it, not reprinted in this, which may ſtill have their uſe; as they were rejected, not becauſe I thought them all of leſs value than what has been inſerted, but becauſe they did not ſuit the different plan of treating the ſubject which I had adopted.

To thoſe who either underſtood the ſubject before, or ſaw it diſtinctly on the peruſal of the firſt edition, I am fearful that I ſhall appear to have treated ſome parts of it too much in detail, and to have been guilty of unneceſſary repetitions. Theſe faults have ariſen partly from want of ſkill, and partly from intention. In drawing ſimilar inferences from the ſtate of ſociety in a number of different countries, I found it very difficult to avoid ſome repetitions; and in thoſe parts of the inquiry which led to concluſions

ſions different from our uſual habits of thinking, it appeared to me, that, with the ſlighteſt hope of producing conviction, it was neceſſary to preſent them to the reader's mind at different times, and on different occaſions. I was willing to ſacrifice all pretenſions to merit of compoſition, to the chance of making an impreſſion on a larger claſs of readers.

The main principle advanced is ſo incontrovertible, that, if I had confined myſelf merely to general views, I could have entrenched myſelf in an impregnable fortreſs; and the work, in this form, would probably have had a much more maſterly air. But ſuch general views, though they may advance the cauſe of abſtract truth, rarely tend to promote any practical good; and I thought that I ſhould not do juſtice to the ſubject, and bring it fairly under diſcuſſion, if I refuſed to conſider any of the conſequences which appeared neceſſarily to flow from it, whatever theſe conſequences might be. By purſuing this plan, however, I am aware that I have opened a door to many objections; and, probably, to much ſeverity of criticiſm: but I conſole myſelf with the reflection, that even the errors into which I may have fallen, by affording a handle to argument, and an additional excitement to examination, may be ſubſervient to the important end, of bringing a ſubject ſo nearly connected with the happineſs of ſociety into more general notice.

Throughout

Throughout the whole of the preſent work, I have ſo far differed in principle from the former, as to ſuppoſe another check to population poſſible, which does not ſtrictly come under the head either of vice or miſery; and, in the latter part, I have endeavoured to ſoften ſome of the harſheſt concluſions of the firſt eſſay. In doing this, I hope that I have not violated the principles of juſt reaſoning; nor expreſſed any opinion reſpecting the probable improvement of ſociety, in which I am not borne out by the experience of the paſt. To thoſe who ſhall ſtill think that any check to population whatever, would be worſe than the evils which it would relieve, the concluſions of the former eſſay will remain in full force; and if we adopt this opinion, we ſhall be compelled to acknowledge that the poverty and miſery which prevail among the lower claſſes of ſociety are abſolutely irremediable.

I have taken as much pains as I could to avoid any errors in the facts and calculations which have been produced in the courſe of the work. Should any of them nevertheleſs turn out to be falſe, the reader will ſee, that they will not materially affect the general tenour of the reaſoning.

From the crowd of materials which preſented themſelves in illuſtration of the firſt branch of the ſubject, I dare not flatter myſelf that I have ſelected the beſt, or arranged them in the moſt perſpicuous method. To thoſe who take an

an intereſt in moral and political queſtions, I hope that the novelty and importance of the ſubject will compenſate the imperfections of its execution.

LONDON, June 8, 1803.

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ESSAY, &c.

BOOK I.

OF THE CHECKS TO POPULATION IN THE LESS CIVILIZED PARTS OF THE WORLD, AND IN PAST TIMES.

CHAP. I.

Statement of the Subject. Ratios of the Increaſe of Population and Food.

In an inquiry concerning the future improvement of ſociety, the mode of conducting the ſubject which naturally preſents itſelf, is

1. An inveſtigation of the cauſes that have hitherto impeded the progreſs of mankind towards happineſs; and

2. An examination into the probability of the total or partial removal of theſe cauſes in future.

To enter fully into this queſtion, and to enumerate all the cauſes that have hitherto influenced human improvement, would be much beyond the power of an individual. The principal object of the preſent eſſay is to examine the effects of one great cauſe intimately united with the very nature of man, which, though it has been conſtantly and powerfully operating ſince the commencement of

ſociety, has been little noticed by the writers who have treated this ſubject. The facts which eſtabliſh the exiſtence of this cauſe have, indeed, been repeatedly ſtated and acknowledged; but its natural and neceſſary effects have been almoſt totally overlooked; though probably among theſe effects may be reckoned a very conſiderable portion of that vice and miſery, and of that unequal diſtribution of the bounties of nature, which it has been the unceaſing object of the enlightened philanthropiſt in all ages to correct.

The cauſe to which I allude, is the conſtant tendency in all animated life to increaſe beyond the nouriſhment prepared for it.

It is obſerved by Dr. Franklin, that there is no bound to the prolific nature of plants or animals, but what is made by their crowding and interfering with each others means of ſubſiſtence. Were the face of the earth, he ſays, vacant of other plants, it might be gradually ſowed and overſpread with one kind only; as, for inſtance, with fennel: and were it empty of other inhabitants, it might in a few ages be repleniſhed from one nation only; as, for inſtance, with Engliſhmen [a].

This is incontrovertibly true. Through the animal and vegetable kingdoms Nature has ſcattered the ſeeds of life abroad with the moſt profuſe and liberal hand; but has been comparatively ſparing in the room and the nouriſhment neceſſary to rear them. The germs of exiſtence contained in this ſpot of earth, with ample food, and ample room to expand in, would fill millions of worlds in the courſe of a few thouſand years. Neceſſity, that imperious all-pervading law of nature, reſtrains them within the preſcribed bounds. The race of plants and the race of animals ſhrink under this great reſtrictive law; and the race of man cannot by any efforts of reaſon eſcape from it.

In plants and animals the view of the ſubject is ſimple. They are all impelled by a powerful inſtinct to the increaſe of their ſpecies;

[a] Franklin's Miſcell. p. 9.

and

and this inſtinct is interrupted by no reaſoning or doubts about providing for their offspring. Wherever, therefore, there is liberty, the power of increaſe is exerted; and the ſuperabundant effects are repreſſed afterwards by want of room and nouriſhment, which is common to plants and animals; and among animals, by their becoming the prey of each other.

The effects of this check on man are more complicated. Impelled to the increaſe of his ſpecies by an equally powerful inſtinct, reaſon interrupts his career, and aſks him whether he may not bring beings into the world, for whom he cannot provide the means of ſupport. If he attend to this natural ſuggeſtion, the reſtriction too frequently produces vice. If he hear it not, the human race will be conſtantly endeavouring to increaſe beyond the means of ſubſiſtence. But as by that law of our nature which makes food neceſſary to the life of man, population can never actually increaſe beyond the loweſt nouriſhment capable of ſupporting it; a ſtrong check on population, from the difficulty of acquiring food, muſt be conſtantly in operation. This difficulty muſt fall ſomewhere; and muſt neceſſarily be ſeverely felt in ſome or other of the various forms of miſery, or the fear of miſery, by a large portion of mankind.

That population has this conſtant tendency to increaſe beyond the means of ſubſiſtence, and that it is kept to its neceſſary level by theſe cauſes, will ſufficiently appear from a review of the different ſtates of ſociety in which man has exiſted. But before we proceed to this review, the ſubject will perhaps be ſeen in a clearer light, if we endeavour to aſcertain, what would be the natural increaſe of population if left to exert itſelf with perfect freedom; and what might be expected to be the rate of increaſe in the productions of the earth, under the moſt favourable circumſtances of human induſtry. A compariſon of theſe two rates of increaſe will enable us to judge of the force of that tendency in population to increaſe beyond the means of ſubſiſtence, which has been ſtated to exiſt.

It will be allowed, that no country has hitherto been known, where

the manners were ſo pure and ſimple, and the means of ſubſiſtence ſo abundant, that no check whatever has exiſted to early marriages from the difficulty of providing for a family; and no waſte of the human ſpecies has been occaſioned afterwards by vicious cuſtoms, by towns, by unhealthy occupations, or too ſevere labour. Conſequently in no ſtate that we have yet known, has the power of population been left to exert itſelf with perfect freedom.

Whether the law of marriage be inſtituted, or not, the dictate of nature and virtue ſeems to be an early attachment to one woman; and where there were no impediments of any kind in the way of an union to which ſuch an attachment would lead, and no cauſes of depopulation afterwards, the increaſe of the human ſpecies would be evidently much greater than any increaſe which has been hitherto known.

In the northern ſtates of America, where the means of ſubſiſtence have been more ample, the manners of the people more pure, and the checks to early marriages fewer, than in any of the modern ſtates of Europe, the population was found to double itſelf for ſome ſucceſſive periods every twenty-five years. Yet even during theſe periods, in ſome of the towns, the deaths exceeded the births [a]; and they conſequently required a continued ſupply from the country to ſupport their population.

In the back ſettlements, where the ſole employment was agriculture, and vicious cuſtoms and unwholeſome occupations were unknown, the population was found to double itſelf in fifteen years [b]. Even this extraordinary rate of increaſe is probably ſhort of the utmoſt power of population. Very ſevere labour is requiſite to clear a freſh country; ſuch ſituations are not in general conſidered as particularly healthy; and the inhabitants were probably occaſionally ſubject to the incurſions of the Indians, which might deſtroy ſome lives, or at any rate diminiſh the fruits of their induſtry.

[a] Price's Obſerv. on Reverſ. Pay. vol. i. p. 274. [b] Id. p. 282.

According

According to a table of Euler, calculated on a mortality of 1 in 36, if the births be to the deaths in the proportion of 3 to 1, the period of doubling will be only 12 $\frac{4}{5}$ years [a]. And theſe proportions are not only poſſible ſuppoſitions, but have actually occurred for ſhort periods in more countries than one.

Sir William Petty ſuppoſes a doubling poſſible in ſo ſhort a time as ten years [b].

But to be perfectly ſure that we are far within the truth, we will take the ſloweſt of theſe rates of increaſe; a rate, in which all concurring teſtimonies agree, and which has been repeatedly aſcertained to be from procreation only.

It may ſafely be pronounced therefore, that population when unchecked goes on doubling itſelf every twenty-five years, or increaſes in a geometrical ratio.

The rate according to which the productions of the earth may be ſuppoſed to increaſe, it will not be ſo eaſy to determine. Of this, however, we may be perfectly certain, that the ratio of their increaſe muſt be totally of a different nature from the ratio of the increaſe of population. A thouſand millions are juſt as eaſily doubled every twenty-five years by the power of population as a thouſand. But the food to ſupport the increaſe from the greater number will by no means be obtained with the ſame facility. Man is neceſſarily confined in room. When acre has been added to acre till all the fertile land is occupied, the yearly increaſe of food muſt depend upon the amelioration of the land already in poſſeſſion. This is a ſtream, which, from the nature of all ſoils, inſtead of increaſing, muſt be gradually diminiſhing. But population, could it be ſupplied with food, would go on with unexhauſted vigour; and the increaſe of one period would furniſh the power of a greater increaſe the next, and this, without any limit.

From the accounts we have of China and Japan, it may be

[a] See this table at the end of chap. iv. book ii. [b] Polit. Arith. p. 14.

fairly

fairly doubted, whether the beſt directed efforts of human induſtry could double the produce of theſe countries even once in any number of years. There are many parts of the globe, indeed, hitherto uncultivated, and almoſt unoccupied; but the right of exterminating, or driving into a corner where they muſt ſtarve, even the inhabitants of theſe thinly peopled regions, will be queſtioned in a moral view. The proceſs of improving their minds and directing their induſtry, would neceſſarily be ſlow; and during this time, as population would regularly keep pace with the increaſing produce, it would rarely happen that a great degree of knowledge and induſtry would have to operate at once upon rich unappropriated ſoil. Even where this might take place, as it does ſometimes in new colonies, a geometrical ratio increaſes with ſuch extraordinary rapidity, that the advantage could not laſt long. If America continue increaſing, which ſhe certainly will do, though not with the ſame rapidity as formerly, the Indians will be driven further and further back into the country, till the whole race is ultimately exterminated.

Theſe obſervations are, in a degree, applicable to all the parts of the earth, where the ſoil is imperfectly cultivated. To exterminate the inhabitants of the greateſt part of Aſia and Africa, is a thought that could not be admitted for a moment. To civilize and direct the induſtry of the various tribes of Tartars, and Negroes, would certainly be a work of conſiderable time, and of variable and uncertain ſucceſs.

Europe is by no means ſo fully peopled as it might be. In Europe, there is the faireſt chance that human induſtry may receive its beſt direction. The ſcience of agriculture has been much ſtudied in England and Scotland; and there is ſtill a great portion of uncultivated land in theſe countries. Let us conſider, at what rate the produce of this iſland might be ſuppoſed to increaſe under circumſtances the moſt favourable to improvement.

If it be allowed, that by the beſt poſſible policy, and great encouragements

couragements to agriculture, the average produce of the iſland could be doubled in the firſt twenty-five years, it will be allowing probably a greater increaſe than could with reaſon be expected.

In the next twenty-five years, it is impoſſible to ſuppoſe that the produce could be quadrupled. It would be contrary to all our knowledge of the properties of land. The improvement of the barren parts would be a work of time and labour; and it muſt be evident to thoſe who have the ſlighteſt acquaintance with agricultural ſubjects, that in proportion as cultivation extended, the additions that could yearly be made to the former average produce, muſt be gradually and regularly diminiſhing. That we may be the better able to compare the increaſe of population and food, let us make a ſuppoſition, which, without pretending to accuracy, is clearly more favourable to the power of production in the earth, than any experience that we have had of its qualities will warrant.

Let us ſuppoſe that the yearly additions which might be made to the former average produce, inſtead of decreaſing, which they certainly would do, were to remain the ſame; and that the produce of this iſland might be increaſed every twenty-five years, by a quantity equal to what it at preſent produces: the moſt enthuſiaſtic ſpeculator cannot ſuppoſe a greater increaſe than this. In a few centuries it would make every acre of land in the iſland like a garden.

If this ſuppoſition be applied to the whole earth, and if it be allowed that the ſubſiſtence for man which the earth affords, might be increaſed every twenty-five years by a quantity equal to what it at preſent produces, this will be ſuppoſing a rate of increaſe much greater than we can imagine that any poſſible exertions of mankind could make it.

It may be fairly pronounced therefore, that, conſidering the preſent average ſtate of the earth, the means of ſubſiſtence, under circumſtances the moſt favourable to human induſtry, could not poſſibly be made to increaſe faſter than in an arithmetical ratio.

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The neceſſary effects of theſe two different rates of increaſe, when brought together, will be very ſtriking. Let us call the population of this iſland eleven millions; and ſuppoſe the preſent produce equal to the eaſy ſupport of ſuch a number. In the firſt twenty-five years the population would be twenty-two millions, and the food being alſo doubled, the means of ſubſiſtence would be equal to this increaſe. In the next twenty-five years, the population would be forty-four millions, and the means of ſubſiſtence only equal to the ſupport of thirty-three millions. In the next period the population would be eighty-eight millions, and the means of ſubſiſtence juſt equal to the ſupport of half of that number. And at the concluſion of the firſt century, the population would be a hundred and ſeventy-ſix millions, and the means of ſubſiſtence only equal to the ſupport of fifty-five millions; leaving a population of a hundred and twenty-one millions totally unprovided for.

Taking the whole earth inſtead of this iſland, emigration would of courſe be excluded; and ſuppoſing the preſent population equal to a thouſand millions, the human ſpecies would increaſe as the numbers 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, and ſubſiſtence as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. In two centuries the population would be to the means of ſubſiſtence as 256 to 9; in three centuries as 4096 to 13, and in two thouſand years the difference would be almoſt incalculable.

In this ſuppoſition no limits whatever are placed to the produce of the earth. It may increaſe for ever, and be greater than any aſſignable quantity; yet ſtill the power of population being in every period ſo much ſuperior, the increaſe of the human ſpecies can only be kept down to the level of the means of ſubſiſtence by the conſtant operation of the ſtrong law of neceſſity acting as a check upon the greater power.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of the general Checks to Population, and the Mode of their Operation.

THE checks to population, which are conſtantly operating with more or leſs force in every ſociety, and keep down the number to the level of the means of ſubſiſtence, may be claſſed under two general heads; the preventive, and the poſitive checks.

The preventive check, is peculiar to man, and ariſes from that diſtinctive ſuperiority in his reaſoning faculties, which enables him to calculate diſtant conſequences. Plants and animals have apparently no doubts about the future ſupport of their offspring. The checks to their indefinite increaſe, therefore, are all poſitive. But man cannot look around him, and ſee the diſtreſs which frequently preſſes upon thoſe who have large families; he cannot contemplate his preſent poſſeſſions or earnings, which he now nearly conſumes himſelf, and calculate the amount of each ſhare, when with very little addition they muſt be divided, perhaps, among ſeven or eight, without feeling a doubt, whether if he follow the bent of his inclinations, he may be able to ſupport the offspring which he will probably bring into the world. In a ſtate of equality, if ſuch can exiſt, this would be the ſimple queſtion. In the preſent ſtate of ſociety other conſiderations occur. Will he not lower his rank in life, and be obliged to give up in great meaſure his former ſociety? Does any mode of employment preſent itſelf by which he may reaſonably hope to maintain a family? Will he not at any rate ſubject himſelf to greater difficulties, and more ſevere labour than in his ſingle ſtate? Will he not be unable to tranſmit to his children the ſame advantages of education and im-

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provement that he had himſelf poſſeſſed? Does he even feel ſecure that, ſhould he have a large family, his utmoſt exertions can ſave them from rags, and ſqualid poverty, and their conſequent degradation in the community? And may he not be reduced to the grating neceſſity of forfeiting his independence, and of being obliged to the ſparing hand of charity for ſupport?

Theſe conſiderations are calculated to prevent, and certainly do prevent, a great number of perſons in all civilized nations from purſuing the dictate of nature in an early attachment to one woman.

If this reſtraint do not produce vice, as in many inſtances is the caſe, and very generally ſo among the middle and higher claſſes of women, it is undoubtedly the leaſt evil that can ariſe from the principle of population. Conſidered as a reſtraint on an inclination, otherwiſe innocent, and always natural, it muſt be allowed to produce a certain degree of temporary unhappineſs; but evidently ſlight, compared with the evils which reſult from any of the other checks to population.

When this reſtraint produces vice, as it does moſt frequently among men, and among a numerous claſs of females, the evils which follow are but too conſpicuous. A promiſcuous intercourſe to ſuch a degree as to prevent the birth of children, ſeems to lower in the moſt marked manner the dignity of human nature. It cannot be without its effect on men, and nothing can be more obvious than its tendency to degrade the female character, and to deſtroy all its moſt amiable and diſtinguiſhing characteriſtics. Add to which, that among thoſe unfortunate females with which all great towns abound, more real diſtreſs and aggravated miſery are perhaps to be found, than in any other department of human life.

When a general corruption of morals, with regard to the ſex, pervades all the claſſes of ſociety, its effects muſt neceſſarily be, to poiſon the ſprings of domeſtic happineſs, to weaken conjugal and parental affection, and to leſſen the united exertions and ardour of parents in the care and education of their children; effects, which cannot take place

place without a decided diminution of the general happineſs and virtue of the ſociety; particularly, as the neceſſity of art in the accompliſhment and conduct of intrigues, and in the concealment of their conſequences, neceſſarily leads to many other vices.

The poſitive checks to population are extremely various, and include every cauſe, whether ariſing from vice or miſery, which in any degree contributes to ſhorten the natural duration of human life. Under this head therefore may be enumerated, all unwholeſome occupations, ſevere labour and expoſure to the ſeaſons, extreme poverty, bad nurſing of children, great towns, exceſſes of all kinds, the whole train of common diſeaſes and epidemics, wars, peſtilence, plague, and famine.

On examining theſe obſtacles to the increaſe of population which I have claſſed under the heads of preventive, and poſitive checks, it will appear that they are all reſolvable into moral reſtraint, vice, and miſery.

Of the preventive checks, that which is not followed by irregular gratifications, may properly be termed moral reſtraint.

Promiſcuous intercourſe, unnatural paſſions, violations of the marriage bed, and improper arts to conceal the conſequences of irregular connexions, clearly come under the head of vice.

Of the poſitive checks, thoſe which appear to ariſe unavoidably from the laws of nature may be called excluſively miſery; and thoſe which we obviouſly bring upon ourſelves, ſuch as wars, exceſſes, and many others which it would be in our power to avoid, are of a mixed nature. They are brought upon us by vice, and their conſequences are miſery [a].

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[a] As the general conſequence of vice is miſery, and as this conſequence is the preciſe reaſon why an action is termed vicious, it may appear that the term miſery alone would be here ſufficient, and that it is ſuperfluous to uſe both. But the rejection of the term vice would introduce a conſiderable confuſion into our language and ideas. We want it particularly to diſtinguiſh that claſs of actions, the general tendency of which is to produce miſery, but which, in their immediate or individual effects, may produce perhaps exactly

In every country, ſome of theſe checks are, with more or leſs force, in conſtant operation; yet notwithſtanding their general prevalence, there are few ſtates in which there is not a conſtant effort in the population to increaſe beyond the means of ſubſiſtence. This conſtant effort as conſtantly tends to ſubject the lower claſſes of ſociety to diſtreſs, and to prevent any great permanent amelioration of their condition.

Theſe effects, in the preſent ſtate of ſociety, ſeem to be produced in the following manner. We will ſuppoſe the means of ſubſiſtence in any country juſt equal to the eaſy ſupport of its inhabitants. The conſtant effort towards population, which is found to act even in the moſt vicious ſocieties, increaſes the number of people before the means of ſubſiſtence are increaſed. The food therefore which before ſupported eleven millions, muſt now be divided among eleven millions and a half. The poor conſequently muſt live much worſe, and many of them be reduced to ſevere diſtreſs. The number of labourers alſo being above the proportion of work in the market, the price of labour muſt tend to fall; while the price of proviſions would at the ſame time tend to riſe. The labourer therefore muſt do more work, to earn the ſame as he did before. During this ſeaſon of diſtreſs, the diſcouragements to marriage, and the difficulty of rearing a family are ſo great, that population is nearly at a ſtand. In the mean time, the cheapneſs of labour, the plenty of labourers, and the neceſſity of an increaſed induſtry among them, encourage cultivators to employ more labour upon their land; to turn up freſh ſoil, and to manure

the contrary. The gratification of all our paſſions in its immediate effect is happineſs, not miſery; and in individual inſtances even the remote conſequences (at leaſt in this life) come under the ſame denomination. I have little doubt that there have been ſome irregular connexions with women, which have added to the happineſs of both parties, and have injured no one. Theſe individual actions therefore cannot come under the head of miſery. But they are ſtill evidently vicious, becauſe an action is ſo denominated, the general tendency of which is to produce miſery, whatever may be its individual effect; and no perſon can doubt the general tendency of an illicit intercourſe between the ſexes, to injure the happineſs of ſociety.

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and improve more completely what is already in tillage; till ultimately the means of ſubſiſtence may become in the ſame proportion to the population, as at the period from which we ſet out. The ſituation of the labourer being then again tolerably comfortable, the reſtraints to population are in ſome degree looſened; and, after a ſhort period, the ſame retrograde and progreſſive movements, with reſpect to happineſs, are repeated.

This ſort of oſcillation will not probably be obvious to common view; and it may be difficult even for the moſt attentive obſerver to calculate its periods. Yet that, in the generality of old ſtates, ſome ſuch vibration does exiſt, though in a much leſs marked, and in a much more irregular manner, than I have deſcribed it, no reflecting man who conſiders the ſubject deeply can well doubt.

One principal reaſon why this oſcillation has been leſs remarked, and leſs decidedly confirmed by experience than might naturally be expected, is, that the hiſtories of mankind which we poſſeſs, are, in general, hiſtories only of the higher claſſes. We have not many accounts, that can be depended upon, of the manners and cuſtoms of that part of mankind where theſe retrograde and progreſſive movements chiefly take place. A ſatisfactory hiſtory of this kind, of one people and of one period, would require the conſtant and minute attention of many obſerving minds in local and general remarks on the ſtate of the lower claſſes of ſociety, and the cauſes that influenced it; and to draw accurate inferences upon this ſubject, a ſucceſſion of ſuch hiſtorians for ſome centuries would be neceſſary. This branch of ſtatiſtical knowledge has of late years been attended to in ſome countries [a], and we may promiſe ourſelves a clearer inſight into the inter-

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[a] The judicious queſtions which Sir John Sinclair circulated in Scotland, and the very valuable accounts which he has collected in that part of the iſland, do him the higheſt honour; and theſe accounts will ever remain an extraordinary monument of the learning, good ſenſe, and general information of the clergy of Scotland. It is to be regretted that the adjoining pariſhes are not put together in the work, which would have aſſiſted the memory both in attaining and recollecting the ſtate of particular diſtricts. The repetitions

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nal ſtructure of human ſociety from the progreſs of theſe inquiries. But the ſcience may be ſaid yet to be in its infancy, and many of the objects, on which it would be deſirable to have information, have been either omitted or not ſtated with ſufficient accuracy. Among theſe perhaps may be reckoned, the proportion of the number of adults to the number of marriages; the extent to which vicious cuſtoms have prevailed in conſequence of the reſtraints upon matrimony; the comparative mortality among the children of the moſt diſtreſſed part of the community, and of thoſe who live rather more at their eaſe; the variations in the real price of labour; the obſervable differences in the ſtate of the lower claſſes of ſociety with reſpect to eaſe and happineſs, at different times during a certain period; and very accurate regiſters of births, deaths, and marriages, which are of the utmoſt importance in this ſubject.

A faithful hiſtory, including ſuch particulars, would tend greatly to elucidate the manner in which the conſtant check upon population acts; and would probably prove the exiſtence of the retrograde and progreſſive movements that have been mentioned; though the times of their vibration muſt neceſſarily be rendered irregular from the operation of many interrupting cauſes; ſuch as, the introduction of or failure of certain manufactures, a greater or leſs prevalent ſpirit of agricultural enterprize; years of plenty, or years of ſcarcity; wars, ſickly ſeaſons, poor laws, emigration, and other cauſes of a ſimilar nature.

A circumſtance which has perhaps more than any other contributed to conceal this oſcillation from common view, is, the differ-

and contradictory opinions which occur are not in my opinion ſo objectionable, as, to the reſult of ſuch teſtimony, more faith may be given than we could poſſibly give to the teſtimony of any individual. Even were this reſult drawn for us by ſome maſter hand, though much valuable time would undoubtedly be ſaved, the information would not be ſo ſatisfactory. If, with a few ſubordinate improvements, this work had contained accurate and complete regiſters for the laſt 150 years, it would have been ineſtimable, and would have exhibited a better picture of the internal ſtate of a country, than has yet been preſented to the world. But this laſt moſt eſſential improvement no diligence could have effected.

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ence between the nominal and real price of labour. It very rarely happens that the nominal price of labour univerſally falls; but we well know that it frequently remains the ſame, while the nominal price of proviſions has been gradually riſing. This is, in effect, a real fall in the price of labour; and, during this period, the condition of the lower claſſes of the community muſt be gradually growing worſe. But the farmers and capitaliſts are growing rich from the real cheapneſs of labour. Their increaſing capitals enable them to employ a greater number of men; and, as the population had probably ſuffered ſome check from the greater difficulty of ſupporting a family, the demand for labour, after a certain period, would be great in proportion to the ſupply, and its price would of courſe riſe, if left to find its natural level; and thus the wages of labour, and conſequently the condition of the lower claſſes of ſociety, might have progreſſive and retrograde movements, though the price of labour might never nominally fall.

In ſavage life, where there is no regular price of labour, it is little to be doubted that ſimilar oſcillations take place. When population has increaſed nearly to the utmoſt limits of the food, all the preventive and the poſitive checks will naturally operate with increaſed force. Vicious habits with reſpect to the ſex will be more general, the expoſing of children more frequent, and both the probability, and fatality, of wars and epidemicks, will be conſiderably greater; and theſe cauſes will probably continue their operation till the population is ſunk below the level of the food; and then the return to comparative plenty will again produce an increaſe, and, after a certain period, its further progreſs will again be checked by the ſame cauſes [a].

[a] Sir James Steuart very juſtly compares the generative faculty to a ſpring loaded with a variable weight, (Polit. Econ. vol i. b. i. c. 4. p. 20.) which would of courſe produce exactly that kind of oſcillation which has been mentioned. In the firſt book of his Political Economy, he has explained many parts of the ſubject of population very ably.

But without attempting to eſtabliſh in all caſes theſe progreſſive and retrograde movements in different countries, which would evidently require more minute hiſtories than we poſſeſs, the following propoſitions are propoſed to be proved:

1. Population is neceſſarily limited by the means of ſubſiſtence.

2. Population invariably increaſes, where the means of ſubſiſtence increaſe, unleſs prevented by ſome very powerful and obvious checks.

3. Theſe checks, and the checks which repreſs the ſuperior power of population, and keep its effects on a level with the means of ſubſiſtence, are all reſolvable into moral reſtraint, vice, and miſery.

The firſt of theſe propoſitions ſcarcely needs illuſtration. The ſecond and third will be ſufficiently eſtabliſhed by a review of the paſt and preſent ſtate of ſociety.

This review will be the ſubject of the following chapters.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the Checks to Population in the loweſt Stage of Human Society.

THE wretched inhabitants of Terra del Fuego have been placed by the general conſent of voyagers at the bottom of the ſcale of human beings[a]. Of their domeſtic habits and manners, however, we have few accounts. Their barren country, and the miſerable ſtate in which they live, have prevented any intercourſe with them that might give ſuch information; but we cannot be at a loſs to conceive the checks to population among a race of ſavages, whoſe very appearance indicates them to be half ſtarved, and who, ſhivering with cold, and covered with filth and vermin, live in one of the moſt inhoſpitable climates in the world, without having ſagacity enough to provide themſelves with ſuch conveniences as might mitigate its ſeverities, and render life in ſome meaſure more comfortable[b].

Next to theſe, and almoſt as low in genius and reſources, have been placed, the natives of Van Dieman's land[c]; but ſome late accounts have repreſented the iſlands of Andaman in the eaſt, as inhabited by a race of ſavages ſtill lower in wretchedneſs even than theſe. Every thing that voyagers have related of ſavage life, is ſaid to fall ſhort of the barbariſm of this people. Their whole time is ſpent in ſearch of food; and as their woods yield them few or no ſupplies of animals, and but little vegetable diet, their principal occupation is that of climbing the rocks, or roving along the margin of the ſea, in ſearch of a precarious meal of fiſh, which, during the tempeſtuous ſeaſon,

[a] Cook's Firſt Voy. vol. ii. p. 59. [b] Second Voy. vol. ii. p. 187.
[c] Vancouver's Voy. vol. ii. b. iii. c. i. p. 13.

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they often ſeek for in vain. Their ſtature ſeldom exceeds five feet; their bellies are protuberant, with high ſhoulders, large heads, and limbs diſproportionably ſlender. Their countenances exhibit the extreme of wretchedneſs, a horrid mixture of famine and ferocity; and their extenuated and diſeaſed figures plainly indicate the want of wholeſome nouriſhment. Some of theſe unhappy beings have been found on the ſhores in the laſt ſtage of famine [a].

In the next ſcale of human beings perhaps we may place the inhabitants of New Holland, of a part of whom we have ſome accounts that may be depended upon, from a perſon who reſided a conſiderable time at Port Jackſon, and had frequent opportunities of being a witneſs to their habits and manners. The narrator of Captain Cook's firſt voyage having mentioned the very ſmall number of inhabitants that was ſeen on the eaſtern coaſt of New Holland, and the apparent inability of the country, from its deſolate ſtate, to ſupport many more, obſerves, "By what means the inhabitants of this country are reduced "to ſuch a number as it can ſubſiſt, is not perhaps very eaſy to gueſs; "whether, like the inhabitants of New Zealand, they are deſtroyed "by the hands of each other in conteſts for food, whether they are "ſwept off by accidental famine, or whether there is any cauſe that "prevents the increaſe of the ſpecies, muſt be left for future adven-"turers to determine [b]."

The account which Mr. Collins has given of theſe ſavages will, I hope, afford in ſome degree a ſatisfactory anſwer. They are deſcribed as, in general, neither tall nor well made. Their arms, legs, and thighs, are thin, which is aſcribed to the poorneſs of their mode of living. Thoſe who inhabit the ſea-coaſt depend almoſt entirely on fiſh for their ſuſtenance, relieved occaſionally by a repaſt on ſome large grubs which are found in the body of the dwarf gum tree. The very ſcanty ſtock of animals in the woods, and the very great labour

[a] Syme's Embaſſy to Ava, ch. i. p. 129. and Aſiatic Reſearches, vol. iv. p. 401.
[b] Cook's Firſt Voy. vol. iii. p. 240.

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neceſſary to take them, keep the inland natives in as poor a condition as their brethren on the coaſt. They are compelled to climb the talleſt trees after honey, and the ſmaller animals, ſuch as the flying ſquirrel and the opoſſum. When the ſtems are of great height, and without branches, which is generally the caſe, in thick foreſts, this is a proceſs of great labour, and is effected by cutting a notch with their ſtone hatchets for each foot ſucceſſively, while their left arm embraces the tree. Trees were obſerved notched in this manner to the height of eighty feet before the firſt branch, where the hungry ſavage could hope to meet with any reward for ſo much toil [a].

The woods, excluſive of the animals occaſionally found in them, afford but little ſuſtenance. A few berries, the yam, the fern root, and the flowers of the different bankſia, make up the whole of the vegetable catalogue [b].

A native with his child, ſurpriſed on the banks of the Hawkſbury river by ſome of our coloniſts, launched his canoe in a hurry, and left behind him a ſpecimen of his food, and of the delicacy of his ſtomach. From a piece of water-ſoken wood, full of holes, he had been extracting and eating a large worm. The ſmell both of the worm and its habitation was in the higheſt degree offenſive. Theſe worms, in the language of the country, are called cah-bro; and a tribe of natives dwelling inland, from the circumſtance of eating theſe loathſome worms, is named Cah-brogal. The wood natives alſo make a paſte formed of the fern root, and the large and ſmall ants bruiſed together, and, in the ſeaſon, add the eggs of this inſect [c].

In a country, the inhabitants of which are driven to ſuch reſources for ſubſiſtence, where the ſupply of animal and vegetable food is ſo extremely ſcanty, and the labour neceſſary to procure it is ſo ſevere, it is evident, that the population muſt be very thinly ſcattered in proportion to the territory. Its utmoſt bounds muſt be very narrow.

[a] Collins's Account of New South Wales, Appendix, p. 549. 4to.
[b] Id. Appen. p. 557. [c] Id. Appen. p. 558.

But when we advert to the ſtrange and barbarous cuſtoms of theſe people, the cruel treatment of their women, and the difficulty of rearing children; inſtead of being ſurpriſed that it does not more frequently preſs to paſs theſe bounds, we ſhall be rather inclined to conſider even theſe ſcanty reſources as more than ſufficient to ſupport all the population that could grow up under ſuch circumſtances.

The prelude to love in this country is violence, and of the moſt brutal nature. The ſavage ſelects his intended wife from the women of a different tribe, generally one at enmity with his own. He ſteals upon her in the abſence of her protectors, and having firſt ſtupified her with blows of a club, or wooden ſword, on the head, back, and ſhoulders, every one of which is followed by a ſtream of blood, he drags her through the woods by one arm, regardleſs of the ſtones and broken pieces of trees that may lie in his route, and anxious only to convey his prize in ſafety to his own party, where a moſt brutal ſcene enſues. The woman thus raviſhed becomes his wife, and is incorporated into the tribe to which he belongs, and but ſeldom quits him for another. The outrage is not reſented by the relations of the female, who only retaliate by a ſimilar outrage when it is in their power[a].

The union of the ſexes takes place at an early age, and inſtances were known to our coloniſts of very young girls having been much and ſhamefully abuſed by the males[b].

The conduct of the huſband to his wife, or wives, ſeems to be nearly in character with this ſtrange and barbarous mode of courtſhip. The females bear on their heads the traces of the ſuperiority of the males, which is exerciſed almoſt as ſoon as they find ſtrength in their arms to inflict a blow. Some of theſe unfortunate beings have been obſerved with more ſcars on their ſhorn heads cut in every direction, than could well be counted. Mr. Collins feelingly ſays, "The condition of theſe women is ſo wretched, that I have often, on

[a] Collins's N. S. Wales, Appen. p. 559. [b] Appen. p. 563.

"ſeeing a female child borne on its mothers ſhoulders, anticipated the "miſeries to which it was born, and thought it would be a mercy "to deſtroy it[a]." In another place, ſpeaking of Bennilong's wife being delivered of a child, he ſays, "I here find in my papers a note "that for ſome offence Bennilong had ſeverely beaten this woman "in the morning, a ſhort time before ſhe was delivered[b]."

Women treated in this brutal manner muſt neceſſarily be ſubject to frequent miſcarriages, and it is probable that the abuſe of very young girls, mentioned above as common, and the too early union of the ſexes in general, would tend to prevent the females from being prolifick. Inſtances of a plurality of wives were found more frequent than of a ſingle wife; but what is extraordinary, Mr. Collins did not recollect ever to have noticed children by more than one. He had heard from ſome of the natives, that the firſt wife claimed an excluſive right to the conjugal embrace, while the ſecond was merely the ſlave and drudge of both[c].

An abſolutely excluſive right in the firſt wife to the conjugal embrace ſeems to be hardly probable; but it is poſſible that the ſecond wife might not be allowed to rear her offſpring. At any rate, if the obſervation be generally true, it proves that a great part of the women are without children, which can only be accounted for from the very ſevere hardſhips which they undergo, or from ſome particular cuſtoms which may not have come to the knowledge of Mr. Collins.

If the mother of a ſucking child die, the helpleſs infant is buried alive in the ſame grave with its mother. The father himſelf places his living child on the body of his dead wife, and having thrown a large ſtone upon it, the grave is inſtantly filled by the other natives. This dreadful act was performed by Co-le-be, a native well known to our coloniſts, and who, on being talked to on the ſubject, juſtified the proceeding by declaring that no woman could be found who would undertake to nurſe the child, and that therefore it muſt have

[a] Collins's N. S. Wales, Appen. p. 583. [b] Appen. note p. 562. [c] Appen. p. 560.

died

died a much worſe death than that which he had given it. Mr. Collins had reaſon to believe that this cuſtom was generally prevalent, and obſerves, that it may in ſome meaſure account for the thinneſs of the population [a].

Such a cuſtom, though in itſelf perhaps it might not much affect the population of a country, places in a ſtrong point of view the difficulty of rearing children in ſavage life. Women, obliged by their habits of living to a conſtant change of place, and compelled to an unremitting drudgery for their huſbands, appear to be abſolutely incapable of bringing up two or three children nearly of the ſame age. If another child be born before the one above it can ſhift for itſelf, and follow its mother on foot, one of the two muſt almoſt neceſſarily periſh for want of care. The taſk of rearing even one infant, in ſuch a wandering and laborious life, muſt be ſo troubleſome and painful, that we are not to be ſurpriſed that no woman can be found to undertake it, who is not prompted by the powerful feelings of a mother.

To theſe cauſes, which forcibly repreſs the riſing generation, muſt be added thoſe which contribute ſubſequently to deſtroy it; ſuch as the frequent wars of theſe ſavages with different tribes, and their perpetual conteſts with each other; their ſtrange ſpirit of retaliation and revenge which prompts the midnight murder, and the frequent ſhedding of innocent blood; the ſmoke and filth of their miſerable habitations, and their poor mode of living, productive of loathſome cutaneous diſorders, and above all, a dreadful epidemic like the ſmall-pox, which ſweeps off great numbers [b].

In the year 1789 they were viſited by this epidemic which raged among them with all the appearance and virulence of the ſmall-pox. The deſolation that it occaſioned was almoſt incredible. Not a living perſon was to be found in the bays and harbours that were

[a] Collins's N.S. Wales, Appendix, p. 607.

[b] See generally, the Appendix to Collins's Account of the Engliſh Colony in New South Wales.

before

before the moſt frequented. Not a veſtige of a human foot was to be traced on the ſands. They had left the dead to bury the dead. The excavations in the rocks were filled with putrid bodies, and in many places the paths were covered with ſkeletons [a].

Mr. Collins was informed, that the tribe of Co-le-be, the native mentioned before, had been reduced by the effects of this dreadful diſorder to three perſons; who found themſelves obliged to unite with ſome other tribe to prevent their utter extinction [b].

Under ſuch powerful cauſes of depopulation, we ſhould naturally be inclined to ſuppoſe that the animal and vegetable produce of the country would be increaſing upon the thinly ſcattered inhabitants, and, added to the ſupply of fiſh from their ſhores, would be more than ſufficient for their conſumption; yet, it appears upon the whole, that the population is in general ſo nearly on a level with the average ſupply of food, that every little deficiency from unfavourable weather, or other cauſes, occaſions diſtreſs. Particular times, when the inhabitants ſeemed to be in great want, are mentioned as not uncommon, and at theſe periods, ſome of the natives were found reduced to ſkeletons, and almoſt ſtarved to death [c].

[a] Collins's N. S. Wales, Appendix, p. 597. [b] Id. Appendix, p. 598.
[c] Id. c. iii. p. 34. and Appendix, p. 551

CHAP. IV.

Of the Checks to Population among the American Indians.

We may next turn our view to the vaſt continent of America, the greateſt part of which was found to be inhabited by ſmall independent tribes of ſavages, ſubſiſting nearly in a ſimilar manner to the natives of New Holland on the productions of unaſſiſted nature. The ſoil was covered by an almoſt univerſal foreſt, and preſented few of thoſe fruits and eſculent vegetables which grow in ſuch profuſion in the iſlands of the South Sea. The produce of a moſt rude and imperfect agriculture, known to ſome of the tribes of hunters, was ſo trifling as to be conſidered only as a feeble aid to the ſubſiſtence acquired by the chace. The inhabitants of this new world, therefore, might be conſidered as living principally by hunting and fiſhing [a]; and the narrow limits to this mode of ſubſiſtence are obvious. The ſupplies derived from fiſhing could extend only to thoſe who were within a certain diſtance of the lakes, the rivers, or the ſea-ſhore; and the ignorance and indolence of the improvident ſavage would frequently prevent him from extending the benefits of theſe ſupplies much beyond the time when they were actually obtained. The great extent of territory required for the ſupport of the hunter has been repeatedly ſtated and acknowledged [b]. The number of wild animals within his reach, combined with the facility with which they might be either killed or enſnared, muſt

[a] Robertſon's Hiſtory of America, vol. ii. b. iv. p. 127. et ſeq. octavo edit. 1780.
[b] Franklin's Miſcell. p. 2.

neceſſarily

neceſſarily limit the number of his ſociety. Tribes of hunters, like beaſts of prey, whom they reſemble in their mode of ſubſiſtence, will conſequently be thinly ſcattered over the ſurface of the earth. Like beaſts of prey, they muſt either drive away, or fly from, every rival, and be engaged in perpetual conteſts with each other [a].

Under ſuch circumſtances, that America ſhould be very thinly peopled in proportion to its extent of territory, is merely an exemplification of the obvious truth, that population cannot increaſe without the food to ſupport it. But the intereſting part of the inquiry, that part, to which I would wiſh particularly to draw the attention of the reader, is, the mode by which the population is kept down to the level of this ſcanty ſupply. It cannot eſcape obſervation, that an inſufficient ſupply of food to any people, does not ſhew itſelf merely in the ſhape of famine, but in other more permanent forms of diſtreſs, and in generating certain cuſtoms, which operate ſometimes with greater force in the ſuppreſſion of a riſing population, than in its ſubſequent deſtruction.

It was generally remarked, that the American women were far from being prolific, their marriages ſeldom producing above two or three children [b]. This unfruitfulneſs has been attributed by ſome to a want of ardour in the men towards their women; a feature of character, which has been conſidered as peculiar to the American ſavage. It is not however peculiar to this race; but probably exiſts in a great degree among all barbarous nations, whoſe food is poor and inſufficient, and who live in a conſtant apprehenſion of being preſſed by famine, or by an enemy. Bruce frequently takes notice of it, particularly, in reference to the Galla and Shangalla, ſa-

[a] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 129.
[b] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 106. Burke's America, vol. i. p. 187. Charlevoix, Hiſt. de la Nouvelle France, tom. iii. p. 304. Lafitau, Mœurs des Sauvages, tom. i. p. 590. In the courſe of this chapter I often give the ſame references as Robertſon; but never, without having examined and verified them myſelf. Where I have not had an opportunity of doing this, I refer to Robertſon alone.

vage nations on the borders of Abyſſinia[a]; and Le Vaillant mentions the phlegmatic temperament of the Hottentots as the chief reaſon of their thin population[b]. It ſeems to be generated by the hardſhips and dangers of ſavage life, which take off the attention from the ſexual paſſion. And that theſe are the principal cauſes of it among the Americans, rather than any abſolute conſtitutional defect, appears probable, from its diminiſhing, nearly in proportion to the degree in which theſe cauſes are mitigated, or removed. In thoſe countries of America, where, from peculiar ſituation or further advantages in improvement, the hardſhips of ſavage life are leſs ſeverely felt, the paſſion between the ſexes becomes more ardent. Among ſome of the tribes ſeated on the banks of rivers well ſtored with fiſh, or others that inhabit a territory greatly abounding in game or much improved in agriculture, the women are more valued and admired; and as hardly any reſtraint is impoſed on the gratification of deſire, the diſſolution of their manners is ſometimes exceſſive[c].

If we do not then conſider this apathy of the Americans as a natural defect in the bodily frame, but merely as a general coldneſs, and an infrequency of the calls of the ſexual appetite, we ſhall not be inclined to give much weight to it as affecting the number of children to a marriage; but ſhall be diſpoſed to look for the cauſe of this unfruitfulneſs in the condition and cuſtoms of the women in a ſavage ſtate. And here we ſhall find reaſons amply ſufficient to account for the fact in queſtion.

It is finely obſerved by Dr. Robertſon, that "Whether man "has been improved by the progreſs of arts and civilization, is a

[a] Travels to diſcover the Source of the Nile, vol. ii. p. 223. 559.

[b] Voyage dans l'Interieur de l'Afrique, tom. i. p. 12, 13.

[c] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 71. Lettres Edif. & Curieuſes, tom vi. p. 48. 322, 330. tom. vii. p. 20. 12mo. edit. 1780. Charlevoix, tom. iii. p. 303, 423. Hennepin, Mœurs des Sauvages, p. 37.

"queſtion, which in the wantonneſs of diſputation has been agitated "among philoſophers. That women are indebted to the refine-"ment of poliſhed manners for a happy change in their ſtate, "is a point, which can admit of no doubt[a]." In every part of the world, one of the moſt general characteriſtics of the ſavage is to deſpiſe and degrade the female ſex[b]. Among moſt of the tribes in America their condition is ſo peculiarly grievous, that ſervitude is a name too mild to deſcribe their wretched ſtate. A wife is no better than a beaſt of burthen. While the man paſſes his days in idleneſs or amuſement, the woman is condemned to inceſſant toil. Taſks are impoſed upon her without mercy, and ſervices are received without complacence or gratitude[c]. There are ſome diſtricts in America where this ſtate of degradation has been ſo ſeverely felt, that mothers have deſtroyed their female infants, to deliver them at once from a life in which they were doomed to ſuch a miſerable ſlavery[d].

This ſtate of depreſſion and conſtant labour added to the unavoidable hardſhips of ſavage life muſt be very unfavourable to the office of child-bearing[e]; and the libertinage which generally prevails among the women before marriage, with the habit of procuring abortions, in which they rarely fail, muſt neceſſarily render them more unfit for bearing children afterwards[f]. One of the miſſionaries ſpeaking of the common practice among the Natchez of changing their wives, adds, unleſs they have children by them, a

[a] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 103.

[b] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 103. Lettres Edif. paſſim. Charlevoix Hiſt. Nouv. Fr. tom. iii. p. 287. Voy. de Perouſe, c. ix. p. 402. 4to. London.

[c] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 105. Lettres Edif. tom. vi. p. 329. Major Roger's North America, p. 211. Creuxii Hiſt. Canad. p. 57.

[d] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 106. Raynal, Hiſt. des Indes, tom. iv. c. vii. p. 110. 8vo. 10 vol. 1795.

[e] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 106. Creuxii Hiſt. Canad. p. 57. Laſitau, tom. i. p. 590.

[f] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 72. Ellis's Voyage, p. 198. Burke's America, vol. i. p. 187.

proof, that theſe marriages were in general unfruitful, which may be accounted for from the libertine lives of the women before wedlock, which he had previouſly noticed [a].

The cauſes, that Charlevoix aſſigns, of the ſterility of the American women, are, the ſuckling their children for ſeveral years, during which time they do not cohabit with their huſbands; the exceſſive labour to which they are always condemned in whatever ſituation they may be; and the cuſtom eſtabliſhed in many places of permitting the young women to proſtitute themſelves before marriage. Added to this, he ſays, the extreme miſery to which theſe people are ſometimes reduced, takes from them all deſire of having children [b]. Among ſome of the ruder tribes it is a maxim not to burden themſelves with rearing more than two of their offspring [c]. When twins are born, one of them is commonly abandoned, as the mother cannot rear them both; and when a mother dies during the period of ſuckling her child, no chance of preſerving its life remains, and, as in New Holland, it is buried in the ſame grave with the breaſt that nouriſhed it [d].

As the parents are frequently expoſed to want themſelves, the difficulty of ſupporting their children becomes at times ſo great, that they are reduced to the neceſſity of abandoning or deſtroying them [e]. Deformed children are very generally expoſed; and among ſome of the tribes in South America, the children of mothers who do not bear their labours well, experience a ſimilar fate, from a fear that the offſpring may inherit the weakneſs of its parent [f].

To cauſes of this nature we muſt aſcribe the remarkable exemption of the Americans from deformities of make. Even when a mother endeavours to rear all her children without diſtinction, ſo great

[a] Lettres Edif. tom. vii. p. 20. 22. [b] Charlevoix, N. Fr. tom. iii. p. 304. [c] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 107. Lettres Edif. tom. ix. p. 140. [d] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 107. Lettres Edif. tom. viii. p. 86. [e] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 108. [f] Laſitau, Mœurs des Sauv. tom. i. p. 592.

a proportion

a proportion of the whole number periſhes under the rigorous treatment that muſt be their lot in the ſavage ſtate, that probably none of thoſe who labour under any original weakneſs or infirmity can attain the age of manhood. If they be not cut off as ſoon as they are born, they cannot long protract their lives under the ſevere diſcipline that awaits them [a]. In the Spaniſh provinces, where the Indians do not live ſo laborious a life, and are prevented from deſtroying their children, great numbers of them are deformed, dwarfiſh, mutilated, blind, and deaf [b].

Polygamy ſeems to have been generally allowed among the Americans, but the privilege was ſeldom uſed, except by the Caciques and chiefs, and now and then by others in ſome of the fertile provinces of the South, where ſubſiſtence was more eaſily procured. The difficulty of ſupporting a family confined the maſs of the people to one wife [c]; and this difficulty was ſo generally known and acknowledged, that fathers, before they conſented to give their daughters in marriage, required unequivocal proofs in the ſuitor of his ſkill in hunting, and his conſequent ability to ſupport a wife and children [d]. The women, it is ſaid, do not marry early [e]; and this ſeems to be confirmed by the libertinage among them before marriage, ſo frequently taken notice of by the miſſionaries and other writers [f].

The cuſtoms above enumerated, which appear to have been generated principally by the experience of the difficulties attending the rearing of a family, combined with the great proportion of children that muſt neceſſarily periſh under the hardſhips of ſavage life, in ſpite

[a] Charlevoix, tom. iii. p. 303. Raynal, Hiſt. des Indes, tom. viii. l. xv. p. 22. [b] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 73. Voyage d'Ulloa, tom. i. p. 232. [c] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 102. Lettres Edif. tom. viii. p. 87. [d] Lettres Edif. tom. ix. p. 364. Robertſon, b. iv. p. 115. [e] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 107. [f] Lettres Edif. paſſim. Voyage d'Ulloa, tom. i. p. 343. Burke's America, vol. i. p. 187. Charlevoix, tom. iii. p. 303, 304.

of

of the beſt efforts of their parents to ſave them [a], muſt, without doubt, moſt powerfully repreſs the riſing generation.

When the young ſavage, by a fortunate train of circumſtances, has paſſed ſafely through the perils of his childhood, other dangers ſcarcely leſs formidable await him on his approach to manhood. The diſeaſes to which man is ſubject in the ſavage ſtate, though fewer in number, are more violent and fatal than thoſe which prevail in civilized ſociety. As ſavages are wonderfully improvident, and their means of ſubſiſtence always precarious, they often paſs from the extreme of want to exuberant plenty, according to the viciſſitudes of fortune in the chace, or to the variety in the productions of the ſeaſons [b]. Their inconſiderate gluttony in the one caſe, and their ſevere abſtinence in the other, are equally prejudicial to the human conſtitution; and their vigour is accordingly at ſome ſeaſons impaired by want, and at others by a ſuperfluity of groſs aliment, and the diſorders ariſing from indigeſtions [c]. Theſe, which may be conſidered as the unavoidable conſequence of their mode of living, cut off conſiderable numbers in the prime of life. They are likewiſe extremely ſubject to conſumptions, to pleuretic, aſthmatic, and paralytic diſorders, brought on by the immoderate hardſhips and fatigues which they endure in hunting and war, and by the inclemency of the ſeaſons to which they are continually expoſed [d].

The miſſionaries ſpeak of the Indians in South America as ſubject to perpetual diſeaſes for which they know no remedy [e]. Ignorant of the uſe of the moſt ſimple herbs, or of any change in their groſs diet, they die of theſe diſeaſes in great numbers. The

[a] Creuxius ſays, that ſcarcely one in thirty reach manhood. (Hiſt. Canad. p. 57); but this muſt be a great exaggeration. [b] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 85. [c] Charlevoix, tom. iii. p. 302, 303. [d] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 86. Charlevoix, tom. iii. p. 364. Lafitau, tom. ii. p. 360, 361. [e] Lettres Edif. tom. viii. p. 83.

jeſuit

jeſuit Fauque ſays, that, in all the different excurſions which he had made, he ſcarcely found a ſingle individual of an advanced age [a]. Robertſon determines the period of human life to be ſhorter among ſavages than in well-regulated and induſtrious communities [b]. Raynal, notwithſtanding his frequent declarations in favour of ſavage life, ſays of the Indians of Canada, that few are ſo long lived as our people, whoſe manner of living is more uniform and tranquil [c]. And Cook and Perouſe confirm theſe opinions in the remarks which they make on ſome of the inhabitants of the northweſt coaſt of America [d].

In the vaſt plains of South America, a burning ſun operating on the extenſive ſwamps and the inundations that ſucceed the rainy ſeaſon, ſometimes generates dreadful epidemics. The miſſionaries ſpeak of contagious diſtempers as frequent among the Indians, and occaſioning at times a great mortality in their villages [e]. The ſmall-pox every where makes great ravages, as, from want of care, and from confined habitations, very few that are attacked recover from it [f]. The Indians of Paraguay are ſaid to be extremely ſubject to contagious diſtempers, notwithſtanding the care and attentions of the Jeſuits. The ſmall-pox and malignant fevers, which, from the ravages they make, are called plagues, frequently deſolate theſe flouriſhing miſſions, and, according to Ulloa, are the cauſe that they had not increaſed in proportion to the time of their eſtabliſhment, and the profound peace which they had enjoyed [g].

Theſe epidemics are not confined to the ſouth. They are mentioned as if they were not uncommon among the more northern nations [h]; and, in a late voyage to the northweſt coaſt of America, captain Vancouver gives an account of a moſt extraordinary

[a] Lettres Edif. tom. vii. p. 317. et ſeq. [b] b. iv. p. 86. [c] Raynal, b. xv. p. 23. [d] Cook, third Voy. vol. iii. ch. ii. p. 520. Voy. de Perouſe, ch. ix. [e] Lettres Edif. tom. viii. p. 79. 339. tom. ix. p. 125. [f] Voyage d'Ulloa, tom. i. p. 349. [g] Id. tom. i. p. 549. [h] Lettres Edif. tom. vi. p. 335.

deſolation

deſolation apparently produced by ſome diſtemper of this kind. From New Dungeneſs he traverſed a hundred and fifty miles of the coaſt without ſeeing the ſame number of inhabitants. Deſerted villages were frequent, each of which was large enough to contain all the ſcattered ſavages that had been obſerved in that extent of country. In the different excurſions which he made, particularly about Port Diſcovery, the ſkulls, limbs, ribs, and backbones, or ſome other veſtiges of the human body, were ſcattered promiſcuouſly in great numbers; and, as no warlike ſcars were obſerved on the bodies of the remaining Indians, and no particular ſigns of fear and ſuſpicion, the moſt probable conjecture ſeems to be, that this depopulation muſt have been occaſioned by peſtilential diſeaſe [a]. The ſmall-pox appears to be common and fatal among the Indians on this coaſt. Its indelible marks were obſerved on many, and ſeveral had loſt the ſight of one eye from it [b].

In general, it may be remarked of ſavages, that, from their extreme ignorance, the dirt of their perſons, and the cloſeneſs and filth of their cabins [c], they loſe the advantage which uſually attends a thinly peopled country, that, of being more exempt from peſtilential diſeaſes, than thoſe which are fully inhabited. In ſome parts of America the houſes are built for the reception of many different families, and fourſcore or a hundred people are crowded together under the ſame roof. When the families live ſeparately, the huts are extremely ſmall, cloſe, and wretched, without windows, and with the doors ſo low, that it is neceſſary to creep on the hands and knees to enter them [d]. On the northweſt coaſt of America, the houſes are in general of the large kind; and Meares deſcribes one of moſt extraordinary dimenſions belonging to a chief near Nootka

[a] Vancouver's Voy. vol. i. b. ii. c. v. p. 256. [b] Id. c. iv. p. 242.

[c] Charlevoix ſpeaks in the ſtrongeſt terms of the extreme filth and ſtench of the American cabins, "On ne peut entrer dans leur cabanes qu'on ne ſoit impeſté;" and the dirt of their meals, he ſays, "vous feroit horreur." Vol. iii. p. 338.

[d] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 182. Voyage d' Ulloa, tom. i. p. 340.

Sound,

Sound, in which eight hundred perſons eat, ſat, and ſlept [a]. All voyagers agree with reſpect to the filth of the habitations, and the perſonal naſtineſs of the people on this coaſt [b]. Captain Cook deſcribes them as ſwarming with vermin, which they pick off and eat [c]; and the naſtineſs and ſtench of their houſes, he ſays, is equal to their confuſion [d]. Perouſe declares that their cabins have a naſtineſs and ſtench, to which the den of no known animal in the world can be compared [e].

Under ſuch circumſtances, it may be eaſily imagined what a dreadful havoc an epidemic muſt make, when once it appears among them; and it does not ſeem improbable, that the degree of filth deſcribed ſhould generate diſtempers of this nature, as the air of their houſes cannot be much purer than the atmoſphere of the moſt crowded cities.

Thoſe who eſcape the dangers of infancy and of diſeaſe are conſtantly expoſed to the chances of war; and notwithſtanding the extreme caution of the Americans in conducting their military operations, yet as they ſeldom enjoy any interval of peace, the waſte of their numbers in war is conſiderable [f]. The rudeſt of the American nations are well acquainted with the rights of each community to its own domains [g]. And as it is of the utmoſt conſequence to prevent others from deſtroying the game in their hunting grounds, they guard this national property with a jealous attention. Innumerable ſubjects of diſpute neceſſarily ariſe. The neighbouring nations live in a perpetual ſtate of hoſtility with each other [h]. The very act of increaſing in one tribe, muſt be an act of aggreſſion on its neighbours, as a larger range of territory will be neceſſary to ſupport its increaſed numbers.

[a] Meares's Voyage, ch. xii. p. 138. [b] Id. ch. xxiii. p. 252. Vancouver's Voy. vol. iii. b. vi. c. i. p. 313. [c] Cook's 3d Voyage, vol. ii. p. 305. [d] c. iii. p. 316.

[e] Voy. de Perouſe, ch. ix. p. 403. [f] Charlevoix, Hiſt. N. Fr. tom. iii. 202, 203, 429. [g] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 147. [h] Ibid. Lettres Edif. tom. viii. p. 40, 26, & paſſim. Cook's 3d Voy. vol. ii. p. 324. Meares's Voy. ch. xxiv. p. 267.

The conteſt will in this caſe naturally continue, either till the equilibrium is reſtored by mutual loſſes, or till the weaker party is exterminated, or driven from its country. When the irruption of an enemy deſolates their cultivated lands, or drives them from their hunting grounds, as they have ſeldom any portable ſtores, they are generally reduced to extreme want. All the people of the diſtrict invaded are frequently forced to take refuge in woods or mountains which can afford them no ſubſiſtence, and where many of them periſh [a]. In ſuch a flight each conſults alone his individual ſafety. Children deſert their parents, and parents conſider their children as ſtrangers. The ties of nature are no longer binding. A father will ſell his ſon for a knife or a hatchet [b]. Famine, and diſtreſſes of every kind, complete the deſtruction of thoſe whom the ſword had ſpared; and in this manner whole tribes are frequently extinguiſhed [c].

Such a ſtate of things has powerfully contributed to generate that ferocious ſpirit of warfare obſervable among ſavages in general, and moſt particularly among the Americans. Their object in battle is not conqueſt, but deſtruction [d]. The life of the victor depends on the death of his enemy; and, in the rancour and fell ſpirit of revenge with which he purſues him, he ſeems conſtantly to bear in mind the diſtreſſes that would be conſequent on defeat. Among the Iroquois, the phraſe by which they expreſs their reſolution of making war againſt an enemy, is, "Let us go and eat that nation." If they ſolicit the aid of a neighbouring tribe, they invite it to eat broth made of the fleſh of their enemies [e]. Among the Abnakis, when a body of their warriors enters an enemy's territory, it is generally divided into different parties of thirty or forty; and the chief ſays to each, to you is given ſuch a hamlet to eat, to you ſuch a village [f], &c. Theſe expreſſions

[a] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 172. Charlevoix, N. Fr. tom. iii. p. 203. [b] Lettres Edif. tom. viii. p. 346. [c] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 172. Account of N. America, by Major Rogers, p. 250. [d] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 150. [e] Id. p. 164.
[f] Lettres Edif. tom. vi. p. 205.

preſſions remain in the language of ſome of the tribes, in which the cuſtom of eating their priſoners taken in war no longer exiſts. Cannibaliſm, however, undoubtedly prevailed in many parts of the new world [a]; and, contrary to the opinion of Dr. Robertſon, I cannot but think that it muſt have had its origin in extreme want, though the cuſtom might afterwards be continued from other motives. It ſeems to be a worſe compliment to human nature, and to the ſavage ſtate, to attribute this horrid repaſt to malignant paſſions, without the goad of neceſſity, rather than to the great law of ſelf-preſervation, which has, at times, overcome every other feeling even among the moſt humane and civilized people. When once it had prevailed, though only occaſionally, from this cauſe, the fear that a ſavage might feel of becoming a repaſt to his enemies, might eaſily raiſe the paſſion of rancour and revenge to ſo high a pitch, as to urge him to treat his priſoners in this way, though not prompted at the time by hunger.

The miſſionaries ſpeak of ſeveral nations, which appeared to uſe human fleſh whenever they could obtain it, as they would the fleſh of any of the rarer animals [b]. Theſe accounts may perhaps be exaggerated, though they ſeem to be confirmed, in a great degree, by the late voyages to the northweſt coaſt of America, and by Captain Cook's deſcription of the ſtate of ſociety in the ſouthern iſland of New Zealand [c]. The people of Nootka Sound appear to be cannibals [d], and the chief of the diſtrict Maquinna is ſaid to be ſo addicted to this horrid banquet, that, in cold blood, he kills a ſlave every moon to gratify his unnatural appetite [e].

The predominant principle of ſelf-preſervation, connected in the breaſt of the ſavage, moſt intimately, with the ſafety and power of

[a] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 164. [b] Lettres Edif. tom. viii. p. 105, 271. tom. vi. p. 266.
[c] Cautious as Captain Cook always is, he ſays of the New Zealanders, "it was but "too evident that they have a great liking for this kind of food." Second Voy. vol. i. p. 246. And in the laſt voyage, ſpeaking of their perpetual hoſtilities, he ſays, "and per-"haps the deſire of a good meal may be no ſmall incitement." Vol. i. p. 137.
[d] Cook's Third Voy. vol. ii. p. 271. [e] Meares's Voy. ch. xxiii. p. 255.

the community to which he belongs, prevents the admiſſion of any of thoſe ideas of honour and gallantry in war, which prevail among more civilized nations. To fly from an adverſary that is on his guard, and to avoid a conteſt where he cannot contend without riſk to his own perſon, and conſequently to his community, is the point of honour with the American. The odds of ten to one are neceſſary to warrant an attack on a perſon who is armed and prepared to reſiſt, and even then, each is afraid of being the firſt to advance [a]. The great object of the moſt renowned warrior, is, by every art of cunning and deceit, by every mode of ſtratagem and ſurprize, that his invention can ſuggeſt, to weaken and deſtroy the tribes of his enemies with the leaſt poſſible loſs to his own. To meet an enemy on equal terms is regarded as extreme folly. To fall in battle, inſtead of being reckoned an honourable death [b], is a misfortune, which ſubjects the memory of a warrior to the imputation of raſhneſs and imprudence. But to lie in wait day after day, till he can ruſh upon his prey, when moſt ſecure, and leaſt able to reſiſt him; to ſteal in the dead of night upon his enemies, ſet fire to their huts, and maſſacre the inhabitants, as they fly naked and defenceleſs from the flames [c], are deeds of glory, which will be of deathleſs memory in the breaſts of his grateful countrymen.

This mode of warfare is evidently generated by a conſciouſneſs of the difficulties attending the rearing of new citizens under the hardſhips and dangers of ſavage life. And theſe powerful cauſes of deſtruction may, in ſome inſtances, be ſo great, as to keep down the population even conſiderably below the means of ſubſiſtence; but the fear that the Americans betray of any diminution of their ſociety, and their apparent wiſh to increaſe it, are no proofs that this is generally the caſe. The country could not probably ſupport the addition that is coveted in each ſociety; but an acceſſion of

[a] Lettres Edif. tom. vi. p. 360. [b] Charlevoix, N. Fr. tom. iii. p. 376.
[c] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 155. Lettres Edif. tom. vi. p. 182, 360.

ſtrength

ſtrength to one tribe, opens to it new ſources of ſubſiſtence in the comparative weakneſs of its adverſaries; and, on the contrary, a diminution of its numbers, ſo far from giving greater plenty to the remaining members, ſubjects them to extirpation or famine from the irruptions of their ſtronger neighbours.

The Chiriguanes, originally only a ſmall part of the tribe of Guaranis, left their native country in Paraguay, and ſettled in the mountains towards Peru. They found ſufficient ſubſiſtence in their new country, increaſed rapidly, attacked their neighbours, and, by ſuperior valour, or ſuperior fortune, gradually exterminated them, and took poſſeſſion of their lands, occupying a great extent of country; and having increaſed, in the courſe of ſome years, from three or four thouſand, to thirty thouſand [a], while the tribes of their weaker neighbours were daily thinned by famine and the ſword.

Such inſtances prove the rapid increaſe, even of the Americans, under favourable circumſtances, and ſufficiently account for the fear in every tribe of diminiſhing its numbers, and the frequent wiſh to increaſe them [b], without ſuppoſing a ſuperabundance of food in the territory actually poſſeſſed.

That the increaſe of the Americans is regulated more by the means of ſubſiſtence, than by any of the other cauſes that have been mentioned as affecting their population; or rather, perhaps, I ſhould ſay, that theſe cauſes themſelves are principally regulated by the plenty or ſcarcity of ſubſiſtence, is ſufficiently evinced, from the greater frequency of the tribes, and the greater numbers in each, throughout all thoſe parts of the country, where, from the vicinity of lakes or rivers, the ſuperior fertility of the ſoil, or further advances in improvement, food becomes more abundant. In the interior of the provinces bordering on the Oronoco, ſeveral hundred miles may be traverſed in

[a] Lettres Edif. tom. viii. p. 243. Les Chiriguanes multiplierent prodigieuſement, et en aſſez peu d'années leur nombre monta a trente mille ames.
[b] Laſitau, tom. ii. p. 163.

different

different directions, without finding a ſingle hut, or obſerving the footſteps of a ſingle creature. In ſome parts of North America, where the climate is more rigorous, and the ſoil leſs fertile, the deſolation is ſtill greater. Vaſt tracts of ſome hundred leagues have been croſſed through uninhabited plains and foreſts[a]. The miſſionaries ſpeak of journies of twelve days without meeting with a ſingle ſoul[b], and of immenſe tracts of country, in which ſcarcely three or four ſcattered villages were to be found[c]. Some of theſe deſerts did not furniſh game[d], and were therefore entirely deſolate; others, which were to a certain degree ſtocked with it, were traverſed in the hunting ſeaſons, by parties, who encamped, and remained in different ſpots, according to the ſucceſs they met with, and were therefore really inhabited in proportion to the quantity of ſubſiſtence which they yielded[e].

Other diſtricts of America are deſcribed as comparatively fully peopled; ſuch as the borders of the great northern lakes, the ſhores of the Miſſiſippi, Louiſiana, and many provinces in South America. The villages here were large, and near each other, in proportion to the ſuperior fruitfulneſs of the territory in game and fiſh, and the advances made by the inhabitants in agriculture[f]. The Indians of the great and populous empires of Mexico and Peru, ſprung undoubtedly from the ſame ſtock, and originally poſſeſſed the ſame cuſtoms, as their ruder brethren; but the moment that, by a fortunate train of circumſtances, they were led to improve and extend their agriculture, a conſiderable population rapidly followed, in ſpite of the apathy of the men, or the deſtructive habits of the women. Theſe habits would, indeed, in a great meaſure yield to the change of circumſtances; and the ſubſtitution of a more quiet and ſedentary life, for a life of per-

[a] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 129, 130. [b] Lettres Edif. tom. vi. p. 357.
[c] Lettres Edif. tom. vi. p. 321. [d] Lettres Edif. tom. ix. p. 145.
[e] Lettres Edif. tom. vi. p. 66, 81, 345. tom. ix. p. 145. [f] Lettres Edif. tom. ix. p. 90, 142. Robertſon, b. iv. p. 141.

petual

petual wandering and hardſhip, would immediately render the women more fruitful, and enable them at the ſame time to attend to the wants of a larger family.

In a general view of the American continent, as deſcribed by hiſtorians, the population ſeems to have been ſpread over the ſurface very nearly in proportion to the quantity of food, which the inhabitants of the different parts, in the actual ſtate of their induſtry and improvement, could obtain; and that, with few exceptions, it preſſed hard againſt this limit, rather than fell ſhort of it, appears, from the frequent recurrence of diſtreſs for want of food in all parts of America.

Remarkable inſtances occur, according to Dr. Robertſon, of the calamities which rude nations ſuffer by famine. As one of them, he mentions an account given by Alvar Nugnez Cabeca de Vaca, one of the Spaniſh adventurers, who reſided almoſt nine years among the ſavages of Florida. He deſcribes them as unacquainted with every ſpecies of agriculture, and living chiefly upon the roots of different plants, which they procure with great difficulty, wandering from place to place in ſearch of them. Sometimes they kill game, ſometimes they catch fiſh, but in ſuch ſmall quantities, that their hunger is ſo extreme, as to compel them to eat ſpiders, the eggs of ants, worms, lizards, ſerpents, a kind of unctuous earth, and, I am perſuaded, he ſays, that, if in this country there were any ſtones, they would ſwallow them. They preſerve the bones of fiſhes and ſerpents, which they grind into powder and eat. The only ſeaſon when they do not ſuffer much from famine, is when a certain fruit like the opuntia, or prickly-pear, is ripe; but they are ſometimes obliged to travel far from their uſual place of reſidence in order to find it. In another place, he obſerves, that they are frequently reduced to paſs two or three days without food[a].

Ellis, in his voyage to Hudſon's Bay, feelingly deſcribes the ſuffer-

[a] Robertſon, note 28. to p. 117. b. iv.

ings

ings of the Indians in that neighbourhood from extreme want. Having mentioned the ſeverity of the climate, he ſays, "Great as theſe "hardſhips are which reſult from the rigour of the cold, yet it may "juſtly be affirmed, that they are much inferior to thoſe which they "feel from the ſcarcity of proviſions, and the difficulty they are "under of procuring them. A ſtory which is related at the facto-"ries, and known to be true, will ſufficiently prove this, and give the "compaſſionate reader a juſt idea of the miſeries to which theſe un-"happy people are expoſed." He then gives an account of a poor Indian and his wife, who, on the failure of game, having eat up all the ſkins which they wore as clothing, were reduced to the dreadful extremity of ſupporting themſelves on the fleſh of two of their children [a]. In another place he ſays, "It has ſometimes happened, that "the Indians who come in ſummer to trade at the factories, miſſing "the ſuccours they expected, have been obliged to ſinge off the hair "from thouſands of beaver ſkins in order to feed upon the leather [b]."

The Abbé Raynal, who is continually reaſoning moſt inconſiſtently in his compariſons of ſavage and civilized life, though in one place he ſpeaks of the ſavage as morally ſure of a competent ſubſiſtence, yet in his account of the nations of Canada, he ſays, that though they lived in a country abounding in game and fiſh, yet in ſome ſeaſons, and ſometimes for whole years, this reſource failed them; and famine then occaſioned a great deſtruction among a people who were at too great a diſtance to aſſiſt each other [c].

Charlevoix, ſpeaking of the inconveniences and diſtreſſes to which the miſſionaries were ſubject, obſerves, that not unfrequently the evils which he had been deſcribing are effaced by a greater, in compariſon of which all the others are nothing. This is famine. It is true, ſays he, that the ſavages can bear hunger with as much patience, as they ſhew careleſneſs in providing againſt it; but they

[a] p. 196. [b] p. 194. [c] Raynal, Hiſt. des Indes, tom. viii. l. xv. p. 22.

are ſometimes reduced to extremities beyond their power to ſupport [a].

It is the general cuſtom among moſt of the American nations, even thoſe which have made ſome progreſs in agriculture, to diſperſe themſelves in the woods at certain ſeaſons of the year, and to ſubſiſt for ſome months on the produce of the chace, as a principal part of their annual ſupplies [b]. To remain in their villages, expoſes them to certain famine [c]; and in the woods they are not always ſure to eſcape it. The moſt able hunters ſometimes fail of ſucceſs, even where there is no deficiency of game [d]; and in their foreſts, on the failure of this reſource, the hunter or the traveller is expoſed to the moſt cruel want [e]. The Indians, in their hunting excurſions, are ſometimes reduced to paſs three or four days without food [f]; and a miſſionary relates an account of ſome Iroquois who, on one of theſe occaſions, having ſupported themſelves as long as they could, by eating the ſkins which they had with them, their ſhoes, and the bark of trees, at length, in deſpair, ſacrificed ſome of the party to ſupport the reſt. Out of eleven, five only returned alive [g].

The Indians, in many parts of South America, live in extreme want [h], and are ſometimes deſtroyed by abſolute famines [i]. The iſlands, rich as they appeared to be, were peopled fully up to the level of their produce. If a few Spaniards ſettled in any diſtrict, ſuch a ſmall addition of ſupernumerary mouths ſoon occaſioned a ſevere dearth of proviſions [k]. The flouriſhing Mexican empire was in the ſame ſtate in this reſpect; and Cortez often found the greateſt difficulty in procuring ſubſiſtence for his ſmall body of ſoldiers [l]. Even the Miſſions of Paraguay, with all the care and foreſight of the Je-

[a] Hiſt. N. Fr. tom. iii. p. 338. [b] Lettres Edif. tom. vi. p. 66, 81, 345. ix. 145. [c] Lettres Edif. tom. vi. 82, 196, 197, 215. ix. 151. [d] Charlevoix, N. Fr. tom. iii. p. 201. Henneſſin, Mœurs des Sauv. p. 78. [e] Lettres Edif. tom. vi. p. 167, 220. [f] Id. tom. vi. p. 33. [g] Id. tom. vi. p. 71. [h] Id. tom. vii. p. 383. ix. 140. [i] Id. tom. viii. p. 79. [k] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 121. Burke's America, vol. i. p. 30. [l] Robertſon, b. viii. p. 212.

ſuits, and notwithſtanding that their population was kept down by frequent epidemicks, were by no means totally exempt from the preſſure of want. The Indians of the Miſſion of St. Michael are mentioned as having at one time increaſed ſo much, that the lands, capable of cultivation in their neighbourhood, produced only half of the grain neceſſary for their ſupport[a]. Long droughts often deſtroyed their cattle[b], and occaſioned a failure of their crops; and on theſe occaſions ſome of the Miſſions were reduced to the moſt extreme indigence, and would have periſhed from famine, but for the aſſiſtance of their neighbours[c].

The late voyages to the northweſt coaſt of America, confirm theſe accounts of the frequent preſſure of want in ſavage life, and ſhew the uncertainty of the reſource of fiſhing, which ſeems to afford, in general, the moſt plentiful harveſt of food that is furniſhed by unaſſiſted nature. The ſea on the coaſt near Nootka Sound is ſeldom or never ſo much frozen as to prevent the inhabitants from having acceſs to it. Yet from the very great precautions they uſe in laying up ſtores for the winter, and their attention to prepare and preſerve whatever food is capable of it, for the colder ſeaſons, it is evident that the ſea at theſe times yields no fiſh; and it appears, that they often undergo very great hardſhips from want of proviſions in the cold months[d]. During a Mr. Maccay's ſtay at Nootka Sound, from 1786 to 1787, the length and ſeverity of the winter occaſioned a famine. The ſtock of dried fiſh was expended, and no freſh ſupplies of any kind were to be caught, ſo that the natives were obliged to ſubmit to a fixed allowance, and the chiefs brought every day to our countrymen the ſtated meal of ſeven dried herrings' heads. Mr. Meares ſays, that the peruſal of this gentleman's journal would ſhock any mind tinctured with humanity[e].

Captain Vancouver mentions ſome of the people to the north of

[a] Lettres Edif. tom. ix. p. 381. [b] Id. tom. ix. p. 191. [c] Id. tom. ix. p. 206, 380. [d] Meares's Voy. ch. xxiv. p. 266. [e] Id. ch. xi. p. 132.

Nootka

Nootka Sound, as living very miſerably on a paſte made of the inner bark of the pine tree, and cockles[a]. In one of the boat excurſions, a party of Indians was met with who had ſome halibut, but, though very high prices were offered, they could not be induced to part with any. This, as Captain Vancouver obſerves, was ſingular, and indicated a very ſcanty ſupply[b]. At Nootka Sound in the year 1794, fiſh had become very ſcarce, and bore an exorbitant price; as, either from the badneſs of the ſeaſon, or from neglect, the inhabitants had experienced the greateſt diſtreſs for want of proviſions during the winter[c].

Perouſe deſcribes the Indians in the neighbourhood of Port Francois, as living during the ſummer in the greateſt abundance by fiſhing, but expoſed in the winter to periſh from want[d].

It is not, therefore, as Lord Kaimes imagines, that the American tribes have never increaſed ſufficiently to render the paſtoral or agricultural ſtate neceſſary to them[e]; but, from ſome cauſe or other, they have not adopted in any great degree theſe more plentiful modes of procuring ſubſiſtence, and therefore, cannot have increaſed ſo as to become populous. If hunger alone could have prompted the ſavage tribes of America to ſuch a change in their habits, I do not conceive that there would have been a ſingle nation of hunters and fiſhers remaining; but it is evident, that ſome fortunate train of circumſtances, in addition to this ſtimulus, is neceſſary for this purpoſe; and it is undoubtedly probable, that theſe arts of obtaining food, will be firſt invented and improved in thoſe ſpots that are beſt ſuited to them, and where the natural fertility of the ſituation, by allowing a greater number of people to ſubſiſt together, would give the faireſt chance to the inventive powers of the human mind.

Among moſt of the American tribes that we have been conſidering, ſo great a degree of equality prevailed, that all the members of

[a] Vancouver's Voy. vol. ii. b. ii. c. ii. p. 273. [b] Id. p. 282.
[c] Id. vol. iii. b. vi. c. i. p. 304. [d] Voy. de Perouſe, ch. ix. p. 400.
[e] Sketches of the Hiſt. of Man. vol. i. p. 99, 105. 8vo. 2d edit.

each community would be nearly equal ſharers in the general hardſhips of ſavage life, and in the preſſure of occaſional famines. But in many of the more ſouthern nations, as in Bagota [a], and among the Natchez [b], and particularly in Mexico and Peru, where a great diſtinction of ranks prevailed, and the lower claſſes were in a ſtate of abſolute ſervitude [c], it is evident that, on occaſion of any failure of ſubſiſtence, theſe would be the principal ſufferers, and the poſitive checks to population would act almoſt excluſively on this part of the community.

The very extraordinary depopulation that has taken place among the American Indians, may appear to ſome to contradict the theory which is intended to be eſtabliſhed; but it will be found that the cauſes of this rapid diminution may all be reſolved into the three great checks to population that have been ſtated; and it is not aſſerted, that theſe checks, operating from particular circumſtances with unuſual force, may not in ſome inſtances be more powerful even than the principle of increaſe.

The inſatiable fondneſs of the Indians for ſpirituous liquors [d], which, according to Charlevoix, is a rage that paſſes all expreſſion [e], by producing among them perpetual quarrels and conteſts, which often terminate fatally, by expoſing them to a new train of diſorders which their mode of life, unfits them to contend with, and, by deadening and deſtroying the generative faculty in its very ſource, may alone be conſidered as a vice adequate to produce the preſent depopulation. In addition to this, it ſhould be obſerved, that almoſt every where the connexion of the Indians with Europeans, has tended to break their ſpirit, to weaken or to give a wrong direction to their induſtry, and in conſequence to diminiſh the ſources of ſubſiſtence. In St. Domingo, the Indians neglected purpoſely to cultivate their lands in order to ſtarve out their cruel oppreſ-

[a] Robertſon, b. iv. p. 141. [b] Lettres Edif. tom. vii. p. 21. Robertſon, b. iv. p. 139. [c] Robertſon, b. vii. p. 190, 242. [d] Major Rogers's Account of North America, p. 210. [e] Charlevoix, tom. iii. p. 302.

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ſors [a]. In Peru and Chili, the forced induſtry of the natives was fatally directed to the digging into the bowels of the earth, inſtead of cultivating its ſurface; and among the northern nations, the extreme deſire to purchaſe European ſpirits, directed the induſtry of the greateſt part of them, almoſt excluſively, to the procuring of peltry for the purpoſe of this exchange [b], which would prevent their attention to the more fruitful ſources of ſubſiſtence, and at the ſame time tend rapidly to deſtroy the produce of the chace. The number of wild animals, in all the known parts of America, is probably even more diminiſhed than the number of people [c]. The attention to agriculture has every where ſlackened, rather than increaſed, as might at firſt have been expected, from European connexion. In no part of America, either North or South, do we hear of any of the Indian nations living in great plenty, in conſequence of their diminiſhed numbers. It may not, therefore, be very far from the truth, to ſay, that even now, in ſpite of all the powerful cauſes of deſtruction that have been mentioned, the average population of the American nations is, with few exceptions, on a level with the average quantity of food, which in the preſent ſtate of their induſtry they can obtain.

[a] Robertſon, b. ii. p. 185. Burke's America, vol. i. p. 300. [b] Charlevoix, N. Fr. tom. iii. p. 260. [c] The general introduction of fire-arms among the Indians, has probably greatly contributed to the diminution of the wild animals.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Of the Checks to Population in the Iſlands of the South Sea.

THE Abbé Raynal ſpeaking of the ancient ſtate of the Britiſh iſles, and of iſlanders in general, ſays of them: "It is among theſe "people that we trace the origin of that multitude of ſingular in- "ſtitutions that retard the progreſs of population. Anthropophagy, "the caſtration of males, the infibulation of females, late mar- "riages, the conſecration of virginity, the approbation of celibacy, "the puniſhments exerciſed againſt girls who become mothers at "too early an age[a]," &c. Theſe cuſtoms, cauſed by a ſuperabundance of population in iſlands, have been carried, he ſays, to the continents, where philoſophers of our days are ſtill employed to inveſtigate the reaſon of them. The Abbé does not ſeem to be aware, that a ſavage tribe in America, ſurrounded by enemies, or a civilized and populous nation, hemmed in by others in the ſame ſtate, is in many reſpects in a ſimilar ſituation. Though the barriers to a further increaſe of population be not ſo well defined, and ſo open to common obſervation, on continents, as on iſlands, yet they ſtill preſent obſtacles that are nearly as inſurmountable: and the emigrant, impatient of the diſtreſſes which he felt in his own country, is by no means ſecure of finding relief in another. There is probably no iſland yet known, the produce of which could not be further increaſed. This is all that can be ſaid of the whole earth. Both are peopled up to their actual produce. And the whole earth is in this reſpect like an iſland. But as the bounds to the

[a] Raynal, Hiſt. des Indes, vol. ii. liv. iii. p. 3. 10 vols. 8vo. 1795.

number

number of people on iſlands, particularly when they are of ſmall extent, are ſo narrow, and ſo diſtinctly marked, that every perſon muſt ſee and acknowlege them, an inquiry into the checks to population on thoſe of which we have the moſt authentic accounts may perhaps tend conſiderably to illuſtrate the preſent ſubject. The queſtion that is aſked in captain Cook's firſt voyage, with reſpect to the thinly ſcattered ſavages of New Holland, "By what means "the inhabitants of this country are reduced to ſuch a number as it "can ſubſiſt[a]?" may be aſked with equal propriety of the moſt populous iſlands in the South Sea, or of the beſt peopled countries in Europe and Aſia. The queſtion, applied generally, appears to me to be highly curious, and to lead to the elucidation of ſome of the moſt obſcure, yet important points, in the hiſtory of human ſociety. I cannot ſo clearly and conciſely deſcribe the preciſe aim of the firſt part of the preſent work, as by ſaying, that it is an endeavour to anſwer this queſtion ſo applied.

Of the large iſlands of New Guinea, New Britain, New Caledonia, and the New Hebrides, little is known with certainty. The ſtate of ſociety in them is probably very ſimilar to that which prevails among many of the ſavage nations of America. They appear to be inhabited by a number of different tribes who are engaged in frequent hoſtilities with each other. The chiefs have little authority; and private property being in conſequence inſecure, proviſions have been rarely found on them in abundance[b]. With the large iſland of New Zealand we are better acquainted; but not in a manner to give us a favourable impreſſion of the ſtate of ſociety among its inhabitants. The picture of it drawn by captain Cook in his three different voyages, contains ſome of the darkeſt ſhades that are any where to be met with in the hiſtory of human nature.

[a] Cook's Firſt Voyage, vol. iii. p. 240. 4to.

[b] See the different accounts of New Guinea and New Britain, in the *Hiſtoire des Navigations aux terres Auſtrales*; and of New Caledonia and the New Hebrides in Cook's Second Voyage, vol. ii. b. iii.

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The ſtate of perpetual hoſtility in which the different tribes of theſe people live with each other, ſeems to be even more ſtriking than among the ſavages of any part of America[a]; and their cuſtom of eating human fleſh, and even their reliſh for that kind of food, are eſtabliſhed beyond a poſſibility of doubt[b]. Captain Cook, who is by no means inclined to exaggerate the vices of ſavage life, ſays of the natives in the neighbourhood of Queen Charlotte's Sound, "If I "had followed the advice of all our pretended friends, I might "have extirpated the whole race; for the people of each hamlet "or village, by turns, applied to me to deſtroy the other. One "would have thought it almoſt impoſſible that ſo ſtriking a proof "of the divided ſtate in which theſe miſerable people live, could "have been aſſigned[c]." And in the ſame chapter further on, he ſays, "From my own obſervations, and the information of Tawei-"harooa, it appears to me, that the New Zealanders muſt live "under perpetual apprehenſions of being deſtroyed by each other; "there being few of their tribes that have not, as they think, "ſuſtained wrongs from ſome other tribes, which they are con-"tinually upon the watch to revenge. And perhaps the deſire of "a good meal may be no ſmall incitement.****Their method of "executing their horrible deſigns, is by ſtealing upon the ad-"verſe party in the night; and if they find them unguarded "(which, however, I believe is very ſeldom the caſe) they kill "every one indiſcriminately, not even ſparing the women and "children. When the maſſacre is completed, they either feaſt "and gorge themſelves on the ſpot, or carry off as many of the "dead bodies as they can, and devour them at home with acts of "brutality too ſhocking to be deſcribed.****To give quarter, or to "take priſoners, makes no part of the military law, ſo that the van-

[a] Cook's Firſt Voyage, vol. ii. p. 345. Second Voyage, vol i. p. 101. Third Voyage, vol. i. p. 161, &c. [b] Second Voyage, vol. i. p. 246. [c] Third Voyage, vol. i. p. 124.

"quiſhed can only ſave their lives by flight. This perpetual ſtate "of war, and deſtructive method of conducting it, operates ſo "ſtrongly in producing habitual circumſpection, that one hardly "ever finds a New Zealander off his guard, either by night or by "day[a]."

As theſe obſervations occur in the laſt voyage, in which, the errors of former accounts would have been corrected, and as a conſtant ſtate of warfare is here repreſented as prevailing to ſuch a degree, that it may be conſidered as the principal check to the population of New Zealand, little need be added on this ſubject. We are not informed whether any cuſtoms are practiſed by the women unfavourable to population. If ſuch be known, they are probably never reſorted to, except in times of great diſtreſs; as each tribe will naturally wiſh to increaſe the number of its members, in order to give itſelf greater power of attack and defence. But the vagabond life which the women of the ſouthern iſland lead, and the conſtant ſtate of alarm in which they live, being obliged to travel and work with arms in their hands[b], muſt undoubtedly be very unfavourable to geſtation, and tend greatly to prevent large families.

Yet, powerful as theſe checks to population are, it appears, from the recurrence of ſeaſons of ſcarcity, that they ſeldom repreſs the number of people below the average means of ſubſiſtence. "That "ſuch ſeaſons there are (Captain Cook ſays) our obſervations leave "us no room to doubt[c]." Fiſh is a principal part of their food, which, being only to be procured on the ſea coaſt, and at certain times[d], muſt always be conſidered as a precarious reſource. It muſt be extremely difficult to dry and preſerve any conſiderable ſtores in a ſtate of ſociety ſubject to ſuch conſtant alarms; particularly, as we may ſuppoſe, that the bays and creeks moſt abounding in fiſh would moſt frequently be the ſubject of obſtinate conteſt, to

[a] Cook's Third Voy. vol. i. p. 137. [b] Id. Second Voy. vol. i. p. 127. [c] Id. Firſt Voy. vol. iii. p. 66. [d] Id. p. 43.

people who were wandering in ſearch of food [a]. The vegetable productions are, the fern root, yams, clams, and potatoes [b]. The three laſt are raiſed by cultivation, and are ſeldom found on the ſouthern iſland, where agriculture is but little known [c]. On the occaſional failure of theſe ſcanty reſources from unfavourable ſeaſons, it may be imagined that the diſtreſs muſt be dreadful. At ſuch periods it does not ſeem improbable, that the deſire of a good meal ſhould give additional force to the deſire of revenge, and that they ſhould be "perpetually deſtroying each other by violence, as the only alter-"native of periſhing by hunger [d]."

If we turn our eyes from the thinly ſcattered inhabitants of New Zealand, to the crowded ſhores of Otaheite and the Society Iſlands, a different ſcene opens to our view. All apprehenſion of dearth ſeems at firſt ſight to be baniſhed from a country that is deſcribed to be fruitful as the garden of the Heſperides [e]. But this firſt impreſſion would be immediately corrected by a moment's reflection. Happineſs and plenty have always been conſidered as the moſt powerful cauſes of increaſe. In a delightful climate, where few diſeaſes are known, and the women are condemned to no ſevere fatigues, why ſhould not theſe cauſes operate with a force unparalleled in leſs favourable regions? Yet, if they did, where could the population find room and food in ſuch circumſcribed limits? If the numbers in Otaheite, not 40 leagues in circuit, ſurpriſed Captain Cook, when he calculated them at two hundred and four thouſand [f], where could they be diſpoſed of in a ſingle century, when they would amount to above three millions, ſuppoſing them to double their numbers every twenty-five years [g]. Each iſland of the

[a] Cook's Third Voy. vol. i. p. 157. [b] Id. Firſt Voy. vol. iii. p. 43.
[c] Id. Firſt Voy. vol. ii. p. 405. [d] Id. Firſt Voy. vol. iii. p. 45.
[e] Miſſionary Voy. Appendix, p. 347. [f] Cook's Second Voy. vol. i. p. 349.
[g] I feel very little doubt that this rate of increaſe is much ſlower than would really take place, ſuppoſing every check to be removed. If Otaheite, with its preſent produce,

the group would be in a ſimilar ſituation. The removal from one to another, would be a change of place, but not a change of the ſpecies of diſtreſs. Effectual emigration, or effectual importation, would be utterly excluded, from the ſituation of the iſlands, and the ſtate of navigation among their inhabitants.

The difficulty, here, is reduced to ſo narrow a compaſs, is ſo clear, preciſe, and forcible, that we cannot eſcape from it. It cannot be anſwered in the uſual vague and inconſiderate manner, by talking of emigration, and further cultivation. In the preſent inſtance we cannot but acknowledge, that the one is impoſſible, and the other glaringly inadequate. The fulleſt conviction muſt ſtare us in the face, that the people on this group of iſlands could not continue to double their numbers every twenty-five years; and before we proceed to inquire into the ſtate of ſociety on them, we muſt be perfectly certain, that, unleſs a perpetual miracle render the women barren, we ſhall be able to trace ſome very powerful checks to population in the habits of the people.

The ſucceſſive accounts that we have received of Otaheite and the neighbouring iſlands, leave us no room to doubt the exiſtence of the Earreoie ſocieties [a] which have juſtly occaſioned ſo much ſurpriſe among civilized nations. They have been ſo often deſcribed, that little more need be ſaid of them here, than that promiſcuous intercourſe and infanticide appear to be their fundamental laws. They conſiſt excluſively of the higher claſſes; "and (according to "Mr. Anderſon [b]) ſo agreeable is this licentious plan of life to their "diſpoſition,

duce, were peopled only with an hundred perſons, the two ſexes in equal numbers, and each man conſtant to one woman, I cannot but think, that for five or ſix ſucceſſive periods, the increaſe would be more rapid than in any inſtance hitherto known, and that they would probably double their numbers in leſs than fifteen years.

[a] Cook's Firſt Voy. vol. ii. p. 207. & ſeq. Second Voy. vol. i. p. 352. Third Voy. vol. ii. p. 157. & ſeq. Miſſionary Voy. Appendix, p. 346. 4to.

[b] Mr. Anderſon acted in the capacity of naturaliſt and ſurgeon in Cook's laſt voyage. Captain Cook and all the officers of the expedition ſeem to have had a very high opinion

" diſpoſition, that the moſt beautiful of both ſexes thus commonly " ſpend their youthful days, habituated to the practice of enormities " that would diſgrace the moſt ſavage tribes.****When an Eareeoic " woman is delivered of a child, a piece of cloth dipped in water " is applied to the mouth and noſe which ſuffocates it [a]." Captain Cook obſerves, " It is certain, that theſe ſocieties greatly prevent " the increaſe of the ſuperior claſſes of people of which they are " compoſed [b]." Of the truth of this obſervation there can be no doubt.

Though no particular inſtitutions of the ſame nature have been found among the lower claſſes; yet the vices which form their moſt prominent features are but too generally ſpread. Infanticide is not confined to the Eareeoics. It is permitted to all; and as its prevalence, among the higher claſſes of the people, has removed from it all odium, or imputation of poverty, it is probably often adopted, rather as a faſhion, than a reſort of neceſſity, and appears to be practiſed familiarly and without reſerve.

It is a very juſt obſervation of Hume, that the permiſſion of infanticide generally contributes to increaſe the population of a country [c]. By removing the fears of too numerous a family, it encourages marriage, and the powerful yearnings of nature prevent parents from reſorting to ſo cruel an expedient, except in extreme caſes. The faſhion of the Eareeoic ſocieties in Otaheite and its neighbouring iſlands, may have made them an exception to this obſervation, and the cuſtom has probably here a contrary tendency.

The debauchery and promiſcuous intercourſe which prevail among the lower claſſes of people, though in ſome inſtances they may have been exaggerated, are eſtabliſhed to a great extent, on unqueſtionable authority. Captain Cook, in a profeſſed endeavour to reſcue

of his talents and accuracy of obſervation. His accounts therefore may be looked upon as of the firſt authority.

[a] Cook's Third Voy. vol. ii. p. 158, 159. [b] Id. Second Voy. vol. i. p. 352.
[c] Hume's Eſſays, vol. i. eſſay xi. p. 431. 8vo. 1764.

the women of Otaheite from a too general imputation of licentiouſneſs, acknowledges that there are more of this character here, than in other countries, making at the ſame time a remark of a moſt deciſive nature, by obſerving, that the women who thus conduct themſelves, do not in any reſpect lower their rank in ſociety, but mix indiſcriminately with thoſe of the moſt virtuous character [a].

The common marriages in Otaheite are without any other ceremony than a preſent, from the man to the parents of the girl. And this ſeems to be rather a bargain with them for permiſſion to try their daughter, than an abſolute contract for a wife. If the father ſhould think that he has not been ſufficiently paid for his daughter, he makes no ſcruple of forcing her to leave her friend, and to cohabit with another perſon who may be more liberal. The man is always at liberty to make a new choice. Should his conſort become pregnant, he may kill the child, and after that continue his connexion with the mother, or leave her, according to his pleaſure. It is only when he has adopted a child, and ſuffered it to live, that the parties are conſidered as in the marriage ſtate. A younger wife, however, may afterwards be joined to the firſt; but the changing of connexions is much more general than this plan, and is a thing ſo common, that they ſpeak of it with great indifference [b]. Libertinage before marriage, ſeems to be no objection to a union of this kind ultimately.

The checks to population from ſuch a ſtate of ſociety would alone appear ſufficient to counteract the effects of the moſt delightful climate and the moſt exuberant plenty. Yet theſe are not all. The wars between the inhabitants of the different iſlands, and their civil contentions among themſelves, are frequent, and ſometimes carried on in a very deſtructive manner [c]. Beſides the waſte of human life

[a] Cook's Second Voy. vol. i. p. 187. [b] Id. Third Voy. vol. ii. p. 157.
[c] Bouganville, Voy. autour du Monde, ch. iii. p. 217. Cook's Firſt Voy. vol. ii. p. 244. Miſſionary Voy. p. 224.

in the field of battle, the conquerors generally ravage the enemy's territory, kill or carry off the hogs and poultry, and reduce as much as poſſible the means of future ſubſiſtence. The iſland of Otaheite which, in the years 1767 and 1768, ſwarmed with hogs and fowls, was, in 1773, ſo ill ſupplied with theſe animals, that hardly any thing could induce the owners to part with them. This was attributed by Captain Cook principally to the wars which had taken place during that interval [a]. On Captain Vancouver's viſit to Otaheite in 1791, he found that moſt of his friends that he had left in 1777, were dead; that there had been many wars ſince that time, in ſome of which, the chiefs of the weſtern diſtricts of Otaheite had joined the enemy; and that the king had been for a conſiderable time completely worſted, and his own diſtricts entirely laid waſte. Moſt of the animals, plants, and herbs, which Captain Cook had left, had been deſtroyed by the ravages of war [b].

The human ſacrifices which are frequent in Otaheite, though alone ſufficient ſtrongly to fix the ſtain of barbariſm on the character of the natives, do not probably occur in ſuch conſiderable numbers as materially to affect the population of the country; and the diſeaſes, though they have been dreadfully increaſed by European contact, were before peculiarly lenient; and even for ſome time afterwards, were not marked by any extraordinary fatality [c].

The great checks to increaſe, appear to be the vices of promiſcuous intercourſe, infanticide, and war, each of theſe operating with very conſiderable force. Yet powerful in the prevention and deſtruction of life as theſe cauſes muſt be, they have not always kept down the population to the level of the means of ſubſiſtence. According to Mr. Anderſon, "Notwithſtanding the extreme fertility of the iſland, a famine frequently happens in which it is ſaid many periſh. Whether this be owing to the failure of ſome

[a] Cook's Second Voy. vol. i. p. 182, 183. [b] Vancouver's Voy. vol. i. b. i. c. 6. p. 98. 4to. [c] Cook's Third Voy. vol. ii. p. 148.

"ſeaſons,

"ſeaſons, to over-population, which muſt ſometimes almoſt neceſſarily happen, or wars, I have not been able to determine; though the truth of the fact may fairly be inferred from the great economy that they obſerve with reſpect to their food, even when there is plenty [a]." After a dinner with a chief at Ulietea, Captain Cook obſerved, that, when the company roſe, many of the common people ruſhed in, to pick up the crumbs which had fallen, and for which they ſearched the leaves very narrowly. Several people daily attended the ſhips, and aſſiſted the butchers for the ſake of the entrails of the hogs which were killed. In general, little ſeemed to fall to their ſhare except offals. "It muſt, however, be owned," Captain Cook ſays, "that they are exceedingly careful of every kind of proviſion, and waſte nothing that can be eaten by man, fleſh and fiſh eſpecially [b]."

From Mr. Anderſon's account, it appears, that a very ſmall portion of animal food falls to the lot of the lower claſs of people, and then, it is either fiſh, ſea-eggs, or other marine productions; for they ſeldom or never eat pork. The king or principal chief, is alone able to furniſh this luxury every day; and the inferior chiefs, according to their riches, once a week, fortnight, or month [c]. When the hogs and fowls have been diminiſhed by wars, or too great conſumption, a prohibition is laid upon theſe articles of food, which continues in force ſometimes for ſeveral months, or even for a year or two, during which time, of courſe, they multiply very faſt, and become again plentiful [d]. The common diet even of the Earecoies, who are among the principal people of the iſlands, is, according to Mr. Anderſon, made up of at leaſt nine tenths of vegetable food [e]. And, as a diſtinction of ranks is ſo ſtrongly marked, and the lives and property of the lower claſſes of people appear to depend abſolutely on the will of their chiefs, we may well imagine

[a] Cook's Third Voy. vol. ii. p. 153, 154. [b] Id. Second Voy. vol. i. p. 176. [c] Id. Third Voy. vol. ii. p. 154. [d] Id. p. 155. [e] Id. p. 148.

that

that theſe chiefs will often live in plenty while their vaſſals and ſervants are pinched with want.

From the late accounts of Otaheite, in the Miſſionary Voyage, it would appear, that the depopulating cauſes above enumerated, have operated with moſt extraordinary force ſince Captain Cook's laſt viſit. A rapid ſucceſſion of deſtructive wars, during a part of that interval, is taken notice of in the intermediate viſit of Captain Vancouver[a]; and, from the ſmall proportion of women remarked by the Miſſionaries[b], we may infer that a greater number of female infants had been deſtroyed than formerly. This ſcarcity of women would naturally increaſe the vice of promiſcuous intercourſe, and, aided by the ravages of European diſeaſes, ſtrike moſt effectually at the root of population[c].

It is probable that Captain Cook, from the data on which he founded his calculation, may have overrated the population of Otaheite, and perhaps the Miſſionaries have rated it too low[d]; but I have no doubt that the population has very conſiderably decreaſed ſince Captain Cook's viſit, from the different accounts that are given of the habits of the people, with regard to economy, at the different periods. Captain Cook and Mr. Anderſon agree in deſcribing their extreme carefulneſs of every kind of food; and Mr. Anderſon, apparently after a very attentive inveſtigation of the ſubject, mentions the frequent recurrence of famines. The Miſſionaries, on the contrary, though they ſtrongly notice the diſtreſs from this cauſe in the Friendly Iſlands and the Marqueſas, ſpeak of the productions of Otaheite as being in the greateſt profuſion; and obſerve, that, notwithſtanding the horrible waſte committed at feaſtings, and by the Eareeoie ſociety, want is ſeldom known[e].

It would appear from theſe accounts, that the population of Otaheite is at preſent repreſſed conſiderably below the average means of

[a] Vancouver's Voy. vol. i. b. i. c. 7. p. 137. p. 192, & 385.
[b] Miſſionary Voyage, p. 195. Appen. p. 385.
[c] Id. Appen. p. 347.
[d] Id. ch. xiii. p. 212.

ſubſiſtence,

ſubſiſtence, but it would be premature to conclude that it will continue long ſo. The variations in the ſtate of the iſland which were obſerved by Captain Cook, in his different viſits, appear to prove that there are marked oſcillations in its proſperity and population[a]. And this is exactly what we ſhould ſuppoſe from theory. We cannot imagine that the population of any of theſe iſlands has, for ages paſt, remained ſtationary at a fixed number, or that it can have been regularly increaſing, according to any rate, however ſlow. Great fluctuations muſt neceſſarily have taken place. Overpopulouſneſs would at all times increaſe the natural propenſity of ſavages to war; and the enmities occaſioned by aggreſſions of this kind, would continue to ſpread devaſtation, long after the original inconvenience, which might have prompted them, had ceaſed to be felt[b]. The diſtreſſes experienced from one or two unfavourable ſeaſons, operating on a crowded population, which was before living with the greateſt economy, and preſſing hard againſt the limits of its food, would, in ſuch a ſtate of ſociety, occaſion the more general prevalence of infanticide and promiſcuous intercourſe[c]; and theſe depopulating cauſes would, in the ſame manner, continue to act with increaſed force, for ſome time after the occaſion which had aggravated them was at an end. A change of habits to a certain degree, gradually produced by a change of circumſtances, would ſoon reſtore the population, which could not long be kept below its natural level, without the moſt extreme violence. How far European contact may operate in Otaheite with this extreme violence, and prevent it from recovering its former population, is a point which experience only can determine. But ſhould this be the caſe, I have no doubt that on tracing the cauſes of it, we ſhould find them to be aggravated vice and miſery.

[a] Cook's Second Voy. vol. i. p. 182, & ſeq. & 346.
[b] Miſſionary Voy. p. 225.
[c] I hope I may never be miſunderſtood with regard to ſome of theſe preventive cauſes of overpopulation, and be ſuppoſed to imply the ſlighteſt approbation of them, merely becauſe I relate their effects. A cauſe which may prevent any particular evil may be beyond all compariſon worſe than the evil itſelf.

Of the other islands in the Pacific Ocean we have a less intimate knowledge than of Otaheite; but our information is sufficient to assure us, that the state of society in all the principal groups of these islands is, in most respects, extremely similar. Among the Friendly and Sandwich islanders, the same feudal system, and feudal turbulence, the same extraordinary power of the chiefs, and degraded state of the lower orders of society, and nearly the same promiscuous intercourse among a great part of the people, have been found to prevail, as at Otaheite.

In the Friendly Islands, though the power of the king was said to be unlimited, and the life and property of the subject at his disposal; yet it appeared, that some of the other chiefs acted like petty sovereigns, and frequently thwarted his measures, of which he often complained. "But however independent (Captain Cook says) on "the despotic power of the king the great men may be, we saw in- "stances enough to prove, that the lower orders of people have no "property nor safety for their persons, but at the will of the chiefs, "to whom they respectively belong[a]." The chiefs often beat the inferior people most unmercifully[b], and when any of them were caught in a theft on board the ships, their masters, far from interceding for them, would often advise the killing of them[c], which, as the chiefs themselves appeared to have no great horror of the crime of theft, could only arise from their considering the lives of these poor people as absolutely of no value.

Captain Cook, in his first visit to the Sandwich Islands, had reason to think that external wars, and internal commotions, were extremely frequent among the natives[d]. And Captain Vancouver, in his later account, strongly notices the dreadful devastations in many of the islands from these causes. Incessant contentions had occasioned alterations in the different governments since Captain Cook's visit.

[a] Cook's Third Voy. vol. i. p. 406. [b] p. 232. [c] p. 233.
[d] Id. vol. ii. p. 247.

Only

Only one chief of all that were known at that time was living; and, on inquiry, it appeared that few had died a natural death, most of them having been killed in these unhappy contests[a]. The power of the chiefs over the inferior classes of the people in the Sandwich Islands appears to be absolute. The people, on the other hand, pay them the most implicit obedience; and this state of servility has manifestly a great effect in debasing both their minds and bodies[b]. The gradations of rank seem to be even more strongly marked here, than in the other islands, as the chiefs of higher rank behave to those who are lower in this scale in the most haughty and oppressive manner[c].

It is not known that, either in the Friendly, or Sandwich Islands, infanticide is practised, or that any institutions are established similar to the Earecoie societies in Otaheite; but it seems to be stated on unquestionable authority, that prostitution is extensively diffused, and prevails to a great degree among the lower classes of women[d], which must always operate as a most powerful check to population. It seems highly probable, that the toutous, or servants, who spend the greatest part of their time in attendance upon the chiefs[e], do not often marry; and it is evident that the polygamy allowed to the superior people, must tend greatly to encourage and aggravate the vice of promiscuous intercourse among the inferior classes.

Were it an established fact, that in the more fertile islands of the Pacific Ocean, very little, or nothing, was suffered from poverty and want of food; as we could not expect to find among savages in such climates any great degree of virtuous restraint, the theory on the subject would naturally lead us to conclude, that vice, including war, was the principal check to their population. The accounts which we have of these islands strongly confirm this conclusion. In the

[a] Vancouver, vol. i. b. ii. c. ii. p. 187, 188. [b] Cook's Third Voyage, vol. iii. p. 157. [c] Ibid. [d] Cook's Third Voy. vol. i. p. 401. Vol. ii. p. 543. Vol. iii. p. 130. Missionary Voy. p. 270. [e] Cook's Third Voy. vol. i. p. 394.

three great groups of iſlands which have been noticed, vice appears to be a moſt prominent feature. In Eaſter Iſland, from the great diſproportion of the males to the females [a], it can ſcarcely be doubted that infanticide prevails, though the fact may not have come to the knowledge of any of our navigators. Perouſe ſeemed to think that the women in each diſtrict were common property to the men of that diſtrict [b], though the numbers of children which he ſaw [c], would rather tend to contradict this opinion. The fluctuations in the population of Eaſter Iſland appear to have been very conſiderable, ſince its firſt diſcovery by Roggewein in 1722, though it cannot have been much affected by European intercourſe. From the deſcription of Perouſe, it appeared, at the time of his viſit, to be recovering its population, which had been in a very low ſtate, probably either from drought, civil diſſenſions, or the prevalence in an extreme degree of infanticide, and promiſcuous intercourſe. When Captain Cook viſited it in his ſecond voyage, he calculated the population at ſix or ſeven hundred [d], Perouſe at two thouſand [e]; and, from the number of children which he obſerved, and the number of new houſes that were building, he conceived that the population was on the increaſe [f].

In the Marianne Iſlands, according to Pere Gobien, a very great number [g] of the young men remained unmarried, lived like the members of the Eareeoie ſociety in Otaheite, and were diſtinguiſhed by a ſimilar name [h]. In the iſland of Formoſa, it is ſaid, that the women were not allowed to bring children into the world before the age of thirty-five. If they were with child prior to that period, an abortion was effected by the prieſteſs, and till the huſband was forty

[a] Cook's Second Voy. vol. i. p. 289. Voyage de Perouſe, c. iv. p. 323. c. v. p. 336. 4to. 1794. [b] Perouſe, c. iv. p. 326. c. v. p. 336.
[c] Perouſe, c. v. p. 336. [d] Cook's Second Voy. vol. i. p. 289.
[e] Perouſe, c. v. p. 336. [f] Ibid. [g] Une infinité de jeunes gens. Hiſt. des Navigations aux terres Auſtrales, vol. ii. p. 507. [h] Cook's Third Voyage, vol. ii. p. 158. note of the Editor.

years

years of age, the wife continued to live in her father's houſe, and was only ſeen by ſtealth [a].

The tranſient viſits that have been made to ſome other iſlands, and the imperfect accounts that we have of them, do not enable us to enter into any particular detail of their cuſtoms; but, from the general ſimilarity of theſe cuſtoms, as far as has been obſerved, we have reaſon to think, that, though they may not be marked by ſome of the more atrocious peculiarities which have been mentioned, vicious habits with reſpect to women, and wars, are the principal checks to their population.

Theſe, however, are not all. On the ſubject of the happy ſtate of plenty in which the natives of the South Sea iſlands have been ſaid to live, I am inclined to think, that our imaginations have been carried beyond the truth, by the exuberant deſcriptions which have ſometimes been given of theſe delightful ſpots. The not unfrequent preſſure of want, even in Otaheite, mentioned in Captain Cook's laſt voyage, has undeceived us with regard to the moſt fertile of all theſe iſlands; and from the Miſſionary Voyage it appears, that at certain times of the year, when the bread fruit is out of ſeaſon, all ſuffer a temporary ſcarcity. At Oheitahoo, one of the Marqueſas, it amounted to hunger, and the very animals were pinched for want of food. At Tongataboo, the principal of the Friendly Iſlands, the chiefs, to ſe-

[a] Harris's Collection of Voyages, 2 vols. folio. edit. 1744. vol. i. p. 794. This relation is given by John Albert de Mandeſloe, a German traveller of ſome reputation for fidelity, though I believe, in this inſtance; he takes his account from the Dutch writers quoted by Monteſquieu, (Eſprit des Loix, liv. 23. ch. 17.) The authority is not perhaps ſufficient to eſtabliſh the exiſtence of ſo ſtrange a cuſtom, though I confeſs that it does not appear to me wholly improbable. In the ſame account, it is mentioned, that there is no difference of condition among theſe people, and that their wars are ſo bloodleſs, that the death of a ſingle perſon generally decides them. In a very healthy climate, where the habits of the people were favourable to population, and a community of goods was eſtabliſhed, as no individual would have reaſon to fear *particular poverty* from a large family, the government would be in a manner compelled to take upon itſelf the ſuppreſſion of the population by law; and as this would be the greateſt violation of every natural feeling, there cannot be a more forcible argument againſt a community of goods.

cure

cure plenty, changed their abodes to other iſlands[a], and at times many of the natives ſuffered much from want[b]. In the Sandwich Iſlands, long droughts ſometimes occur[c]; hogs and yams are often very ſcarce[d], and viſitors are received with an unwelcome auſterity very different from the profuſe benevolence of Otaheite. In New Caledonia, the inhabitants feed upon ſpiders[e], and are ſometimes reduced to eat great pieces of ſteatite to appeaſe the cravings of their hunger[f].

Theſe facts ſtrongly prove, that in whatever abundance the productions of theſe iſlands may be found at certain periods, or however they may be checked by ignorance, wars, and other cauſes, the average population, generally ſpeaking, preſſes hard againſt the limits of the average food. In a ſtate of ſociety, where the lives of the inferior orders of the people ſeem to be conſidered by their ſuperiors as abſolutely of no value, it is evident that we are very liable to be deceived with regard to the appearances of abundance; and we may eaſily conceive, that hogs and vegetables might be exchanged in great profuſion for European commodities by the principal proprietors, while their vaſſals and ſlaves were ſuffering ſeverely from want.

I cannot conclude this general review of that department of human ſociety, which has been claſſed under the name of ſavage life, without obſerving, that the only advantage in it above civilized life that I can diſcover, is the poſſeſſion of a greater degree of leiſure by the maſs of the people. There is leſs work to be done, and conſequently there is leſs labour. When we conſider the inceſſant toil to which the lower claſſes of ſociety in civilized life are condemned, this cannot but appear to us a ſtriking advantage; but it is probably overbalanced by greater diſadvantages. In all thoſe countries where proviſions are procured with facility, a moſt tyrannical diſtinction of

[a] Miſſionary Voy. Appen. p. 385. [b] Id. p. 270. [c] Vancouver's Voy. vol. ii. b. iii. c. viii. p. 230. [d] Id. c. vii. and viii. [e] Voyage in ſearch of Peroufe, ch. xiii. p. 420. Eng. tranſl. 4to. [f] Id. ch. xiii. p. 400.

rank

rank prevails. Blows, and violations of property, ſeem to be matters of courſe; and the lower claſſes of the people are in a ſtate of comparative degradation much below what is known in civilized nations.

In that part of ſavage life where a great degree of equality obtains, the difficulty of procuring food, and the hardſhips of inceſſant war, create a degree of labour not inferior to that which is exerted by the lower claſſes of the people in civilized ſociety, though much more unequally divided. But though we may compare the labour of theſe two claſſes of human ſociety, their privations and ſufferings will admit of no compariſon. Nothing appears to me to place this in ſo ſtriking a point of view, as the whole tenor of education among the ruder tribes of ſavages in America. Every thing that can contribute to teach the moſt unmoved patience under the ſevereſt pains and misfortunes, every thing that tends to harden the heart, and narrow all the ſources of ſympathy, is moſt ſeduloufly inculcated in the ſavage. The civilized man, on the contrary, though he may be adviſed to bear evil with patience when it comes, is not inſtructed to be always expecting it. Other virtues are to be called into action beſides fortitude. He is taught to feel for his neighbour, or even his enemy in diſtreſs; to encourage and expand his ſocial affections; and in general, to enlarge the ſphere of pleaſurable emotions. The obvious inference from theſe two different modes of education is, that the civilized man hopes to enjoy, the ſavage expects only to ſuffer.

The prepoſterous ſyſtem of Spartan diſcipline, and that unnatural abſorption of every private feeling in concern for the public, which has ſometimes been ſo abſurdly admired, could never have exiſted but among a people, expoſed to perpetual hardſhips and privations from inceſſant war, and in a ſtate, under the conſtant fear of dreadful reverſes of fortune. Inſtead of conſidering theſe phenomena as indicating any peculiar tendency to fortitude and patriotiſm in the diſpoſition of the Spartans, I ſhould merely conſider them as a ſtrong

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indication of the miſerable and almoſt ſavage ſtate of Sparta, and of Greece in general at that time. Like the commodities in a market, thoſe virtues will be produced in the greateſt quantity for which there is the greateſt demand; and where patience, under pain and privations, and extravagant patriotic ſacrifices, are the moſt called for, it is a melancholy indication of the miſery of the people, and the inſecurity of the ſtate.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Checks to Population among the ancient Inhabitants of the North of Europe.

A HISTORY of the early migrations and ſettlements of mankind, with the motives which prompted them, would illuſtrate in a ſtriking manner the conſtant tendency in the human race to increaſe beyond the means of ſubſiſtence. Without ſome general law of this nature, it would ſeem as if the world could never have been peopled. A ſtate of ſloth, and not of reſtleſſneſs and activity, ſeems evidently to be the natural ſtate of man; and this latter diſpoſition could not have been generated but by the ſtrong goad of neceſſity, though it might afterwards be continued by habit, and the new aſſociations that were formed from it, the ſpirit of enterprize, and the thirſt of martial glory.

We are told, that Abram and Lot had ſo great ſubſtance in cattle, that the land would not bear them both, that they might dwell together. There was ſtrife between their herdſmen. And Abram propoſed to Lot to ſeparate, and ſaid, "Is not the whole "land before thee? If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go "to the right; if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to "the left[a]."

This ſimple obſervation and propoſal is a ſtriking illuſtration of that great ſpring of action which overſpread the whole earth with people, and in the progreſs of time, drove ſome of the leſs fortunate

[a] Geneſis, ch. xiii.

inhabitants of the globe, yielding to irreſiſtible preſſure, to ſeek a ſcanty ſubſiſtence in the burning deſerts of Aſia and Africa, and the frozen regions of Siberia and North America. The firſt migrations would naturally find no other obſtacles than the nature of the country; but when a conſiderable part of the earth had been peopled, though but thinly, the poſſeſſors of theſe diſtricts would not yield them to others without a ſtruggle; and the redundant inhabitants of any of the more central ſpots, could not find room for themſelves without expelling their neareſt neighbours, or at leaſt paſſing through their territories, which would neceſſarily give occaſion to frequent conteſts.

The middle latitudes of Europe and Aſia, ſeem to have been occupied at an early period of hiſtory, by nations of ſhepherds. Thucydides gave it as his opinion, that the civilized ſtates of Europe and Aſia, in his time, could not reſiſt the Scythians united. Yet a country in paſture cannot poſſibly ſupport ſo many inhabitants as a country in tillage; but what renders nations of ſhepherds ſo formidable, is the power which they poſſeſs of moving altogether, and the neceſſity they frequently feel of exerting this power in ſearch of freſh paſture for their herds. A tribe that is rich in cattle has an immediate plenty of food. Even the parent ſtock may be devoured in caſe of abſolute neceſſity. The women live in greater eaſe than among nations of hunters, and are conſequently more prolific. The men, bold in their united ſtrength, and confiding in their power of procuring paſture for their cattle by change of place, feel probably but few fears about providing for a family. Theſe combined cauſes ſoon produce their natural and invariable effect, an extended population. A more frequent and rapid change of place then becomes neceſſary. A wider and more extenſive territory is ſucceſſively occupied. A broader deſolation extends all around them. Want pinches the leſs fortunate members of the ſociety; and at length the impoſſibility of ſupporting ſuch a number together, becomes too evident to be reſiſted. Young ſcions are then puſhed out from the parent ſtock, and

inſtructed

inſtructed to explore freſh regions, and to gain happier ſeats for themſelves by their ſwords.

"The world is all before them where to chuſe."

Reſtleſs from preſent diſtreſs, flushed with the hope of fairer proſpects, and animated with the ſpirit of hardy enterprize, theſe daring adventurers are likely to become formidable adverſaries to all who oppoſe them. The inhabitants of countries long ſettled, engaged in the peaceful occupations of trade and agriculture, would not often be able to reſiſt the energy of men acting under ſuch powerful motives of exertion. And the frequent conteſts with tribes in the ſame circumſtances with themſelves, would be ſo many ſtruggles for exiſtence, and would be fought with a deſperate courage, inſpired by the reflection, that death would be the puniſhment of defeat, and life the prize of victory.

In theſe ſavage conteſts, many tribes muſt have been utterly exterminated. Many probably periſhed by hardſhips and famine. Others, whoſe leading ſtar had given them a happier direction, became great and powerful tribes, and in their turn ſent off freſh adventurers in ſearch of other ſeats. Theſe would at firſt owe allegiance to their parent tribe; but in a ſhort time the ties that bound them would be little felt, and they would remain friends, or become enemies, according as their power, their ambition, or their convenience, might dictate.

The prodigious waſte of human life occaſioned by this perpetual ſtruggle for room and food, would be more than ſupplied by the mighty power of population, acting in ſome degree unſhackled from the conſtant habit of migration. A prevailing hope of bettering their condition by change of place, a conſtant expectation of plunder, a power, even, if diſtreſſed, of ſelling their children as ſlaves, added to the natural careleſneſs of the Barbaric character, would all conſpire to raiſe a population which would remain to be repreſſed afterwards by famine, or war.

The tribes that poſſeſſed themſelves of the more fruitful regions, though they might win them and maintain them by continual battles, rapidly increaſed in number and power, from the increaſed means of ſubſiſtence; till at length the whole territory, from the confines of China to the ſhores of the Baltic, was peopled by a various race of barbarians, brave, robuſt, and enterpriſing, enured to hardſhips, and delighting in war [a]. While the different fixed governments of Europe and Aſia, by ſuperior population and ſuperior ſkill, were able to oppoſe an impenetrable barrier to their deſtroying hordes, they waſted their ſuperfluous numbers in conteſts with each other; but the moment that the weakneſs of the ſettled governments, or the caſual union of many of theſe wandering tribes, gave them the aſcendant in power, the ſtorm diſcharged itſelf on the faireſt provinces of the earth; and China, Perſia, Egypt, and Italy, were overwhelmed at different periods in this flood of barbariſm. Theſe remarks are ſtrongly exemplified in the fall of the Roman empire. The ſhepherds of the north of Europe were long held in check by the vigour of the Roman arms, and the terror of the Roman name. The formidable irruption of the Cimbri in ſearch of new ſettlements, though ſignalized by the deſtruction of five conſular armies, was at length arreſted in its victorious career by Marius; and the barbarians were taught to repent their raſhneſs by the almoſt complete extermination of this powerful colony [b]. The names of Julius Cæſar, of Druſus, Tiberius, and Germanicus, impreſſed on their minds by the ſlaughter of their countrymen, continued to inſpire them with a fear of encroaching on the Roman territory.

[a] The various branchings, diviſions, and conteſts, of the great Tartar nation are curiouſly deſcribed in the genealogical hiſtory of the Tartars by the Khan Abul Ghazi; (tranſlated into Engliſh from the French, with additions, in 2 vols. 8vo.) but the misfortune of all hiſtory is, that while the motives of a few princes and leaders, in their various projects of ambition, are ſometimes detailed with accuracy, the motives which often crowd their ſtandards with willing followers, are totally overlooked.

[b] Tacitus de Moribus Germanorum, f. 37.

But

But they were rather triumphed over, than vanquiſhed [a]; and though the armies, or colonies, which they ſent forth, were either cut off, or forced back into their original ſeats, the vigour of the great German nation remained unimpaired, and ready to pour forth her hardy ſons in conſtant ſucceſſion, wherever they could force an opening for themſelves by their ſwords. The feeble reigns of Decius, Gallus, Æmilianus, Valerian, and Gallienus, afforded ſuch an opening, and were in conſequence marked by a general irruption of barbarians. The Goths, who were ſuppoſed to have migrated in the courſe of ſome years from Scandinavia to the Euxine, were bribed to withdraw their victorious troops, by an annual tribute. But no ſooner was the dangerous ſecret of the wealth and weakneſs of the Roman empire thus revealed to the world, than new ſwarms of barbarians ſpread devaſtation through the frontier provinces, and terror as far as the gates of Rome [b]. The Franks, the Allemanni, the Goths, and adventurers of leſs conſiderable tribes, comprehended under theſe general appellations, poured like a torrent on different parts of the empire. Rapine and oppreſſion deſtroyed the produce of the preſent, and the hope of future harveſts. A long and general famine was followed by a waſting plague, which for fifteen years ravaged every city and province of the Roman empire; and, judging from the mortality in ſome ſpots, it was conjectured, that in a few years, war, peſtilence, and famine, had conſumed the moiety of the human ſpecies [c]. Yet the tide of emigration ſtill continued at intervals to roll impetuouſly from the north, and the ſucceſſion of martial princes, who repaired the misfortunes of their predeceſſors, and propt the falling fate of the empire, had to accompliſh the labours of Hercules in freeing the Roman territory from theſe barbarous invaders. The Goths, who, in the year 250, and the following years, ravaged the empire both by ſea and land, with various

[a] Tacitus de Moribus Germanorum, f. 37. [b] Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. i. c. x. p. 407. et ſeq. 8vo. edit. 1783. [c] Id. vol. i. c. x. p. 455, 456.

ſucceſs,

ſucceſs, but in the end, with the almoſt total loſs of their adventurous bands [a], in the year 269, ſent out an emigration of immenſe numbers with their wives and families for the purpoſes of ſettlement [b]. This formidable body, which was ſaid to conſiſt at firſt of 320,000 barbarians [c], was ultimately deſtroyed and diſperſed by the vigour and wiſdom of the emperor Claudius. His ſucceſſor, Aurelian, encountered and vanquiſhed new hoſts of the ſame name that had quitted their ſettlements in the Ukraine; but one of the implied conditions of the peace, was, that he ſhould withdraw the Roman forces from Dacia, and relinquiſh this great province to the Goths and Vandals [d]. A new and moſt formidable invaſion of the Allemanni threatened ſoon after to ſack the miſtreſs of the world, and three great and bloody battles were fought by Aurelian before this deſtroying hoſt could be exterminated, and Italy be delivered from its ravages [e].

The ſtrength of Aurelian had cruſhed on every ſide the enemies of Rome. After his death, they ſeemed to revive with an increaſe of fury and numbers. They were again vanquiſhed on all ſides by the active vigour of Probus. The deliverance of Gaul alone from German invaders is reported to have coſt the lives of four hundred thouſand barbarians [f]. The victorious emperor purſued his ſucceſſes into Germany itſelf, and the princes of the country, aſtoniſhed at his preſence, and diſmayed and exhauſted by the ill ſucceſs of their laſt emigration, ſubmitted to any terms that the conquerors might impoſe [g]. Probus, and afterwards Diocletian [h], adopted the plan of recruiting the exhauſted provinces of the empire, by granting lands to the fugitive or captive barbarians, and diſpoſing of their ſuperfluous numbers where they might be the leaſt likely to be dangerous to the ſtate; but ſuch colonizations were an inſufficient vent for the popu-

[a] Gibbon, vol. i. c. x. p. 431. [b] Id. vol. ii. c. xi. p. 13. [c] Id. p. 11. [d] Id. p. 19. A. D. 270. [e] Id. p. 26. [f] Id. vol. ii. c. xii. p. 75. [g] Id. p. 79. A. D. 277. [h] Id. c. xiii. p. 132. A. D. 296.

lation

lation of the north, and the ardent temper of the barbarians would not always bend to the ſlow labours of agriculture [a]. During the vigorous reign of Diocletian, unable to make an effectual impreſſion on the Roman frontiers, the Goths, the Vandals, the Gepidæ, the Burgundians, and the Allemanni, waſted each other's ſtrength by mutual hoſtilities, while the ſubjects of the empire enjoyed the bloody ſpectacle, conſcious, that whoever vanquiſhed, they vanquiſhed the enemies of Rome [b].

Under the reign of Conſtantine the Goths were again formidable. Their ſtrength had been reſtored by a long peace, and a new generation had ariſen, who no longer remembered the misfortunes of ancient days [c]. In two ſucceſſive wars great numbers of them were ſlain. Vanquiſhed on every ſide, they were driven into the mountains; and, in the courſe of a ſevere campaign, above a hundred thouſand were computed to have periſhed by cold and hunger [d]. Conſtantine adopted the plan of Probus and his ſucceſſors, in granting lands to thoſe ſuppliant barbarians who were expelled from their own country. Towards the end of his reign, a competent portion in the provinces of Pannonia, Thrace, Macedonia, and Italy, was aſſigned for the habitation and ſubſiſtence of three hundred thouſand Sarmatians [e].

The warlike Julian had to encounter and vanquiſh new ſwarms of Franks and Allemanni, that, emigrating from their German foreſts during the civil wars of Conſtantine, ſettled in different parts of Gaul, and made the ſcene of their devaſtations three times more extenſive than that of their conqueſts [f]. Deſtroyed and repulſed on every ſide, they were purſued, in five expeditions, into their own country [g]; but Julian had conquered, as ſoon as he had penetrated into Germany; and in the midſt of that mighty hive which had ſent

[a] Gibbon, vol. ii. c. xii. p. 84. [b] Id. c. xiii. p. 130. [c] Id. c. xiv. p. 254. A. D. 322. [d] Id. vol. iii. c. xviii. p. 125. A. D. 332. [e] Id. p. 127. [f] Id. vol. iii. c. xix. p. 215. A. D. 356. [g] Id. p. 228. and vol. iv. c. xxii. p. 17. from A. D. 357 to 359.

out

out ſuch ſwarms of people, as to keep the Roman world in perpetual dread, the principal obſtacles to his progreſs were, almoſt impaſſable roads, and vaſt unpeopled foreſts [a].

Though thus ſubdued and proſtrated by the victorious arms of Julian, this hydra-headed monſter roſe again after a few years; and the firmneſs, vigilance, and powerful genius of Valentinian were fully called into action, in protecting his dominions from the different irruptions of the Allemanni, the Burgundians, the Saxons, the Goths, the Quadi, and Sarmatians [b].

The fate of Rome was at length determined by an irreſiſtible emigration of the Huns from the eaſt and north, which precipitated on the empire the whole body of the Goths [c]; and the continuance of this powerful preſſure on the nations of Germany, ſeemed to prompt them to the reſolution, of abandoning to the fugitives of Sarmatia their woods and moraſſes, or at leaſt, of diſcharging their ſuperfluous numbers on the provinces of the Roman empire [d]. An emigration of four hundred thouſand perſons iſſued from the ſame coaſt of the Baltic, which had poured forth the myriads of Cimbri and Teutones during the vigour of the Republic [e]. When this hoſt was deſtroyed by war and famine, other adventurers ſucceeded. The Suevi, the Vandals, the Alani, the Burgundians, paſſed the Rhine never more to retreat [f]. The conquerors who firſt ſettled, were expelled or exterminated by new invaders. Clouds of barbarians ſeemed to collect from all parts of the northern hemiſphere. Gathering freſh darkneſs and terror as they rolled on, the congregated bodies at length obſcured the ſun of Italy, and ſunk the weſtern world in night.

In two centuries from the flight of the Goths acroſs the Danube, barbarians of various names and lineage had plundered and taken

[a] Gibbon, vol. iv. c. xxii. p. 17. and vol. iii. c. xix. p. 229. [b] Id. vol. iv. c. xxv. from A. D. 364 to 375. [c] Id. vol iv. c. xxvi. p. 382. et ſeq. A. D. 376. [d] Id. vol. v. c. xxx. p. 213. [e] Id. p. 214. A. D. 406. [f] Id. p. 224.

poſſeſſion

poſſeſſion of Thrace, Pannonia, Gaul, Britain, Spain, Africa, and Italy [a]. The moſt horrible devaſtations, and an incredible deſtruction of the human ſpecies, accompanied theſe rapid conqueſts; and famine and peſtilence, which always march in the train of war, when it ravages with ſuch inconſiderate cruelty, raged in every part of Europe. The hiſtorians of the times, who beheld theſe ſcenes of deſolation, labour, and are at a loſs for expreſſions, to deſcribe them; but beyond the power of language, the numbers and the deſtructive violence of theſe barbarous invaders were evinced by the total change which took place in the ſtate of Europe [b]. Theſe tremendous effects, ſo long, and ſo deeply felt, throughout the faireſt portions of the earth, may be traced to the ſimple cauſe of the ſuperiority of the power of population to the means of ſubſiſtence.

Machiavel, in the beginning of his hiſtory of Florence, ſays, "The "people who inhabit the northern parts that lie between the Rhine "and the Danube, living in a healthful and prolific climate, often "increaſe to ſuch a degree, that vaſt numbers of them are forced "to leave their native country, and go in ſearch of new habita- "tions. When any one of thoſe provinces begins to grow too popu- "lous, and wants to diſburthen itſelf, the following method is ob- "ſerved. In the firſt place, it is divided into three parts, in each of "which, there is an equal portion of the nobility and commonalty, "the rich and the poor. After this they caſt lots, and that divi- "ſion on which the lot falls, quits the country and goes to ſeek "its fortune, leaving the other two more room and liberty to "enjoy their poſſeſſions at home. Theſe emigrations proved the "deſtruction of the Roman empire [c]." Gibbon is of opinion that Machiavel has repreſented theſe emigrations too much as regular and concerted meaſures [d]; but I think it highly probable that he has not

[a] Robertſon's Charles V. vol. i. ſect. i. p. 7. 8vo. 1782. [b] Id. p. 10, 11, 12.
[c] Iſtorie Fiorentine Machiavelli, l. i. p. 1, 2.
[d] Gibbon, vol. i. c. ix. p. 360. note. Paul Diaconus, from whom it is ſuppoſed

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not erred much in this reſpect, and that it was a foreſight of the frequent neceſſity of thus diſcharging their redundant population, which gave occaſion to that law among the Germans, taken notice of by Cæſar and Tacitus, of not permitting their cultivated lands to remain longer than a year under the ſame poſſeſſors [a]. The reaſons which Cæſar mentions as being aſſigned for this cuſtom, ſeem to be hardly adequate; but if we add to them, the proſpect of emigration, in the manner deſcribed by Machiavel, the cuſtom will appear to be highly uſeful, and a double weight will be given to one of the reaſons that Cæſar mentions, namely, leſt they ſhould be led, by being accuſtomed to one ſpot, to exchange the toils of war for the buſineſs of agriculture [b].

Gibbon very juſtly rejects, with Hume and Robertſon, the improbable ſuppoſition, that the inhabitants of the north were far more numerous formerly, than at preſent [c]; but he thinks himſelf obliged at the ſame time to deny the ſtrong tendency to increaſe in the northern nations [d], as if the two facts were neceſſarily connected. But a careful diſtinction ſhould always be made, between a redundant population, and a population actually great. The Highlands of

that Machiavel has taken this deſcription, writes thus: Septentrionalis plaga quantò magis ab æſtu ſolis remota eſt, et nivali frigore gelida, tantò ſalubrior corporibus hominum et propagandis gentibus magis coaptata. Sicut e contrario, omnis meridiana regio, quò ſolis eſt fervori vicinior eo morbis eſt abundantior, et educandis minus apta mortalibus *****. Multæque quoque ex eâ, eo quod tantas mortalium turmas germinat, quantas alere vix ſufficit, ſæpe gentes egreſſæ ſunt, quæ non ſolum partes Aſiæ, ſed etiam maxime ſibi contiguam Europam afflixere. (De geſtis Longobardorum, l. i. c. i.)

Intra hanc ergo conſtituti populi, dum in tantam multitudinem pullulaſſent, ut jam ſimul habitare non valerent, in tres (ut fertur) partes omnem catervam dividentes, quænam ex illis patriam eſſet relictura, ut novas ſedes exquirerent, ſorte diſquirunt. Igitur ea pars, cui ſors dederit genitale ſolum excedere, exteraque arva ſectari, conſtitutis ſupra ſe duobus ducibus, Ibore ſcilicet, et Agione, qui et Germani erant, et juvenili ætate floridi, ceteriſque preſtantiores, ad exquirandas quas poſſint incolere terras, ſedeſque ſtatuere, valedicentes ſuis ſimul et patriæ iter arripiunt. (c. ii.)

[a] De bello Gallico, vi. 22. De moribus Germ. ſ. xxvi.
[b] De bello Gallico vi. 22. [c] Gibbon, vol. i. c. ix. p. 361. [d] Id. p. 348.

Scotland

Scotland are probably more redundant in population than any other part of Great Britain; and though it would be admitting a palpable abſurdity, to allow that the north of Europe, covered in early ages with immenſe foreſts, and inhabited by a race of people who ſupported themſelves principally by their herds and flocks [a], was more populous in thoſe times than in its preſent ſtate; yet the facts detailed in the Decline and Fall of the Roman empire, or even the very ſlight ſketch of them that I have given, cannot rationally be accounted for, without the ſuppoſition of a moſt powerful tendency in theſe people to increaſe, and to repair their repeated loſſes by the prolific power of nature.

From the firſt irruption of the Cimbri, to the final extinction of the weſtern empire, the efforts of the German nations to colonize or plunder were unceaſing [b]. The numbers that were cut off during this period by war and famine were almoſt incalculable, and ſuch as could not poſſibly have been ſupported with undiminiſhed vigour by a country thinly peopled, unleſs the ſtream had been ſupplied by a ſpring of very extraordinary power.

Gibbon deſcribes the labours of Valentinian in ſecuring the Gallic frontier againſt the Germans, an enemy, he ſays, whoſe ſtrength was renewed by a ſtream of daring volunteers which inceſſantly flowed from the moſt diſtant tribes of the north [c]. An eaſy adoption of ſtrangers was probably a mode by which ſome of the German nations renewed their ſtrength ſo ſuddenly [d], after the moſt deſtructive defeats; but this explanation only removes the difficulty a little further off. It makes the earth reſt upon the tortoiſe; but does not tell us, on what the tortoiſe reſts. We may ſtill aſk, what northern reſervoir ſupplied this inceſſant ſtream of daring adventurers?

[a] Tacitus de moribus German. ſ. v. Cæſar de bell. Gall. vi. 22.
[b] Cæſar found in Gaul a moſt formidable colony under Arioviſtus, and a general dread prevailing that in a few years all the Germans would paſs the Rhine. De bell. Gall. i. 31.
[c] Gibbon, vol. iv. c. xxv. p. 283. [d] Ibid. note.

venturers? Monteſquieu's ſolution of the problem, will, I think, hardly be admitted. The ſwarms of barbarians which iſſued formerly from the north, appear no more, he ſays, at preſent; and the reaſon which he gives is, that the violences of the Romans had driven the people of the ſouth into the north. As long as this force continued, they remained there; but as ſoon as it was weakened, they ſpread themſelves again over every country.

The ſame phenomenon appeared after the conqueſts and tyrannies of Charlemagne, and the ſubſequent diſſolution of his empire; and if a prince, he ſays, in the preſent days were to make ſimilar ravages in Europe, the nations driven into the north, and reſting on the limits of the univerſe [a], would there make a ſtand, till the moment when they would inundate, or conquer, Europe a third time. In a note he obſerves, we ſee to what the famous queſtion is reduced—why the north is no longer ſo fully peopled as in former times?

If the famous queſtion, or rather the anſwer to it, be reduced to this, it is reduced to a miracle; for without ſome ſupernatural mode of obtaining food, how theſe collected nations could ſupport themſelves in ſuch barren regions, for ſo long a period, as during the vigour of the Roman empire, it is a little difficult to conceive; and one can hardly help ſmiling at the bold figure of theſe prodigious crowds making their laſt determined ſtand on the limits of the univerſe, and living, as we muſt ſuppoſe, with the moſt patient fortitude on air and ice for ſome hundreds of years, till they could return to their own homes, and reſume their uſual more ſubſtantial mode of ſubſiſtence.

The whole difficulty, however, is at once removed, if we apply to the German nations at that time, a fact, which is ſo generally known to have occurred in America, and ſuppoſe, that, when not

[a] Les nations adoſſées au limites de l'univers y tiendroient ferme. Grandeur et Decad. des Rom. c. xvi. p. 187.

checked

checked by wars and famine, they increaſed at a rate that would double their numbers in twenty-five or thirty years. The propriety, and even the neceſſity, of applying this rate of increaſe to the inhabitants of ancient Germany, will ſtrikingly appear from that moſt valuable picture of their manners which has been left us by Tacitus. He deſcribes them as not inhabiting cities, or even admitting of contiguous ſettlements. Every perſon ſurrounds his houſe with a vacant ſpace [a], a circumſtance, which beſides its beneficial effect as a ſecurity from fire, is ſtrongly calculated to prevent the generation, and check the ravages, of epidemics. They content themſelves almoſt univerſally with one wife. Their matrimonial bond is ſtrict and ſevere, and their manners in this reſpect deſerving of the higheſt praiſe [b]. They live in a ſtate of well-guarded chaſtity, corrupted by no ſeducing ſpectacles, or convivial incitements. Adultery is extremely rare, and no indulgence is ſhewn to a proſtitute. Neither beauty, youth, nor riches can procure her a huſband; for none there looks on vice with a ſmile, nor calls mutual ſeduction the way of the world. To limit the increaſe of children, or put to death any of the huſband's blood, is accounted infamous; and virtuous manners have there more efficacy than good laws elſewhere [c]. Every mother ſuckles her own children, and does not deliver them into the hands of ſervants and nurſes. The youths partake late of the ſexual intercourſe, and hence paſs the age of puberty unexhauſted. Nor are the virgins brought forward. The ſame maturity, the ſame full growth is required: the ſexes unite equally matched and robuſt, and the children inherit the vigour of their parents. The more numerous are a man's kinſmen and relations, the more comfortable is his old age; nor is it any advantage to be childleſs [d].

With theſe manners, and a habit of enterpriſe and emigration, which would naturally remove all fears about providing for a family,

[a] Tacitus de moribus Germ. ſ. xvi. [b] Id. ſ. xviii. [c] Id. ſ. xix.
[d] Id. ſ. xx.

it

it is difficult to conceive a ſociety with a ſtronger principle of increaſe in it; and we ſee at once that prolific ſource of ſucceſſive armies and colonies, againſt which, the force of the Roman empire ſo long ſtruggled with difficulty, and under which, it ultimately ſunk. It is not probable that for two periods together, or even for one, the population within the confines of Germany ever doubled itſelf in twenty-five years. Their perpetual wars, the rude ſtate of agriculture, and particularly the very ſtrange cuſtom adopted by moſt of the tribes, of marking their barriers by extenſive deſarts [a], would abſolutely prevent any very great actual increaſe of numbers. At no one period could the country be called well-peopled, though it was often redundant in population. They abandoned their immenſe foreſts to the exerciſe of hunting, employed in paſturage the moſt conſiderable part of their lands, beſtowed on the ſmall remainder a rude and careleſs cultivation, and when the return of famine ſeverely admoniſhed them of the inſufficiency of their ſcanty reſources, they accuſed the ſterility of a country which refuſed to ſupply the multitude of its inhabitants [b]; but inſtead of clearing their foreſts, draining their ſwamps, and rendering their ſoil fit to ſupport an extended population, they found it more congenial to their martial habits and impatient diſpoſitions, to go "in queſt of "food, of plunder, or of glory [c]," into other countries. Theſe adventurers either gained lands for themſelves by their ſwords, or were cut off by the various accidents of war; were received into the Roman armies, or diſperſed over the Roman territory; or perhaps, having relieved their country by their abſence, returned home laden with ſpoils, and ready, after having recruited their diminiſhed numbers, for freſh expeditions. The ſucceſſion of human beings appears to have been moſt rapid, and as faſt as ſome were diſpoſed of in

[a] Cæſar de bell. Gall. vi. 23.
[b] Gibbon, vol. i. c. ix. p. 360.
[c] Id. c. x. p. 417.

in colonies, or mowed down by the ſcythe of war and famine, others roſe in increaſed numbers to ſupply their place.

According to this view of the ſubject, the North could never have been exhauſted; and when Dr. Robertſon, deſcribing the calamities of theſe invaſions, ſays, that they did not ceaſe, till the North, by pouring forth ſucceſſive ſwarms, was drained of people, and could no longer furniſh inſtruments of deſtruction [a], he will appear to have fallen into the very error which he had before laboured to refute, and to ſpeak as if the northern nations were actually very populous. For they muſt have been ſo, if the number of their inhabitants at any one period, had been ſufficient, beſides the ſlaughter of war, to people in ſuch a manner Thrace, Pannonia, Gaul, Spain, Africa, Italy, and England, as in ſome parts not to leave many traces of their former inhabitants. The period of the peopling of theſe countries, however, he himſelf mentions as two hundred years [b], and in ſuch a time new generations would ariſe that would more than ſupply every vacancy.

The true cauſe which put a ſtop to the continuance of northern emigration was the impoſſibility any longer of making an impreſſion on the moſt deſirable countries of Europe. They were then inhabited by the deſcendants of the braveſt and moſt enterpriſing of the German tribes; and it was not probable, that they ſhould ſo ſoon degenerate from the valour of their anceſtors, as to ſuffer their lands to be wreſted from them by inferior numbers and inferior ſkill, though perhaps ſuperior hardihood.

Checked for a time by the bravery and poverty of their neighbours by land, the enterpriſing ſpirit and overflowing numbers of the Scandinavian nations ſoon found vent by ſea. Feared before the reign of Charlemagne, they were repelled with difficulty by the care and vigour of that great prince, but during the diſtractions of the

[a] Robertſon's Charles V. vol. i. ſ. i. p. 11.
[b] Id. vol. i. ſ. i. p. 7.

the empire under his feeble ſucceſſors, they ſpread like a devouring flame over Lower Saxony, Friezeland, Holland, Flanders, and the banks of the Rhine as far as Mentz.

After having long ravaged the coaſts, they penetrated into the heart of France, pillaged and burnt her faireſt towns, levied immenſe tributes on her monarchs, and at length obtained, by grant, one of the fineſt provinces of the kingdom. They made themſelves even dreaded in Spain, Italy, and Greece, ſpreading every where deſolation and terror. Sometimes they turned their arms againſt each other, as if bent on their own mutual deſtruction; at other times tranſported colonies to unknown or uninhabited countries, as if they were willing to repair, in one place, the horrid deſtruction of the human race occaſioned by their furious ravages, in others [a].

The mal-adminiſtration and civil wars of the Saxon kings of England produced the ſame effect as the weakneſs which followed the reign of Charlemagne in France [b], and for two hundred years the Britiſh iſles were inceſſantly ravaged, and often in part ſubdued, by theſe northern invaders. During the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries, the ſea was covered with their veſſels from one end of Europe to the other [c], and the countries, now the moſt powerful in arts and arms, were the prey of their conſtant depredations. The growing and conſolidating ſtrength of theſe countries, at length, removed all further proſpect of ſucceſs from ſuch invaſions [d]. The nations of the north were ſlowly and reluctantly compelled to confine themſelves within their natural limits, and to exchange their paſtoral manners, and with them the peculiar facilities of plunder and emi-

[a] Mallet, Introd. a l'Hiſtoire de Dannemarc, tom. i. c. x. p. 221, 223, 224. 12mo. 1766. [b] Id. p. 226. [c] Id. p. 221. [d] Perhaps the civilized world could not be conſidered as perfectly ſecure from another northern or eaſtern inundation, till the total change in the art of war, by the introduction of gunpowder, gave to improved ſkill and knowledge the decided advantage over phyſical force.

gration

gration which they afforded, for the patient labours, and ſlow returns of trade and agriculture. But the ſlowneſs of theſe returns neceſſarily effected an important change in the manners of the people.

In ancient Scandinavia, during the time of its conſtant wars and emigrations, few or none, probably, were ever deterred from marrying by the fear of not being able to provide for a family. In modern Scandinavia, on the contrary, the frequency of the marriage union is continually checked by the moſt imperious and juſtly founded apprehenſions of this kind. This is moſt particularly the caſe in Norway, as I ſhall have occaſion to remark in another place; but the ſame fears operate in a greater or leſs degree, though every where with conſiderable force, in all parts of Europe. Happily, the more tranquil ſtate of the modern world does not demand ſuch rapid ſupplies of human beings, and the prolific powers of nature cannot therefore be ſo generally called into action.

Mallet, in the excellent account of the northern nations which he has prefixed to his hiſtory of Denmark, obſerves, that he had not been able to diſcover any proofs that their emigrations proceeded from want of room at home [a]; and one of the reaſons which he gives, is, that, after a great emigration, the countries often remained quite deſerted and unoccupied for a long time [b]. But inſtances of this kind I am inclined to think were rare, though they might occaſionally happen. With the habits of enterprize and emigration which prevailed in thoſe days, a whole people would ſometimes move in ſearch of a more fertile territory. The lands, which they before occupied, muſt of neceſſity be deſart for a time; and if there were any thing particularly inelegible in the ſoil or ſituation, which the total emigration of the people would ſeem to imply, it might be more congenial to the temper of the ſurrounding bar-

[a] Hiſt. Dan. tom. i. c. ix. p. 206. [b] Id. p. 205, 206.

barians,

barians, to provide for themſelves better by their ſwords, than to occupy immediately theſe rejected lands. Such total emigrations proved the unwillingneſs of the ſociety to divide, but by no means that they were not ſtraitened for room and food at home.

The other reaſon which Mallet gives is, that, in Saxony, as well as Scandinavia, vaſt tracts of land lay in their original uncultivated ſtate, having never been grubbed up or cleared; and that, from the deſcriptions of Denmark in thoſe times, it appeared, that the coaſts alone were peopled, but the interior parts formed one vaſt foreſt [a]. It is evident, that he here falls into the common error of confounding a ſuperfluity of inhabitants with great actual population. The paſtoral manners of the people, and their habits of war and enterprize, prevented them from clearing and cultivating their lands [b]; and then theſe very foreſts, by reſtraining the ſources of ſubſiſtence within very narrow bounds, contributed to a ſuperfluity of numbers, that is, to a population beyond what the ſcanty ſupplies of the country could ſupport.

There is another cauſe, not often attended to, why poor, cold, and thinly-peopled countries tend generally to a ſuperfluity of inhabitants, and are ſtrongly prompted to emigration. In warmer and more populous countries, particularly thoſe abounding in great towns and manufactures, an inſufficient ſupply of food can ſeldom continue long without producing epidemics, either in the ſhape of great and ravaging plagues, or of leſs violent, though more conſtant, ſickneſſes. In poor, cold, and thinly-peopled countries, on the contrary, from the antiſeptic quality of the air, the miſery ariſing from

[a] Hiſt. Dan. tom. i. c. ix. p. 207.

[b] Nec arare terram aut expectare annum tam facile perſuaſeris, quam vocare hoſtes et vulnera mereri; pigrum quinimò et iners videtur ſudore acquirere quod poſſis ſanguine parare. Tacitus de mor. Germ. Nothing, indeed, in the ſtudy of human nature, is more evident than the extreme difficulty with which habits are changed; and no argument therefore can be more fallacious than to infer, that thoſe people are not pinched with want, who do not make a proper uſe of their lands.

inſufficient

inſufficient or bad food, may continue a conſiderable time without producing theſe effects, and, conſequently, this powerful ſtimulus to emigration continues to operate for a much longer period [a].

I would by no means, however, be underſtood to ſay, that the northern nations never undertook any expeditions unleſs prompted by ſtraitened food or circumſtances at home. Mallet relates, what was probably true, that it was their common cuſtom to hold an aſſembly every ſpring, for the purpoſe of conſidering in what quarter they ſhould make war [b]; and among a people who nouriſhed ſo ſtrong a paſſion for war, and who conſidered the right of the ſtrongeſt as a right divine, occaſions for it would never be wanting. Beſides this pure and diſintereſted love of war and enterprize, civil diſſenſions, the preſſure of a victorious enemy, a wiſh for a milder climate, or other cauſes, might ſometimes prompt to emigration; but, in a general view of the ſubject, I cannot help conſidering this period of hiſtory as affording a very ſtriking illuſtration of the principle of population; a principle, which appears to me, to have given the original impulſe and ſpring of action, to have furniſhed the inexhauſtible reſources, and often prepared the immediate cauſes, of that rapid ſucceſſion of adventurous irruptions and emigrations, which occaſioned the fall of the Roman empire; and afterwards pouring from the thinly-peopled countries of Denmark and Norway, for above two hundred years ravaged and over-ran a great part of Europe. Without the ſuppoſition of a tendency to increaſe almoſt as great as among the Americans, the facts appear to me not to be accounted for [c]; and with ſuch a ſuppoſition, we cannot be at a loſs

to

[a] Epidemics have their ſeldomer or frequenter returns according to their ſundry ſoils, ſituations, air, &c. Hence, ſome have them yearly, as Egypt and Conſtantinople; others, once in four or five years, as about Tripoli and Aleppo; others, ſcarce once in ten, twelve, or thirteen years, as England; others, not in leſs than twenty years, as *Norway and the Northern iſlands.* Short, Hiſtory of Air, Seaſons, &c. vol. ii. p. 344.

[b] Hiſt. Dan. c. ix. p. 209.

[c] Gibbon, Robertſon, and Mallet, ſeem all rather

to name the checks to the actual population, when we read the diſguſting details of thoſe unceaſing wars, and of that prodigal waſte of human life, which marked theſe barbarous periods.

Inferior checks would undoubtedly concur; but we may ſafely pronounce, that among the ſhepherds of the north of Europe, war and famine, were the principal checks, that kept the population down to the level of their ſcanty means of ſubſiſtence.

to ſpeak of Jornandes's expreſſion *vagina nationum* as incorrect and exaggerated; but to me it appears exactly applicable, though the other expreſſion, officina gentium, at leaſt their tranſlation of it, *ſtorehouſe of nations*, may not be quite accurate.

Ex hac igitur Scanziâ inſulâ, quaſi officina gentium, aut certè velut vagina nationum egreſſi, &c. Jornandes de rebus Geticis, p. 83.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Checks to Population among modern Paſtoral Nations.

THE paſtoral tribes of Aſia, by living in tents and moveable huts, inſtead of fixed habitations, are ſtill leſs connected with their territory than the ſhepherds of the north of Europe. The camp, and not the ſoil, is the native country of the genuine Tartar. When the forage of a certain diſtrict is conſumed, the tribe makes a regular march to freſh paſtures. In the ſummer, it advances towards the north, in the winter returns again to the ſouth; and thus, in a time of moſt profound peace, acquires the practical and familiar knowledge of one of the moſt difficult operations of war. Such habits would ſtrongly tend to diffuſe among theſe wandering tribes the ſpirit of emigration and conqueſt. The thirſt of rapine, the fear of a too powerful neighbour, or the inconvenience of ſcanty paſtures, have in all ages been ſufficient cauſes to urge the hordes of Scythia boldly to advance into unknown countries, where they might hope to find a more plentiful ſubſiſtence, or a leſs formidable enemy [a].

In all their invaſions, but more particularly when directed againſt the civilized empires of the ſouth, the Scythian ſhepherds have been uniformly actuated by a moſt ſavage and deſtructive ſpirit. When the Moguls had ſubdued the northern provinces of China, it was propoſed, in calm and deliberate council, to exterminate all the inhabitants of that populous country, that the vacant land might be converted to the paſture of cattle. The execution of this horrid deſign

[a] Gibbon, vol. iv. c. xxvi. p. 348.

was prevented by the wiſdom and firmneſs of a Chineſe mandarin[a]; but the bare propoſal of it exhibits a ſtriking picture, not only of the inhuman manner, in which the rights of conqueſt were abuſed, but of the powerful force of habit among nations of ſhepherds, and the conſequent difficulty of the tranſition from the paſtoral to the agricultural ſtate.

To purſue, even in the moſt curſory manner, the tide of emigration and conqueſt in Aſia, the rapid increaſe of ſome tribes, and the total extinction of others, would lead much too far. During the periods of the formidable irruptions of the Huns, the wide-extended invaſions of the Moguls, the ſanguinary conqueſts of Tamerlane and Aurengzebe, and the dreadful convulſions which attended the diſſolution, as well as the formation, of their empires, the checks to population are but too obvious. In reading of the devaſtations of the human race in thoſe times, when the ſlighteſt motive of caprice or convenience, often involved a whole people in indiſcriminate maſſacre[b], inſtead of looking for the cauſes which prevented a further progreſs in population, we can only be aſtoniſhed at the force of that principle of increaſe, which could furniſh freſh harveſts of human beings for the ſcythe of each ſucceſſive conqueror. Our inquiries will be more uſefully directed to the preſent ſtate of the Tartar nations, and the ordinary checks to their increaſe, when not under the influence of theſe violent convulſions.

The immenſe country inhabited at preſent by thoſe deſcendants of the Moguls and Tartars, who retain nearly the ſame manners as their anceſtors, compriſes in it almoſt all the middle regions of Aſia, and poſſeſſes the advantage of a very fine and temperate climate. The ſoil is in general of great natural fertility. There are comparatively but few genuine deſerts. The wide-extended plains without a ſhrub, which have ſometimes received that appellation, and which the Ruſſians call ſteppes, are covered with a luxuriant graſs, admirably

[a] Gibbon, vol. vi. ch. xxxiv. p. 54. [b] Id. p. 55.

fitted

fitted for the paſture of numerous herds and flocks. The principal defect of this extenſive country is a want of water; but it is ſaid that the parts which are ſupplied with this neceſſary article, would be ſufficient for the ſupport of four times the number of its preſent inhabitants, if it were properly cultivated[a]. Every Orda, or tribe, has a particular canton belonging to it, containing both its ſummer and winter paſtures; and the population of this vaſt territory, whatever it may be, is probably diſtributed over its ſurface nearly in proportion to the degree of actual fertility in the different diſtricts.

Volney juſtly deſcribes this neceſſary diſtribution in ſpeaking of the Bedoweens of Syria:—"In the barren cantons, that is, thoſe which "are ill furniſhed with plants, the tribes are feeble, and very diſtant "from each other; as in the deſert of Suez, that of the Red Sea, "and the interior part of the Great Deſert. When the ſoil is better "covered, as between Damaſcus and the Euphrates, the tribes are "ſtronger and leſs diſtant. And in the cultivable cantons, as the "Pachalic of Aleppo, the Hauran, and the country of Gaza, the in-"campments are numerous and near each other[b]." Such a diſtribution of inhabitants, according to the quantity of food which they can obtain in the actual ſtate of their induſtry and habits, may be applied to Grand Tartary, as well as to Syria and Arabia, and is, in fact, equally applicable to the whole earth, though the commerce of civilized nations prevents it from being ſo obvious, as in the more ſimple ſtages of ſociety.

The Mahometan Tartars, who inhabit the weſtern parts of Grand Tartary, cultivate ſome of their lands; but this, in ſo ſlovenly and inſufficient a manner, as not to afford a principal ſource of ſubſiſtence[c]. The ſlothful and warlike genius of the Barbarian every where prevails, and he does not eaſily reconcile himſelf to the acquiring by labour what he can hope to acquire by rapine. When the annals of

[a] Geneal. Hiſt. of Tartars, vol. ii. ſec. i. 8vo. 1730. [b] Voy. de Volney, tom. i. ch. xxiii. p. 351. 8vo. 1787. [c] Geneal. Hiſt. Tar. vol. ii. p. 382.

Tartary

Tartary are not marked by any ſignal wars and revolutions, its domeſtic peace and induſtry are conſtantly interrupted by petty conteſts, and mutual invaſions for the ſake of plunder. The Mahometan Tartars are ſaid to live almoſt entirely by robbing and preying upon their neighbours, as well in peace as in war [a].

The Uſbecks, who poſſeſs as maſters the kingdom of Chowaraſm, leave to their tributary ſubjects, the Sarts and Turkmans, the fineſt paſtures of their country, merely, becauſe their neighbours on that ſide are too poor, or too vigilant, to give them hopes of ſucceſsful plunder. Rapine is their principal reſource. They are perpetually making incurſions into the territories of the Perſians, and of the Uſbecks of Great Bucharia; and neither peace nor truce can reſtrain them; as the ſlaves, and other valuable effects, which they carry off, form the whole of their riches. The Uſbecks, and their ſubjects the Turkmans, are perpetually at variance; and their jealouſies, fomented often by the princes of the reigning houſe, keep the country in a conſtant ſtate of inteſtine commotion [b]. The Turkmans are always at war with the Curds and the Arabs, who often come and break the horns of their herds, and carry away their wives and daughters [c].

The Uſbecks of Great Bucharia are reckoned the moſt civilized of all the Mahometan Tartars, yet are not much inferior to the reſt in their ſpirit of rapine [d]. They are always at war with the Perſians, and laying waſte the fine plains of the province of Choraſan. Though the country which they poſſeſs is of the greateſt natural fertility, and ſome of the remains of the ancient inhabitants practiſe the peaceful arts of trade and agriculture; yet neither the aptitude of the ſoil, nor the example which they have before them, can induce them to change their antient habits; and they would rather pillage, rob, and

[a] Geneal. Hiſt. Tart. vol ii. p. 390. [b] Id. p. 430, 431. [c] Id. p. 426. [d] Id. p. 459.

kill, their neighbours, than apply themſelves to improve the benefits which nature ſo liberally offers them [a].

The Tartars of the Caſatſhia Orda in Turkeſtan, live in a ſtate of continual warfare with their neighbours to the north and eaſt. In the winter they make their incurſions towards the Kalmucks, who, about that time, go to ſcour the frontiers of Great Bucharia, and the parts to the ſouth of their country. On the other ſide, they perpetually incommode the Coſacks of the Yaik, the Nogai Tartars, and the Kalmuck tribes which obey Ajuka Chan. In the ſummer they croſs the mountains of Eagles, and make inroads into Siberia. And though they are often very ill treated in theſe incurſions, and the whole of their plunder is not equivalent to what they might obtain with very little labour from their lands, yet they chuſe rather to expoſe themſelves to the thouſand fatigues and dangers neceſſarily attendant on ſuch a life, than apply themſelves ſeriouſly to agriculture [b].

The mode of life among the other tribes of Mahometan Tartars, preſents the ſame uniform picture, which it would be tireſome to repeat, and for which, therefore, I refer the reader to the Genealogical Hiſtory of the Tartars, and its valuable notes. The conduct of the author of this hiſtory himſelf, a Chan of Chowaraſm, affords a curious example of the ſavage manner in which the wars, of policy, of revenge, or plunder, are carried on in theſe countries. His invaſions of Great Bucharia were frequent, and each expedition was ſignalized by the ravage of provinces, and the utter ruin and deſtruction of towns and villages. When, at any time, the number of his priſoners impeded his motions, he made no ſcruple to kill them on the ſpot. Wiſhing to reduce the power of the Turkmans who were tributary to him, he invited all the principal people to a ſolemn feaſt, and had them maſſacred to the number of two thouſand. He burnt and deſtroyed their villages with the moſt unſparing cruelty, and committed

[a] Geneal. Hiſt. Tart. vol. ii. p. 455. [b] Id. p. 573, et ſeq.

ſuch devaſtations, that the effect of them returned on their authors, and the army of the victors ſuffered ſeverely from dearth [a].

The Mahometan Tartars in general hate trade, and make it their buſineſs to ſpoil all the merchants who fall into their hands [b]. The only commerce that is countenanced is the commerce in ſlaves. Theſe form a principal part of the booty which they carry off in their predatory incurſions, and are conſidered as a chief ſource of their riches. Thoſe which they have occaſion for themſelves, either for the attendance on their herds, or as wives and concubines, they keep, and the reſt they ſell [c]. The Circaſſian and Dagheſtan Tartars, and the other tribes in the neighbourhood of Caucaſus, living in a poor and mountainous country, and, on that account, leſs ſubject to invaſion, generally overflow with inhabitants; and when they cannot obtain ſlaves in the common way, ſteal from one another, and even ſell their own wives and children [d]. This trade in ſlaves, ſo general among the Mahometan Tartars, may be one of the cauſes of their conſtant wars; as, when a proſpect of a plentiful ſupply for this kind of traffick offers itſelf, neither peace nor alliance can reſtrain them [e].

The heathen Tartars, the Kalmucks, and Moguls, do not make much uſe of ſlaves, and are ſaid, in general, to lead a much more peaceable and harmleſs life, contenting themſelves with the produce of their herds and flocks, which form their ſole riches. They rarely make war for the ſake of plunder; and ſeldom invade the territory of their neighbours, unleſs to revenge a prior attack. They are not, however, without deſtructive wars. The inroads of the Mahometan

[a] Geneal. Hiſt. Tart. vol. i. c. xii. [b] Id. vol. ii. p. 412. [c] Id. p. 413.
[d] Id. vol. ii. p. 413, 414, and ch. xii.
[e] "They juſtify it as lawful to have many wives, becauſe they ſay they bring us many "children, which we can ſell for ready money, or exchange for neceſſary conveniences; "yet when they have not wherewithal to maintain them, they hold it a piece of charity "to murder infants new born, as alſo they do ſuch as are ſick, and paſt recovery, becauſe "they ſay they free them from a great deal of miſery." Sir John Chardin's Travels. Harris's Col. b. iii. c. ii, p. 865.

metan Tartars oblige them to conſtant defence and retaliation; and feuds ſubſiſt between the kindred tribes of the Kalmucks and Moguls, which, fomented by the artful policy of the emperor of China, are carried on with ſuch animoſity, as to threaten the entire deſtruction of one or other of theſe nations [a].

The Bedoweens of Arabia and Syria do not live in greater tranquillity than the inhabitants of Grand Tartary. The very nature of the paſtoral ſtate, ſeems to furniſh perpetual occaſions for war. The paſtures which a tribe uſes at one period, form but a ſmall part of its poſſeſſions. A large range of territory is ſucceſſively occupied in the courſe of the year; and as the whole of this is abſolutely neceſſary for the annual ſubſiſtence of the tribe, and is conſidered as appropriated, every violation of it, though the tribe may be at a great diſtance, is held to be a juſt cauſe of war [b]. Alliances and kindred make theſe wars more general. When blood is ſhed, more muſt expiate it; and as ſuch accidents have multiplied in the lapſe of years, the greateſt part of the tribes have quarrels between them, and live in a ſtate of perpetual hoſtility [c]. In the times which preceded Mahomet, ſeventeen hundred battles are recorded by tradition; and a partial truce of two months, which was religiouſly kept, might be conſidered, according to a juſt remark of Gibbon, as ſtill more ſtrongly expreſſive of their general habits of anarchy and warfare [d].

The waſte of life, from ſuch habits, might alone appear ſufficient to repreſs their population; but probably their effect is ſtill greater in the fatal check which they give to every ſpecies of induſtry, and particularly to that, the object of which is to enlarge the means of

[a] Geneal. Hiſt. Tart. vol. ii. p. 545.
[b] Ils ſe diſputeront la terre inculte comme parmi nous les citoyens ſe diſputent les heritages. Ainſi ils trouveront de frequentes occaſions de guerre pour la nourriture de leur beſtiaux, &c. **** ils auront autant de choſes a regler par le droit des gens qu'ils en auront peu a decider par le droit civil. Monteſ. Eſprit des Loix, l. xviii. c. xii.
[c] Voy. de Volney, tom. i. c. xxii. p. 361, 362, 363.
[d] Gibbon, vol. ix. c. l. p. 238, 239.

ſubſiſtence. Even the conſtruction of a well, or a reſervoir of water, requires ſome funds and labour in advance; and war may deſtroy in one day, the work of many months, and the reſources of a whole year[a]. The evils ſeem mutually to produce each other. A ſcarcity of ſubſiſtence might at firſt perhaps give occaſion to the habits of war, and the habits of war in return powerfully contribute to narrow the means of ſubſiſtence.

Some tribes, from the nature of the deſerts in which they live, ſeem to be neceſſarily condemned to a paſtoral life[b]; but even thoſe which inhabit ſoils proper for agriculture, have but little temptation to practiſe this art, while ſurrounded by marauding neighbours. The peaſants of the frontier provinces of Syria, Perſia, and Siberia, expoſed as they are to the conſtant incurſions of a devaſtating enemy, do not lead a life that is to be envied by the wandering Tartar or Arab. A certain degree of ſecurity, is perhaps ſtill more neceſſary, than richneſs of ſoil, to encourage the change from the paſtoral to the agricultural ſtate; and where this cannot be attained, the ſedentary labourer is more expoſed to the viciſſitudes of fortune, than he who leads a wandering life, and carries all his property with him[c]. Under the feeble, yet oppreſſive government of the Turks, it is not uncommon for peaſants to deſert their villages and betake themſelves to a paſtoral ſtate, in which they expect to be better able to eſcape from the plunder of their Turkiſh maſters and Arab neighbours[d].

It may be ſaid, however, of the ſhepherd, as of the hunter, that if want alone could effect a change of habits, there would be few paſtoral tribes remaining. Notwithſtanding the conſtant wars of the Bedoween Arabs, and the other checks to their increaſe, from the hardſhips of their mode of life, their population preſſes ſo hard againſt the limits of their food, that they are compelled from neceſſity to a degree of abſtinence, which nothing but early and conſtant habit

[a] Voy. de Volney, tom. i. c. xxiii. p. 353. [b] Id. p. 350. [c] Id. p. 354. [d] Id. p. 350.

could

could enable the human conſtitution to ſupport. According to Volney, the lower claſſes of the Arabs live in a ſtate of habitual miſery and famine[a]. The tribes of the deſert deny that the religion of Mahomet was made for them. For how, they ſay, can we perform ablutions, when we have no water; how can we give alms, when we have no riches; or what occaſion can there be to faſt during the month of Ramadan, when we faſt all the year[b]?

The power and riches of a Chaik conſiſt in the number of his tribe. He conſiders it therefore as his intereſt to encourage population, without reflecting how it may be ſupported. His own conſequence much depends on a numerous progeny, and kindred[c]; and in a ſtate of ſociety where power generally procures ſubſiſtence, each individual family derives ſtrength and importance from its numbers. Theſe ideas act ſtrongly as a bounty upon population, and co-operating with a ſpirit of generoſity which almoſt produces a community of goods[d], contribute to puſh it to its utmoſt verge, and to depreſs the body of the people in the moſt rigid poverty.

The habits of polygamy, where there have been loſſes of men in war, tend perhaps alſo to produce the ſame effect. Niehbur obſerves that polygamy multiplies families till many of their branches ſink into the moſt wretched miſery[e]. The deſcendants of Mahomet are found in great numbers all over the eaſt, and many of them in extreme poverty. A Mahometan is in ſome degree obliged to polygamy from a principle of obedience to his prophet, who makes one of the great duties of man to conſiſt in procreating children to glorify the Creator. Fortunately, individual intereſt, corrects in ſome degree, as in many other inſtances, the abſurdity of the legiſlator, and the poor Arab is obliged to proportion his religious obedience to the ſcantineſs of his reſources. Yet ſtill the direct encouragements to population are extraordinarily great; and nothing can place, in a more ſtriking

[a] Voy. de Volney, tom. i. c. xxiii. p. 359. [b] Id. p. 380. [c] Id. p. 366. [d] Id. p. 378. [e] Niehbur's Travels, vol. ii. c. v. p. 207.

point

point of view, the futility and abſurdity of ſuch encouragements, than the preſent ſtate of theſe countries. It is univerſally agreed, that if their population be not leſs than formerly, it is indubitably not greater; and it follows as a direct conſequence, that the great increaſe of ſome families has abſolutely puſhed the others out of exiſtence. Gibbon, ſpeaking of Arabia, obſerves, that "The meaſure of population "is regulated by the means of ſubſiſtence, and the inhabitants of this "vaſt peninſula, might be out-numbered by the ſubjects of a fertile "and induſtrious province[a]." Whatever may be the encouragements to marriage, this meaſure cannot be paſſed. While the Arabs retain their preſent manners, and the country remains in its preſent ſtate of cultivation, the promiſe of Paradiſe to every man who had ten children, would but little increaſe their numbers, though it might greatly increaſe their miſery. Direct encouragements to population have no tendency whatever to change theſe manners, and promote cultivation. Perhaps, indeed, they have a contrary tendency, as the conſtant uneaſineſs from poverty and want which they occaſion, would encourage the marauding ſpirit[b] and multiply the occaſions of war.

Among the Tartars, who, from living in a more fertile ſoil, are comparatively richer in cattle, the plunder to be obtained in predatory incurſions, is greater than among the Arabs. And as the conteſts are more bloody, from the ſuperior ſtrength of the tribes, and the cuſtom of making ſlaves is general, the loſs of numbers in war will be more conſiderable. Theſe two circumſtances united, enable ſome hordes of fortunate robbers to live in a ſtate of plenty, in com-

[a] It is rather a curious circumſtance, that a truth ſo important which has been ſtated, and acknowledged, by ſo many authors, ſhould ſo rarely have been purſued to its conſequences. People are not every day dying of famine. How then is the population regulated to the meaſure of the means of ſubſiſtence?

[b] Auſſi arrive-t'il chaque jour des accidens, des enlèvements de beſtiaux; et cette guerre de maraude eſt une de celles qui occupent d'avantage les Arabes. Voy. de Volney, tom. i. c. xxiii. p. 364.

pariſon

pariſon of their leſs enterpriſing neighbours. Profeſſor Pallas gives a particular account of two wandering tribes ſubject to Ruſſia, one of which ſupports itſelf almoſt entirely by plunder, and the other lives as peacefully as the reſtleſsneſs of its neighbours will admit. It may be curious to trace the different checks to population that reſult from theſe different habits.

The Kirgiſiens, according to Pallas[a], live at their eaſe in compariſon of the other wandering tribes that are ſubject to Ruſſia. The ſpirit of liberty and independence which reigns amongſt them, joined to the facility with which they can procure a flock ſufficient for their maintenance, prevents any of them from entering into the ſervice of others. They all expect to be treated as brothers, and the rich, therefore, are obliged to uſe ſlaves. It may be aſked what are the cauſes which prevent the lower claſſes of people from increaſing till they become poor?

Pallas has not informed us how far vicious cuſtoms with reſpect to women, or the reſtraints on marriage from the fear of a family, may have contributed to this effect; but, perhaps, the deſcription which he gives of their civil conſtitution, and licentious ſpirit of rapine, may be alone almoſt ſufficient to account for it. The Chan cannot exerciſe his authority but through the medium of a council of principal perſons, choſen by the people; and even the decrees thus confirmed are continually violated with impunity[b]. Though the plunder and capture of perſons, of cattle, and of merchandize, which the Kirgiſiens exerciſe on their neighbours the Kazalpacs, the Bucharians, the Perſians, the Truchemenes, the Kalmucks, and the Ruſſians, are prohibited by their laws, yet no perſon is afraid to avow them. On the contrary, they boaſt of their ſucceſſes in this

[a] Not having been able to procure the work of Pallas on the hiſtory of the Mongol nations, I have here made uſe of a general abridgement of the works of the Ruſſian travellers, in 4 vols. oct. publiſhed at Berne and Lauſanne in 1781 and 1784, entitled, Decouvertes Ruſſes, tom. iii. p. 399.

[b] Decouv. Ruſſ. tom. iii. p. 389.

way,

way, as of the moſt honourable enterprizes. Sometimes they paſs their frontiers alone, to ſeek their fortune, ſometimes collect in troops under the command of an able chief, and pillage entire caravans. A great number of Kirgiſiens, in exerciſing this rapine, are either killed, or taken into ſlavery; but about this the nation troubles itſelf very little. When theſe ravages are committed by private adventurers, each retains what he has taken, whether cattle or women. The male ſlaves and the merchandize are ſold to the rich, or to foreign traders[a].

With theſe habits, in addition to their national wars, which, from the fickle and turbulent diſpoſition of the tribe, are extremely frequent[b], we may eaſily conceive that the checks to population from violent cauſes may be ſo powerful as nearly to preclude all others. Occaſional famines may ſometimes attack them in their wars of devaſtation[c], their fatiguing predatory incurſions, or from long droughts, and mortality of cattle; but, in the common courſe of things, the approach of poverty would be the ſignal for a new marauding expedition; and the poor Kirgiſien would either return with ſufficient to ſupport him, or loſe his life or liberty in the attempt. He who determines to be rich, or die, and does not ſcruple the means, cannot long remain poor.

The Kalmucks, who, before their migration in 1771, inhabited the fertile ſteppes of the Wolga, under the protection of Ruſſia, lived, in general, in a different manner. They were not often engaged in any very bloody wars[d]; and the power of the Chan being abſolute[e], and the civil adminiſtration better regulated than among the Kirgi-

[a] Decouv. Ruſſ. tom. iii. p. 396, 397, 398. [b] Id. p. 378.

[c] Cette multitude devaſte tout ce qui ſe trouve ſur ſon paſſage, ils emmenent avec eux tout le betail qu'ils ne conſomment pas, et reduiſent a l'eſclavage les femmes, les enfans, et les hommes, qu'ils n'ont par maſſacrés. Id. p. 390.

[d] Decouv. Ruſſ. tom. iii. p. 221. The tribe is deſcribed here under the name of the Torgots, which was their appropriate appellation. The Ruſſians called them by the more general name of Kalmucks. [e] Id. p. 327.

ſiens,

ſiens, the marauding expeditions of private adventurers were checked. The Kalmuck women are extremely prolific. Barren marriages are rare, and three or four children are generally ſeen playing round every hut. From which it may naturally be concluded, Pallas obſerves, that they ought to have multiplied greatly during the hundred and fifty years that they inhabited tranquilly the ſteppe of the Wolga. The reaſons which he gives for their not having increaſed ſo much as might be expected, are, the many accidents occaſioned by falls from horſes, the frequent petty wars between their different princes, and with their different neighbours; and, particularly, the numbers among the poorer claſſes who die of hunger, of miſery, and every ſpecies of calamity, of which the children are moſt frequently the victims[a].

It appears that when this tribe firſt put itſelf under the protection of Ruſſia, it had ſeparated from the Soongares, and was by no means numerous. The poſſeſſion of the fertile ſteppe of the Wolga, and a more tranquil life, ſoon increaſed it, and in 1662 it amounted to fifty thouſand families[b]. From this period to 1771, the time of its migration, it ſeems to have increaſed very ſlowly. The extent of paſtures poſſeſſed, would not probably admit of a much greater population, as at the time of its flight from theſe quarters, the irritation of the Chan at the conduct of Ruſſia, was ſeconded by the complaints of the people, of the want of paſture for their numerous herds. At this time the tribe amounted to between 55 and 60,000 families. Its fate in this curious migration, was what has probably been the fate of many other wandering hordes, who, from ſcanty paſtures, or other cauſes of diſcontent, have attempted to ſeek for freſh ſeats. The march took place in the winter, and numbers periſhed on this painful journey from cold, famine, and miſery. A great part was

[a] Decouv. Ruſſ. tom. iii. p. 319, 320, 321.

[b] Id. p. 221. Tooke's View of Ruſſian Empire, vol. ii. b. ii. p. 30. Another inſtance of rapid increaſe preſents itſelf in a colony of baptized Kalmucks, who received from Ruſſia a fertile diſtrict to ſettle in. From 8695, which was its number in 1754, it had increaſed in 1771 to 14,000. Tooke's View of Ruſ. Em. vol. ii. b. ii. p. 32, 33.

either

either killed or taken by the Kirghiſes; and thoſe who reached their place of deſtination, though received at firſt kindly by the Chineſe, were afterwards treated with extreme ſeverity[a].

Before this migration, the lower claſſes of the Kalmucks had lived in great poverty and wretchedneſs, and had been reduced habitually to make uſe of every animal, plant, or root, from which it was poſſible to extract nouriſhment[b]. They very ſeldom killed any of their cattle that were in health, except indeed they were ſtolen, and then they were devoured immediately for fear of a diſcovery. Wounded, or worn out horſes, and beaſts that had died of any diſeaſe, except a contagious epidemic, were conſidered as moſt deſireable food. Some of the pooreſt Kalmucks would eat the moſt putrid carrion, and even the dung of their cattle[c]. A great number of children periſhed of courſe from bad nouriſhment[d]. In the winter all the lower claſſes ſuffered ſeverely from cold and hunger[e]. In general, one third of their ſheep, and often much more, died in the winter, in ſpite of all their care; and if a froſt came late in the ſeaſon after rain and ſnow, ſo that the cattle could not get at the graſs, the mortality among their herds became general, and the poorer claſſes of the Kalmucks were expoſed to inevitable famine[f].

Malignant fevers, generated principally by their putrid food and the putrid exhalations with which they were ſurrounded, and the ſmall-pox, which is dreaded like the plague, ſometimes thinned their numbers[g]; but in general, it appears, that their population preſſed ſo hard againſt the limits of their means of ſubſiſtence, that want, with the diſeaſes ariſing from it, might be conſidered as the principal check to their increaſe.

A perſon travelling in Tartary during the ſummer months, would probably ſee extenſive ſteppes unoccupied, and graſs in profuſion,

[a] Tooke's View of Ruſ. Emp. vol. ii. b. ii. p. 29, 30, 31. Decouv. Ruſ. tom. iii. p. 221. [b] Id. p. 275, 276. [c] Id. p. 272, 273, 274. [d] Id. p. 324. [e] Id. p. 310. [f] Ibid. and p. 270. [g] Id. p. 311, 312, 313.

ſpoiling

ſpoiling for want of cattle to conſume it. He would infer, perhaps, that the country could ſupport a much greater number of inhabitants, even ſuppoſing them to remain in their ſhepherd ſtate. But this might be a haſty and unwarranted concluſion. A horſe, or any other working animal, is ſaid to be ſtrong only in proportion to the ſtrength of his weakeſt part. If his legs be ſlender and feeble, the ſtrength of his body will be but of little conſequence; or if he wants power in his back and haunches, the ſtrength which he may poſſeſs in his limbs can never be called fully into action. The ſame reaſoning muſt be applied to the power of the earth to ſupport living creatures. The profuſion of nouriſhment which is poured forth in the ſeaſons of plenty, cannot all be conſumed by the ſcanty numbers that were able to ſubſiſt through the ſeaſon of ſcarcity. When human induſtry and foreſight are directed in the beſt manner, the population that the ſoil can ſupport is regulated by the average produce throughout the year; but among animals, and in the uncivilized ſtates of man, it will be much below this average. The Tartar would find it extremely difficult to collect and carry with him ſuch a quantity of hay, as would feed all his cattle well during the winter. It would impede his motions, expoſe him to the attacks of his enemies, and an unfortunate day might deprive him of the labours of a whole ſummer, as in the mutual invaſions which occur, it ſeems to be the univerſal practice to burn and deſtroy all the forage and proviſions which cannot be carried away[a]. The Tartar, therefore, provides only for the moſt valuable of his cattle during the winter, and leaves the reſt to ſupport themſelves by the ſcanty herbage which they can pick up. This poor living, combined with the ſevere cold, naturally deſtroys a conſiderable

[a] On mit le feu a toutes les meules de bled et de fourrage. **** Cent cinquante villages egalement encendiès. Memoires du Baron de Tott, tom. i. p. 272. He gives a curious deſcription of the devaſtations of a Tartar army, and of its ſufferings in a winter campaign. 'Cette journèe couta a l'armèe plus de 3,000 hommes, et 30,000 chevaux, qui perirent de froid, p. 267.

part of them [a]. The population of the tribe is meaſured by the population of its herds; and the average numbers of the Tartars, as of the horſes that run wild in the deſart, is repreſſed ſo low by the annual returns of the cold and ſcarcity of winter, that they cannot conſume all the plentiful offerings of ſummer.

Droughts and unfavourable ſeaſons have, in proportion to their frequency, the ſame effect as the winter. In Arabia [b], and a great part of Tartary [c], droughts are not uncommon; and if the periods of their return be not above ſix or eight years, the average population can never much exceed what the ſoil can ſupport during theſe unfavourable times. This is true in every ſituation; but perhaps in the ſhepherd ſtate, man is peculiarly expoſed to be affected by the ſeaſons; and a great mortality of parent ſtock is an evil more fatal and longer felt, than the failure of a crop of grain. Pallas and the other Ruſſian travellers ſpeak of epizooties, as very common in theſe parts of the world [d].

As among the Tartars, a family is always honourable, and women are reckoned very ſerviceable in the management of the cattle and the houſehold concerns, it is not probable that many are deterred from marriage, from the fear of not being able to ſupport a family [e]. At the ſame time, as all wives are bought of their parents, it muſt ſometimes be out of the power of the poorer claſſes to make the purchaſe. The monk Rubruquis, ſpeaking of this cuſtom, ſays, that as parents keep all their daughters till they can ſell them, their maids are ſometimes very ſtale before they are married [f]. Among the Mahometan Tartars female captives would ſupply the place of wives [g]; but among the pagan Tartars, who make

[a] Decouvertes Ruſſes, vol. iii. p. 261. [b] Voy. de Volney, vol. i. c. 23. p. 353. [c] Decouv. Ruſſ. tom. i. p. 467. ii. p. 10, 11, 12, &c. &c.
[d] Id. tom. i. p. 290, &c. ii. p. 11. iv. p. 304. [e] Geneal. Hiſt. Tartars, vol. ii. p. 407. [f] Travels of Wm. Rubruquis in 1253. Harris's Collection of Voy. b. i. c. ii. p. 561. [g] Decouv. Ruſſ. tom. iii. p. 413.

but little uſe of ſlaves, the inability of buying a wife, muſt frequently operate on the poorer claſſes as a check to marriage, particularly as their price would be kept up by the practice of polygamy among the rich [a].

The Kalmucks are ſaid not to be jealous [b], and, from the general prevalence of the venereal diſeaſe among them [c], we may infer that a certain degree of promiſcuous intercourſe prevails.

On the whole, therefore, it would appear, that in that department of the ſhepherd life which has been conſidered in this chapter, the principal checks which keep the population down to the level of the means of ſubſiſtence, are, reſtraint, from inability to obtain a wife, vicious cuſtoms with reſpect to women, epidemics, wars, famine, and the diſeaſes ariſing from extreme poverty. The three firſt checks and the laſt appear to have operated with much leſs force among the ſhepherds of the north of Europe.

[a] Pallas takes notice of the ſcarcity of women, or the ſuperabundance of males among the Kalmucks, notwithſtanding the more conſtant expoſure of the male ſex to every kind of accident. Decouv. Ruſſ. tom. iii. p. 320.
[b] Decouv. Ruſſ. tom. iii. p. 239. [c] Id. p. 324.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the Checks to Population in different Parts of Africa.

The parts of Africa viſited by Park, are deſcribed by him as neither well cultivated, nor well peopled. He found many extenſive and beautiful diſtricts entirely deſtitute of inhabitants; and in general, the borders of the different kingdoms were either very thinly peopled, or perfectly deſerted. The ſwampy banks of the Gambia, the Senegal, and other rivers towards the coaſt, appeared to be unfavourable to population, from being unhealthy[a]; but other parts were not of this deſcription; and it was not poſſible, he ſays, to behold the wonderful fertility of the ſoil, the vaſt herds of cattle proper both for labour and food, and reflect on the means which preſented themſelves of vaſt inland navigation, without lamenting that a country ſo abundantly gifted by nature, ſhould remain in its preſent ſavage and neglected ſtate[b].

The cauſes of this neglected ſtate clearly appear, however, in the deſcription which Park gives of the general habits of the negroe nations. In a country divided into a thouſand petty ſtates, moſtly independent and jealous of each other, it is natural to imagine, he ſays, that wars frequently originate from very frivolous provocations. The wars of Africa are of two kinds, one called killi, that which is openly avowed; and the other, tegria, plundering or ſtealing. Theſe latter are very common, particularly about the beginning of the dry ſeaſon, when the labours of harveſt are over,

[a] Park's Interior of Africa, c. xx. p. 261. 4to. [b] Id. c. xxiii. p. 312.

and proviſions are plentiful. Theſe plundering excurſions always produce ſpeedy retaliation[a].

The inſecurity of property ariſing from this conſtant expoſure to plunder, muſt neceſſarily have a moſt baneful effect on induſtry. The deſerted ſtate of all the frontier provinces, ſufficiently proves to what a degree it operates. The nature of the climate is unfavourable to the exertion of the negroe nations; and, as there are not many opportunities of turning to advantage the ſurplus produce of their labour, we cannot be ſurpriſed that they ſhould in general content themſelves with cultivating only as much ground as is neceſſary for their own ſupport[b]. Theſe cauſes appear adequately to account for the uncultivated ſtate of the country.

The waſte of life in theſe conſtant wars and predatory incurſions muſt be conſiderable; and Park agrees with Buffon in ſtating, that, independent of violent cauſes, longevity is rare among the negroes. At forty, he ſays, moſt of them became greyhaired and covered with wrinkles, and but few of them ſurvive the age of fifty-five, or ſixty[c]. Buffon attributes this ſhortneſs of life to the premature intercourſe of the ſexes, and the very early and exceſſive debauchery[d]. On this ſubject perhaps he has been led into exaggerations; but, without attributing too much to this cauſe, it ſeems agreeable to the analogy of nature to ſuppoſe, that, as the natives of hot climates arrive much earlier at maturity than the inhabitants of colder countries, they ſhould alſo periſh earlier.

According to Buffon, the negroe women are extremely prolific; but, it appears from Park, that they are in the habit of ſuckling

[a] Park's Africa, c. xxii. p. 291. & ſeq. [b] Id. c. xxi. p. 280. [c] Id. p. 274.

[d] L'uſage prematuré des femmes eſt peut-être la cauſe de la brieveté de leur vie; les enfans ſont ſi debauchés, et ſi peu contraints par les peres et meres, que des leur plus tendre jeuneſſe ils ſe livrent à tout ce que la nature leur ſuggère, rien n'eſt ſi rare que de trouver dans ce peuple quelque fille qui puiſe ſe ſouvenir du tems auquel elle a ceſſé d'etre vierge. Hiſtoire Naturelle de l'Homme, vol. vi. p. 235. 5th edit. 12mo. 31 vols.

their children two or three years, and as the husband, during this time, devotes the whole of his attention to his other wives, the family of each wife is seldom numerous[a]. Polygamy is universally allowed among the negro nations[b], and consequently without a greater superabundance of women than we have reason to suppose, many will be obliged to live unmarried. This hardship will probably fall principally on the slaves, who, according to Park, are in the proportion of three to one to the free men[c]. A master is not permitted to sell his domestic slaves, nor those born in his own house, except in case of famine, to support himself and family. We may imagine, therefore, that he will not suffer them to increase beyond the employment which he has for them. The slaves which are purchased, or the prisoners taken in war, are entirely at the disposal of their masters[d]. They are often treated with extreme severity, and in any scarcity of women arising from the polygamy of the free men, would of course be deprived of them without scruple. Few or no women, probably, remain in a state of strict celibacy; but, in proportion to the number married, the state of society does not seem to be favourable to increase.

Africa has been at all times the principal mart of slaves. The drains of its population in this way have been great and constant, particularly since their introduction into the European colonies; but perhaps, as Dr. Franklin observes, it would be difficult to find the gap that has been made by a hundred years exportation of negroes which has blackened half America[e]. For, notwithstanding this con-

[a] Park's Africa, c. xx. p. 265. As the accounts of Park, and those on which Buffon has founded his observations, are probably accounts of different nations, and certainly at different periods, we cannot infer that either is incorrect because they differ from each other: but as far as Park's observations extend, they are certainly entitled to more credit than any of the travellers which preceded him.

[b] Id. c. xx. p. 267. [c] Id. c. xxii. p. 287. [d] Id 288.

[e] Franklin's Miscell. p. 9.

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stant emigration, the loss of numbers from incessant war, and the checks to increase from vice and other causes, it appears, that the population is continually passing beyond the means of subsistence. According to Park, scarce years and famines are frequent. Among the four principal causes of slavery in Africa, he mentions famine next to war[a]; and the express permission given to masters to sell their domestic slaves for the support of their family, which they are not allowed to do on any less urgent occasion[b], seems to imply the not infrequent recurrence of severe want. During a great scarcity, which lasted for three years in the countries of the Gambia, great numbers of people became slaves. Park was assured by Dr. Lairdly, that at that time many free-men came, and begged with great earnestness, to be put upon his slave chain to save them from perishing with hunger[c]. While Park was in Manding, a scarcity of provisions was severely felt by the poor, as the following circumstance painfully convinced him. Every evening during his stay, he observed five or six women come to the Mansa's house, and receive each of them a certain quantity of corn. "Observe that boy," said the Mansa to him, pointing to a fine child about five years of age—"his mother has sold him to me for forty days provision for herself "and the rest of her family. I have bought another boy in the "same manner[d]." In Soosceta, a small Jallonka village, Mr. Park was informed by the master, that he could furnish no provisions, as there had lately been a great scarcity in that part of the country. He assured him, that before they had gathered in their present crops, all the inhabitants of Kullo had been for twenty-nine days without tasting corn; during which time they had supported themselves entirely on the yellow powder which is found in the pods of the nitta, so called by the natives, a species of mi-

[a] Park's Africa, c. xxii. p. 295. [b] Id. p. 288. note. [c] Id. p. 295.

[d] Id. c. xix. p. 248.

mosa,

moſa, and upon the ſeeds of the bamboo cane, which, when properly pounded and dreſſed, taſte very much like rice [a].

It may be ſaid, perhaps, that as, according to Park's account, much good land remains uncultivated in Africa, the dearths may be attributed to a want of people; but if this were the caſe, we can hardly ſuppoſe that ſuch numbers would yearly be ſent out of the country. What the negroe nations really want, is, ſecurity of property, and its general concomitant, induſtry; and without theſe, an increaſe of people would only greatly aggravate their diſtreſſes. If, in order to fill up thoſe parts that appeared to be deficient in inhabitants, we were to ſuppoſe a high bounty given on children, the effects would probably be, the increaſe of wars, the increaſe of the exportation of ſlaves, and a great increaſe of miſery, but little or no real increaſe of population.

The cuſtoms of ſome nations, and the prejudices of all, operate in ſome degree like a bounty of this kind. The Shangalla negroes, according to Bruce, hemmed in on every ſide by active and powerful enemies, and leading a life of ſevere labour, and of conſtant apprehenſion, feel but little deſire for women. It is the wife and not the man, that is the cauſe of their polygamy. Though they live in ſeparate tribes or nations, yet theſe nations are again ſubdivided into families. In fighting, each family attacks and defends by itſelf, and their's is the ſpoil and plunder who take it. The mothers, therefore, ſenſible of the diſadvantages of a ſmall family, ſeek to multiply it by all the means in their power; and it is by their importunity, that the huſband ſuffers himſelf to be overcome [b]. The motives to polygamy among the Galla, are deſcribed to be the ſame, and in both nations, the firſt wife courts the alliance of a ſecond, for her huſband; and the principal argument that ſhe makes

[a] Park's Africa, c. xxv. p. 336.
[b] Bruce's Travels to diſcover the Source of the Nile, vol. ii. p. 556. 4to.

uſe of, is, that their families may be joined together and be ſtrong, and that her children, by being few in number, may not fall a prey to their enemies in the day of battle [a]. It is highly probable that this extreme deſire of having large families, defeats its own purpoſe; and that the poverty and miſery which it occaſions, cauſe fewer children to grow up to maturity than if the parents had confined their attention to the rearing of a ſmaller number.

Bruce is a great friend to polygamy, and defends it in the only way in which it is capable of being defended, by aſſerting, that, in the countries in which it principally prevails, the proportion of girls to boys born, is two or three to one. A fact ſo extraordinary, however, cannot be admitted upon the authority of thoſe vague inquiries on which he founds his opinion. That there are conſiderably more women living, than men, in theſe climates, is in the higheſt degree probable. Even in Europe, where it is known with certainty that more boys are born than girls, the women in general exceed the men in number; and we may imagine, that, in hot and unhealthy climates, and in a barbarous ſtate of ſociety, the accidents to which the men are expoſed muſt be very greatly increaſed. The women by leading a more ſedentary life, would ſuffer leſs from the effects of a ſcorching ſun and ſwampy exhalations. They would in general be more exempt from the diſorders ariſing from debauchery; but above all, they would eſcape in great meaſure the ravages of war. In a ſtate of ſociety in which hoſtilities never ceaſe, the drains of men, from this cauſe alone, muſt occaſion a great diſproportion of the ſexes, particularly where it is the cuſtom, as related of the Galla in Abyſſinia [b], to maſſacre indiſcriminately all the males, and ſave only the marriageable women from the general deſtruction. The actual diſproportion of the ſexes ariſing from theſe cauſes, probably, firſt gave riſe to the permiſſion of polygamy, and has, perhaps,

[a] Bruce's Travels to diſcover the Source of the Nile, vol. ii. p. 223.
[b] Id. vol. iv. p. 411.

contributed to make us more eaſily believe, that the proportion of male and female children, in hot climates, is very different from what we have experienced it to be, in the temperate zone.

Bruce, with the uſual prejudices on this ſubject, ſeems to think that the celibacy of a part of the women is fatal to the population of a country. He obſerves of Jidda, that, on account of the great ſcarcity of proviſions which is the reſult of an extraordinary concourſe of people to a place almoſt deſtitute of the neceſſaries of life, few of the inhabitants can avail themſelves of the privilege granted by Mahomet. They cannot, therefore, marry more than one wife; and from this cauſe ariſes, he ſays, the want of people and the large number of unmarried women [a]. But it is evident, that the want of people in this barren ſpot ariſes ſolely from the want of proviſions, and that if each man had half a dozen wives, the number of people could not be much increaſed by it.

In Arabia Felix, according to Bruce, where every ſort of proviſion is exceedingly cheap, where the fruits of the ground, the general food of man, are produced ſpontaneouſly, the ſupport of a number of wives coſts no more than that of ſo many ſlaves or ſervants; their food is the ſame, and a blue cotton ſhirt, a habit common to them all, is not more chargeable for the one than for the other. The conſequence is, he ſays, that celibacy in women is prevented, and the number of people increaſed in a fourfold ratio by polygamy, to what it is in thoſe countries that are monogamous [b]. And yet, notwithſtanding this fourfold increaſe, it does not appear that any part of Arabia is really very populous.

The effect of polygamy in increaſing the number of married women and preventing celibacy, is beyond diſpute; but how far this may tend to increaſe the actual population, is a very different conſideration. It may perhaps contribute to preſs the population harder againſt the limits of the food; but the ſqualid and hopeleſs poverty which

[a] Bruce, vol. i. c. xi. p. 280. [b] Id. vol. i. c. xi. p. 281.

this

this occaſions, is by no means favourable to induſtry; and in a climate in which there appears to be many prediſpoſing cauſes of ſickneſs, it is difficult to conceive that this ſtate of wretchedneſs does not powerfully contribute to the extraordinary mortality which has been obſerved in ſome of theſe countries.

According to Bruce, the whole coaſt of the Red Sea, from Suez to Babelmandel, is extremely unwholeſome, but more eſpecially between the tropics. Violent fevers, called there nedad, make the principal figure in this fatal liſt, and generally terminate the third day in death [a]. Fear frequently ſeizes ſtrangers upon the firſt ſight of the great mortality which they obſerve on their firſt arrival.

Jidda and all the parts of Arabia adjacent to the eaſtern coaſt of the Red Sea, are in the ſame manner very unwholeſome [b].

In Gondar, fevers perpetually reign, and the inhabitants are all the colour of a corpſe [c].

In Sirè, one of the fineſt countries in the world, putrid fevers of the very worſt kind are almoſt conſtant [d]. In the low grounds of Abyſſinia, in general, malignant tertians occaſion a great mortality [e]. And every where, the ſmall-pox makes great ravages, particularly among the nations bordering on Abyſſinia, where it ſometimes extinguiſhes whole tribes [f].

The effect of poverty, bad diet, and its almoſt conſtant concomitant want of cleanlineſs, in aggravating malignant diſtempers, is well known; and this kind of wretchedneſs ſeems generally to prevail. Of Tchagaſſa, near Gondar, Bruce obſerves, that the inhabitants, notwithſtanding their threefold harveſts, are miſerably poor [g]. At Adowa, the capital of Tigré, he makes the ſame remark, and applies it to all the Abyſſinian farmers. The land is let yearly to the higheſt bidder, and, in general, the landlord furniſhes the ſeed

[a] Bruce, vol. iii. p. 33. [b] Id. vol. i. 279. [c] Id. vol. iii. p. 178.
[d] Id. p. 153. [e] Id. vol. iv. p. 22. [f] Id. vol. iii. c. iii. p. 68. c. vii. p. 178. vol. i. c. xiii. p. 353. [g] Id. vol. iii. c. vii. p. 195.

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on condition to receive half of the produce; but, it is ſaid, that he is a very indulgent maſter who does not take another quarter for the riſk he has run; ſo that the quantity which comes to the ſhare of the huſbandman is not more than ſufficient to afford a bare ſuſtenance to his wretched family [a]. The Agows, one of the moſt conſiderable nations of Abyſſinia in point of number, are deſcribed by Bruce as living in a ſtate of miſery and penury ſcarcely to be conceived. We ſaw a number of women, he ſays, wrinkled and ſunburnt, ſo as ſcarcely to appear human, wandering about under a burning ſun, with one and ſometimes two children upon their backs, gathering the ſeeds of bent graſs to make a kind of bread [b]. The Agow women begin to bear children at eleven years old. They marry generally about that age, and there is no ſuch thing as barrenneſs known among them [c]. In Dixan, one of the frontier towns of Abyſſinia, the only trade is that of ſelling children. Five hundred are exported annually to Arabia; and in times of ſcarcity, Bruce obſerves, four times that number [d].

In Abyſſinia, polygamy does not regularly prevail. Bruce, indeed, makes rather a ſtrange aſſertion on this ſubject, and ſays, that though we read from the Jeſuits a great deal about marriage and polygamy, yet that there is nothing which may be averred more truly, than that there is no ſuch thing as marriage in Abyſſinia [e]. But, however this may be, it appears clear, that few or no women live a life of celibacy in Abyſſinia, and that the prolific powers of nature are nearly all called into action, except as far as they are checked by promiſcuous intercourſe. This, however, from the ſtate of manners deſcribed by Bruce, muſt operate very powerfully [f].

The check to population from war, appears to be exceſſive. For the laſt four hundred years, according to Bruce, it has never ceaſed to lay deſolate this unhappy country [g]; and the ſavage manner in

[a] Bruce, vol. iii. c. v. p. 124. [b] Id. c. xix. p. 738. [c] Id. p. 739.
[d] Id. vol. iii. c. iii. p. 88. [e] Id. c. xi. p. 306. [f] Id. p. 292.
[g] Id. vol. iv. p. 119.

which

which it is carried on, ſurrounds it with tenfold deſtruction. When Bruce firſt entered Abyſſinia, he ſaw on every ſide ruined villages deſtroyed to the loweſt foundation, by Raſs Michael in his march to Gondar [a]. In the courſe of the civil wars, while Bruce was in the country, he ſays, "The rebels had begun to lay waſte "Dembea, and burnt all the villages in the plain, from ſouth to "weſt; making it like a deſert between Michael and Faſil.**** "The king often aſcended to the top of the tower of his palace, "and contemplated, with the greateſt diſpleaſure, the burning of "his rich villages in Dembea [b]." In another place, he ſays, "the "whole country of Degweſſa was totally deſtroyed; men, women, "and children, were entirely extirpated, without diſtinction of age "or ſex; the houſes raſed to the ground, and the country about it "left as deſolate as after the deluge. The villages belonging to the "king were as ſeverely treated; a univerſal cry was heard from all "parts, but no one dared to ſuggeſt any means of help [c]." In Maitſha, one of the provinces of Abyſſinia, he was told, that if ever he met an old man, he might be ſure that he was a ſtranger, as all that were natives died by the lance young [d].

If the picture of the ſtate of Abyſſinia, drawn by Bruce, be in any degree near the truth, it places, in a ſtrong point of view, the force of that principle of increaſe which preſerves a population fully up to the level of the means of ſubſiſtence, under the checks of war, peſtilential diſeaſes, and promiſcuous intercourſe, all operating in an exceſſive degree.

The nations which border on Abyſſinia are univerſally ſhort-lived. A Shangalla woman at twenty-two, is, according to Bruce, more wrinkled and deformed by age than is an European woman at ſixty [e]. It would appear therefore, that, in all theſe countries, as among the northern ſhepherds, in the times of their conſtant emigrations,

[a] Bruce, vol. iii. c. vii. p. 192. [b] Id. vol. iv. c. v. p. 112.
[c] Id. vol. iv. p. 258. [d] Id. c. i. p. 14. [e] Id. vol. ii. p. 559.

there

there is a very rapid ſucceſſion of human beings, and the difference in the two inſtances is, that our northern anceſtors died out of their own country, whereas theſe die at home. If accurate regiſters of mortality were kept among theſe nations, I have little doubt that it would appear, that, including the mortality from wars, 1 in 17 or 18 at the leaſt, die annually, inſtead of 1 in 34 or 36, as in the generality of European ſtates.

The deſcription which Bruce gives of ſome parts of the country which he paſſed through on his return home, preſents a picture more dreadful even than the ſtate of Abyſſinia, and ſhews how little population depends on the birth of children, in compariſon of the production of food, and of thoſe circumſtances of natural and political ſituation which influence this produce.

" At half paſt ſix," Bruce ſays, " we arrived at Garigana, a " village whoſe inhabitants had all periſhed with hunger the year " before; their wretched bones being all unburied, and ſcattered " upon the ſurface of the ground where the village formerly ſtood. " We encamped among the bones of the dead, no ſpace could be " found free from them [a]."

Of another town or village in his route, he obſerves, " The " ſtrength of Teawa was 25 horſe. The reſt of the inhabitants " might be 1200, naked, miſerable, and deſpicable Arabs, like the " reſt of thoſe which live in villages.****Such was the ſtate of " Teawa. Its conſequence was only to remain till the Daveina " Arabs ſhould reſolve to attack it, when its cornfields being burnt " and deſtroyed in a night, by a multitude of horſemen, the bones " of its inhabitants ſcattered upon the earth, would be all its re- " mains like thoſe of the miſerable village of Garigana [b].

" There is no water between Teawa and Beyla. Once Ingedi- " dema and a number of villages were ſupplied with water from " wells, and had large crops of Indian corn ſown about their poſ-

[a] Bruce, vol. iv. p. 349. [b] Id. p. 353.

" ſeſſions.

" ſeſſions. The curſe of that country the Arabs Daveina have de- " ſtroyed Ingedidema, and all the villages about it; filled up their " wells, burnt their crops, and expoſed all the inhabitants to die " by famine [a]."

Soon after leaving Sennaar, he ſays, " We began now to ſee " the effects of the quantity of rain having failed. There was little " corn ſown, and that ſo late, as to be ſcarcely above ground. It " ſeems the rains begin later as they paſs northward. Many people " were here employed in gathering graſs-ſeeds to make a very bad " kind of bread. Theſe people appear perfect ſkeletons, and no " wonder, as they live upon ſuch fare. Nothing increaſes the dan- " ger of travelling and prejudice againſt ſtrangers, more than the " ſcarcity of proviſions in the country through which you are " to paſs [b].

" Came to Eltic, a ſtraggling village about half a mile from the " Nile, in the north of a large bare plain; all paſture, except the " banks of the river which are covered with wood. We now no " longer ſaw any corn ſown. The people here were at the ſame " miſerable employment as thoſe we had ſeen before, that of gather- " ing graſs-ſeeds [c]."

Under ſuch circumſtances of climate and political ſituation, though a greater degree of foreſight, induſtry, and ſecurity, might conſiderably better their condition, and increaſe their population, the birth of a greater number of children without theſe concomitants, would only aggravate their miſery, and leave their population where it was.

The ſame may be ſaid of the once flouriſhing and populous country of Egypt. Its preſent depreſſed ſtate has not been cauſed by the weakening of the principle of increaſe, but by the weakening of the principle of induſtry and foreſight, from the inſecurity of property conſequent on a moſt tyrannical and oppreſſive government.

[a] Bruce, vol. iv. p. 411. [b] Id. p. 511. [c] Ibid.

The principle of increaſe in Egypt, at preſent, does all that is poſſible for it to do. It keeps the population fully up to the level of the means of ſubſiſtence; and, were its power ten times greater than it really is, it could do no more.

The remains of ancient works, the vaſt lakes, canals, and large conduits for water deſtined to keep the Nile under controul, ſerving as reſervoirs to ſupply a ſcanty year, and as drains and outlets to prevent the ſuperabundance of water in wet years, ſufficiently indicate to us, that the ancients by art and induſtry contrived to fertilize a much greater quantity of land from the overflowings of their river, than is done at preſent; and to prevent, in ſome meaſure, the diſtreſſes which are now ſo frequently experienced from a redundant or inſufficient inundation [a]. It is ſaid of the governor Petronius, that, effecting by art what was denied by nature, he cauſed abundance to prevail in Egypt under the diſadvantage of ſuch a deficient inundation, as had always before been accompanied by dearth [b]. A flood too great is as fatal to the huſbandman, as one that is deficient; and the ancients had, in conſequence, drains and outlets to ſpread the ſuperfluous waters over the thirſty ſands of Lybia, and render even the deſert habitable. Theſe works are now all out of repair, and by ill management often produce miſchief inſtead of good. The cauſes of this neglect, and conſequently of the diminiſhed means of ſubſiſtence, are obviouſly to be traced to the extreme ignorance and brutality of the government, and the wretched ſtate of the people. The Mamelukes, in whom the principal power reſides, think only of enriching themſelves, and employ for this purpoſe what appears to them to be the ſimpleſt method, that of ſeizing wealth wherever it may be found, of wreſting it by violence from the poſſeſſor, and of impoſing continually new and arbitrary contributions [c]. Their ignorance and brutality, and the conſtant ſtate of

[a] Bruce, vol. iii. c. xvii. p. 710.
[b] Voyage de Volney, tom. i. c. iii. p. 33. 8vo. [c] Id. c. xii. p. 170.

alarm

alarm in which they live, prevent them from having any views of enriching the country, the better to prepare it for their plunder. No public works therefore are to be expected from the government, and no individual proprietor dares to undertake any improvement which might imply the poſſeſſion of capital, as it would probably be the immediate ſignal of his deſtruction. Under ſuch circumſtances, we cannot be ſurpriſed, that the ancient works are neglected, that the ſoil is ill cultivated, and that the means of ſubſiſtence, and conſequently the population, are greatly reduced. But ſuch is the natural fertility of the Delta from the inundations of the Nile, that even without any capital employed upon the land, without a right of ſucceſſion, and conſequently almoſt without a right of property, it ſtill maintains a conſiderable population in proportion to its extent; ſufficient, if property were ſecure, and induſtry well directed, gradually to improve and extend the cultivation of the country, and reſtore it to its former ſtate of proſperity. It may be ſafely pronounced of Egypt, that it is not the want of population that has checked its induſtry, but the want of induſtry that has checked its population.

The cauſes which keep down the population to the level of the preſent contracted means of ſubſiſtence are but too obvious. The peaſants are allowed for their maintenance only ſufficient to keep them alive [a]. A miſerable ſort of bread made of doura without leaven or flavour, cold water, and raw onions, make up the whole of their diet. Meat and fat, of which they are paſſionately fond, never appear but on great occaſions, and among thoſe who are more at their eaſe. Their habitations are huts made of earth, where a ſtranger would be ſuffocated with the heat and ſmoke; and where the diſeaſes that are generated by want of cleanlineſs, by moiſture, and by bad nouriſhment, often viſit them and commit great ravages. To theſe phyſical evils are added, a conſtant ſtate of alarm, the

[a] Voyage de Volney, tom. i. c. xii. p. 172.

fear of the plunder of the Arabs, and the viſits of the Mamelukes, the ſpirit of revenge that is tranſmitted in families, and all the evils of a continued civil war [a].

In the year 1783 the plague was very fatal; and in 1784 and 1785, a dreadful famine reigned in Egypt, from a deficiency in the inundations of the Nile. Volney draws a frightful picture of the miſery that was ſuffered on this occaſion. The ſtreets of Cairo, which at firſt were full of beggars, were ſoon cleared of all theſe objects, who either periſhed or fled. A vaſt number of unfortunate wretches, in order to eſcape death, ſpread themſelves over all the neighbouring countries, and the towns of Syria were inundated with Egyptians. The ſtreets, and public places were crowded with extenuated and dying ſkeletons. All the moſt revolting modes of ſatisfying the cravings of hunger were reſorted to; the moſt diſguſting food was devoured with eagerneſs; and Volney mentions the having ſeen, under the walls of ancient Alexandria, two miſerable wretches ſeated on the carcaſe of a camel, and diſputing with the dogs its putrid fleſh. The depopulation of the two years was eſtimated at one ſixth of all the inhabitants [b].

[a] Volney, tom. i. c. xii. p. 173. This ſketch of the ſtate of the peaſantry in Egypt, given by Volney, ſeems to be nearly confirmed by all the other writers on the ſubject; and particularly in a valuable paper intitled, *Conſiderations generales ſur l'Agriculture de l'Egypte, par L. Reynier.* (Memoirs ſur L'Egypte, tom. iv. p. 1.)

[b] Voy. de Volney, tom. i. c. xii. ſ. ii.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Of the Checks to Population in Siberia, Northern and Southern.

THE inhabitants of the moſt northern parts of Aſia ſubſiſt chiefly by hunting and fiſhing; and we may ſuppoſe, therefore, that the checks to their increaſe are of the ſame nature as thoſe which prevail among the American Indians; except that the check from war is conſiderably leſs, and the check from famine, perhaps, greater than in the temperate regions of America. M. de Leſſeps, who travelled from Kamtſchatka to Peterſburgh with the papers of the unfortunate Perouſe, draws a melancholy picture of the miſery that is ſometimes ſuffered in this part of the world from a ſcarcity of food. He obſerves, while at Bolcheretſk, a village of Kamtſchatka, "very heavy "rains are injurious in this country, becauſe they occaſion floods, "which drive the fiſh from the rivers. A famine, the moſt diſtreſſ- "ing to the poor Kampſchadales, is the reſult, as it happened laſt "year in all the villages along the weſtern coaſt of the peninſula. "This dreadful calamity occurs ſo frequently in this quarter, that "the inhabitants are obliged to abandon their dwellings, and repair "with their families to the borders of the Kamtſchatka river, where "they hope to find better reſources, fiſh being more plentiful in this "river. M. Kasloff (the Ruſſian officer who conducted M. de "Leſſeps) had intended to proceed along the weſtern coaſt; but "the news of this famine determined him, contrary to his wiſhes, "to return, rather than be driven to the neceſſity of ſtopping half

 "way,

" way, or periſhing with hunger [a]." Though a different route was purſued, yet in the courſe of the journey almoſt all the dogs which drew the ſledges died for want of food; and every dog, as ſoon as he failed, was immediately devoured by the others [b].

Even at Okotſk, a town of conſiderable trade, the inhabitants wait with hungry impatience for the breaking up of the river Okhota in the ſpring. When M. de Leſſeps was there, the ſtock of dried fiſh was nearly exhauſted. Meal was ſo dear, that the common people were unable to purchaſe it. On drawing the ſeine prodigious numbers of ſmall fiſh were caught, and the joy and clamour redoubled at the ſight. The moſt famiſhed were firſt ſerved. M. de Leſſeps feelingly ſays, " I could not refrain from tears on perceiving the ravenouſneſs " of theſe poor creatures;**** whole families contended for the fiſh, " which were devoured raw before my eyes [c]."

Throughout all the northern parts of Siberia, the ſmall-pox is very fatal. In Kampſchatka, according to M. de Leſſeps, it has carried off three fourths [d] of the native inhabitants.

Pallas confirms this account; and, in deſcribing the Oſtiacks on the Obi who live nearly in the ſame manner, obſerves, that this diſorder makes dreadful ravages among them, and may be conſidered as the principal check to their increaſe [e]. The extraordinary mortality of the ſmall-pox among theſe people, is very naturally accounted for, from the extreme heat, filth, and putrid air, of their underground habitations. Three or four Oſtiack families are crowded together in one yourt, and nothing can be ſo diſguſting as their mode of living. They never waſh their hands, and the putrid remains of the fiſh, and the excrements of the children, are never cleared away. From this deſcription, ſays Pallas, one may eaſily form an idea of the ſtench, the fœtid vapours, and humidity of their yourts [f]. They have ſeldom many children. It is a rare thing to ſee three or four in one family.

[a] Travels in Kamtſchatka, vol. i. p. 147. 8vo. Eng. tranſ. 1790. [b] Id. p. 264. [c] Id. vol. ii. p. 252, 253. [d] Id. vol. i. p. 128. [e] Voy. de Pallas, tom. iv. p. 68. 4to. 5 vols. 1788. Paris. [f] Id. p. 60.

The

The reaſon which Pallas gives, is, that ſo many die young on account of their bad nouriſhment [a]. To this, perhaps, ſhould be added the ſtate of miſerable and laborious ſervitude to which the women are condemned [b], which certainly prevents them from being prolific.

The Samoyedes, Pallas thinks, are not quite ſo dirty as the Oſtiacks, becauſe they are more in motion during the winter in hunting; but he deſcribes the ſtate of the women amongſt them as a ſtill more wretched and laborious ſervitude [c]; and conſequently the check to population from this cauſe would be greater.

Moſt of the natives of theſe inhoſpitable regions live nearly in the ſame miſerable manner, which it would be, therefore, mere repetition to deſcribe. From what has been ſaid, we may form an idea of the principal checks that keep the actual population down to the level of the ſcanty means of ſubſiſtence which theſe dreary countries afford.

In ſome of the ſouthern parts of Siberia, and in the diſtricts adjoining the Wolga, the Ruſſian travellers deſcribe the ſoil to be of extraordinary fertility. It conſiſts in general of a fine black mould of ſo rich a nature as not to require, or even to bear, dreſſing. Manure only makes the corn grow too luxuriantly, and ſubjects it to fall to the ground and be ſpoiled. The only mode of recruiting this kind of land which is practiſed, is, by leaving it one year out of three in fallow, and proceeding in this way, there are ſome grounds, the vigour of which is ſaid to be inexhauſtible [d]. Yet notwithſtanding the facility with which, as it would appear, the moſt plentiful ſubſiſtence might be procured, many of theſe diſtricts are thinly peopled, and in none of them, perhaps, does population increaſe in the proportion that might be expected from the nature of the ſoil.

Such countries ſeem to be under that moral impoſſibility of increaſing, which is well deſcribed by Sir James Steuart [e]. Man, though he may often be produced without a ſufficient demand for

[a] Voy. de Pallas, tom. iv. p. 72. [b] Id. p. 60. [c] Id. p. 92. [d] Id. p. 5. [e] Polit. Econ. b. i. c. v. p. 30. 4to.

him,

him, cannot really multiply and proſper unleſs his labour be wanted; and the reaſon that the population goes on ſo ſlowly in theſe countries, is, that there is very little demand for men. The mode of agriculture is deſcribed to be extremely ſimple, and to require very few labourers. In ſome places the ſeed is merely thrown on the fallow[a]. The buck-wheat is a common culture; and though it is ſown very thin, yet one ſowing will laſt five or ſix years, and produce every year twelve or fifteen times the original quantity. The ſeed which falls during the time of the harveſt is ſufficient for the next year, and it is only neceſſary to paſs a harrow once over it in the ſpring. And this is continued, till the fertility of the ſoil begins to diminiſh. It is obſerved, very juſtly, that the cultivation of no kind of grain can ſo exactly ſuit the indolent inhabitants of the plains of Siberia[b].

With ſuch a ſyſtem of agriculture, and with few or no manufactures, the demand for men muſt be very eaſily ſatisfied. Corn will undoubtedly be very cheap; but labour will be in proportion ſtill cheaper. Though the farmer may be able to provide an ample quantity of food for his own children, yet the wages of his labourer will not be ſufficient to enable him to rear up a family with eaſe.

If, from obſerving the deficiency of population, compared with the fertility of the ſoil, we were to endeavour to remedy it by giving a bounty upon children, and thus enabling the labourer to rear up a greater number; what would be the conſequence? Nobody would want the work of theſe ſupernumerary labourers that were thus brought into the market. Though the ample ſubſiſtence of a man for a day might be purchaſed for a penny, yet nobody will give theſe people a farthing for their labour. The farmer is able to do all that he wiſhes, all that he thinks neceſſary in the cultivation of the ſoil, by means of his own family, and the one or two labourers which he might have before. As theſe people, therefore, can give him nothing

[a] Voy. de Pallas, tom. i. p. 250.
[b] Decouv. Ruſſ. vol. iv. p. 329. 8vo. 4 vols. Berne.

that

that he wants, it is not to be expected that he ſhould overcome his natural indolence, and undertake a larger and more troubleſome concern, merely to provide them gratuitouſly with food. In ſuch a ſtate of things, when the very ſmall demand for manufacturing labour is ſatisfied, what are the reſt to do? They are, in fact, as completely without the means of ſubſiſtence, as if they were living upon a barren ſand. They muſt either emigrate to ſome place where their work is wanted, or periſh miſerably of poverty. Should they be prevented from ſuffering this laſt extremity by a ſcanty ſubſiſtence given to them, in conſequence of a ſcanty and only occaſional uſe of their labour, it is evident, that though they might exiſt themſelves, they would not be in a capacity to marry, and continue to increaſe the population.

It might be ſuppoſed, perhaps, that if there were much good land unuſed, the redundant population would naturally betake itſelf to the cultivation of it, and raiſe its own food. But though there are many countries where good land remains uncultivated, there are very few where it may be obtained by the firſt perſon who chuſes to occupy it. Even were this the caſe, there would be ſtill ſome obſtacles remaining. The ſupernumerary labourer whom I have deſcribed, has no funds whatever, that can enable him to build a houſe, to purchaſe ſtock and utenſils, and to ſubſiſt till he has brought his new land into proper order, and obtained an adequate return. Even the children of the farmer, when they grow up, would find it very difficult to obtain theſe neceſſary funds. In a ſtate of ſociety where the market for corn is extremely narrow, and the price very low, the cultivators are always poor; and though they may be able amply to provide for their family, in the ſimple article of food; yet they cannot realiſe a capital to divide among their children, and enable them to undertake the cultivation of freſh land. Though this neceſſary capital might be very ſmall, yet even this ſmall ſum, the farmer perhaps cannot acquire; for when he grows a greater quantity of corn than uſual, he finds no purchaſer

for it [a], and cannot convert it into any permanent article, which will enable any of his children to command an equivalent portion of ſubſiſtence or labour in future. In general, therefore, he contents himſelf with growing only what is ſufficient for the immediate demands of his family, and the narrow market to which he is accuſtomed. And if he has a large family, many of his children probably fall into the rank of labourers, and their further increaſe is checked, as in the caſe of the labourer before deſcribed, by a want of the means of ſubſiſtence.

It is not therefore a direct encouragement to the procreation and rearing of children that is wanted in theſe countries, in order to increaſe their population; but the creation of an effectual demand for the produce of the ſoil, by promoting the means of its diſtribution. This can only be effected, either by the introduction of manufactures, and by inſpiring the cultivator with a taſte for them, which muſt neceſſarily be a work of time; or by aſſiſting new coloniſts and the children of the old cultivators with capital to enable them to occupy ſucceſſively, and bring into cultivation, all the land that is fit for it.

The late Empreſs of Ruſſia adopted both theſe means of increaſing the population in her dominions. She encouraged both manufacturers and cultivators; and furniſhed to foreigners of either deſcription, capital, and funds for ſubſiſtence, free of all intereſt for a certain term of years [b]. Theſe well-directed efforts, added to what had been done by Peter I. had, as might be expected, a conſiderable effect; and the Ruſſian territories, particularly the Aſiatic part of them, which had ſlumbered for centuries, with a population nearly ſtationary, or at moſt increaſing very languidly, ſeem to have made a ſudden ſtart of late years. Though the population of the more fertile provinces of Siberia be ſtill very inadequate to the richneſs of the ſoil; yet in ſome of them, agriculture flouriſhes in no inconſiderable degree, and

[a] Il y a fort peu de debit dans le pays, parce que le plupart des habitans ſon cultivateurs et elevent eux memes des beſtiaux. Voy. de Pallas, tom. iv. p. 4.

[b] Tooke's View of Ruſſian Empire, vol. ii. p. 242.

great

great quantities of corn are grown. In a general dearth which happened in 1769, the province of Iſetſk was able, notwithſtanding a ſcanty harveſt, to ſupply, in the uſual manner, the founderies and forges of Ural, beſides preſerving from the horrors of famine all the neighbouring provinces [a]. And in the territory of Kraſnoyarſk, on the ſhores of the Yeniſſey, in ſpite of the indolence and drunkenneſs of the inhabitants, the abundance of corn is ſo great, that no inſtance has ever been known of a general failure [b]. Pallas juſtly obſerves, if we conſider that Siberia, not two hundred years ago, was a wilderneſs utterly unknown, and, in point of population, was even far behind the almoſt deſert tracts of North America, we may juſtly be aſtoniſhed at the preſent ſtate of this part of the world, and at the multitude of its Ruſſian inhabitants, who in numbers greatly exceed the natives [c].

When Pallas was in Siberia, proviſions in theſe fertile diſtricts, particularly in the environs of Kraſnoyarſk, were moſt extraordinarily cheap. A pood, or forty pounds, of wheaten flour, was ſold for about twopence halfpenny, an ox for five or ſix ſhillings, and a cow for three or four [d]. This unnatural cheapneſs, owing to a want of vent for the products of the ſoil, was perhaps the principal check to the population. In the period which has ſince elapſed, the prices have riſen conſiderably [e]; and we may conclude, therefore, that the object principally wanted has been attained, and that the population proceeds with rapid ſtrides.

Pallas, however, complains, that the intentions of the Empreſs reſpecting the peopling of Siberia, were not always well fulfilled by her ſubordinate agents, and that the proprietors, to whoſe care this was left, often ſent off coloniſts, in every reſpect unfit for the purpoſe, in regard to age, diſeaſes, and want of induſtrious habits [f]. Even the

[a] Voy. de Pallas, tom. iii. p. 10. [b] Id. tom. iv. p. 3. [c] Id. p. 6.
[d] Id. p. 3. [e] Tooke's View of Ruſſian Empire, vol. iii. p. 239.
[f] Voy. de Pallas, tom. v. p. 5.

German ſettlers in the diſtricts near the Wolga, are, according to Pallas, deficient in this laſt point [a], and this is certainly a moſt eſſential one. It may, indeed, be ſafely aſſerted, that the importation of induſtry is of infinitely more conſequence to the population of a country, than the importation of men and women conſidered only with regard to numbers. Were it poſſible at once to change the habits of a whole people, and to direct its induſtry at pleaſure, no government would ever be reduced to the neceſſity of encouraging foreign ſettlers. But to change long-exiſting habits is of all enterprizes the moſt difficult. Many years muſt elapſe under the moſt favourable circumſtances, before the Siberian boor will poſſeſs the induſtry and activity of an Engliſh labourer. And though the Ruſſian government has been inceſſant in its endeavours, to convert the paſtoral tribes of Siberia to agriculture; yet many obſtinately perſiſt in bidding defiance to any attempts that can be made to wean them from their injurious ſloth [b].

Many obſtacles concur to prevent that rapid growth of the Ruſſian colonies which the procreative power would permit. Some of the low countries of Siberia are unhealthy, from the number of marſhes which they contain [c], and great and waſting epizooties are frequent among the cattle [d]. In the diſtricts near the Wolga, though the ſoil is naturally rich, yet droughts are ſo frequent, that there is ſeldom more than one good harveſt out of three [e]. The coloniſts of Saratof, after they had been ſettled for ſome years, were obliged to remove on this account to other diſtricts, and the whole expence of building their houſes, amounting to above a million of rubles, was remitted to them by the Empreſs [f]. For purpoſes either of ſafety or convenience, the houſes of each colony are all built contiguous, or nearly ſo, and not ſcattered about upon the different farms. A want

[a] Voy. de Pallas, tom. v. p. 253. [b] Tooke's Ruſſian Empire, vol. iii. p 313.
[c] Voy. de Pallas, tom. iii. p. 16. [d] Id. p. 17. tom. v. p. 411.
[e] Id. p. 252, et ſeq. [f] Tooke's Ruſſian Empire, vol. ii. p. 245.

of

of room is, in conſequence, ſoon felt in the immediate neighbourhood of the village, while the diſtant grounds remain in a ſtate of very imperfect cultivation. On obſerving this in the colony of Kotſchesnaia, Pallas propoſed that a certain part ſhould be removed by the Empreſs to other diſtricts, that the remainder might be left more at their eaſe [a]. This propoſal ſeems to prove that ſpontaneous diviſions of this kind did not often take place, and that the children of the coloniſts might not always find an eaſy mode of ſettling themſelves, and rearing up freſh families. In the flouriſhing colony of the Moravian brethren at Sarepta, it is ſaid, that the young people cannot marry without the conſent of their prieſts; and that their conſent is not in general granted till late [b]. It would appear, therefore, that among the obſtacles to the increaſe of population, even in theſe new colonies, the preventive check has its ſhare. Population can never increaſe with great rapidity but when the price of common labour is very high, as in America; and from the ſtate of ſociety in this part of the Ruſſian territories, and the conſequent want of a proper vent for the produce of induſtry, this effect, which uſually accompanies new colonies, and is eſſential to their rapid growth, does not take place in any conſiderable degree.

[a] Voy. de Pallas, tom. v. p. 253. [b] Id. p. 175.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Of the Checks to Population in the Turkiſh Dominions, and Perſia.

In the Aſiatic parts of the Turkiſh dominions, it will not be difficult, from the accounts of travellers, to trace the checks to population, and the cauſes of its preſent decay; and as there is little difference in the manners of the Turks, whether they inhabit Europe or Aſia, it will not be worth while to make them the ſubject of diſtinct conſideration.

The fundamental cauſe of the low ſtate of population in Turkey, compared with its extent of territory, is undoubtedly the nature of the government. Its tyranny, its feebleneſs, its bad laws, and worſe adminiſtration of them, with the conſequent inſecurity of property, throw ſuch obſtacles in the way of agriculture, that the means of ſubſiſtence are neceſſarily decreaſing yearly, and with them, of courſe, the number of people. The miri, or general land tax, paid to the ſultan, is in itſelf moderate [a]; but by abuſes inherent in the Turkiſh government, the pachas, and their agents, have found out the means of rendering it ruinous. Though they cannot abſolutely alter the impoſt which has been eſtabliſhed by the ſultan, they have introduced a multitude of changes, which, without the name, produce all the effects of an augmentation [b]. In Syria, according to Volney, having the greateſt part of the land at their diſpoſal, they clog their conceſſions with burdenſome conditions, and exact the half, and ſometimes even two thirds, of the crop. When the harveſt is over, they

[a] Voy. de Volney, tom. ii. c. xxxvii. p. 373. (8vo. 1787.)

[b] Ibid.

cavil

cavil about loſſes, and, as they have the power in their hands, they carry off what they think proper. If the ſeaſon fail, they ſtill exact the ſame ſum, and expoſe every thing that the poor peaſant poſſeſſes to ſale. To theſe conſtant oppreſſions, are added a thouſand accidental extortions. Sometimes a whole village is laid under contribution for ſome real or imaginary offence. Arbitrary preſents are exacted on the acceſſion of each governor; graſs, barley, and ſtraw, are demanded for his horſes; and commiſſions are multiplied, that the ſoldiers who carry the orders may live upon the ſtarving peaſants, whom they treat with the moſt brutal inſolence and injuſtice [a].

The conſequence of theſe depredations is, that the poorer claſs of inhabitants, ruined, and unable any longer to pay the miri, become a burden to the village, or fly into the cities; but the miri is unalterable, and the ſum to be levied muſt be found ſomewhere. The portion of thoſe who are thus driven from their homes falls on the remaining inhabitants, whoſe burden, though at firſt light, now becomes inſupportable. If they ſhould be viſited by two years of drought and famine, the whole village is ruined and abandoned; and the tax, which it ſhould have paid, is levied on the neighbouring lands [b].

The ſame mode of proceeding takes place, with regard to the tax on the Chriſtians, which has been raiſed by theſe means from three, five, and eleven piaſtres, at which it was firſt fixed, to thirty-five and forty, which abſolutely impoveriſhes thoſe on whom it is levied, and obliges them to leave the country. It has been remarked, that theſe exactions have made a rapid progreſs during the laſt forty years, from which time are dated the decline of agriculture, the depopulation of the country, and the diminution in the quantity of ſpecie carried to Conſtantinople [c].

The peaſants are every where reduced to a little flat cake of barley, or doura, onions, lentils, and water. Not to loſe any part of their

[a] Voy. de Volney, tom. ii. c. xxxvii. [b] Id. c. xxxvii. p. 375. [c] Id. p. 376.

corn,

corn, they leave in it all ſorts of wild grain, which often produces bad conſequences. In the mountains of Lebanon and Nablous, in time of dearth, they gather the acorns from the oaks, which they eat after boiling, or roaſting them on the aſhes [a].

By a natural conſequence of this miſery, the art of cultivation is in the moſt deplorable ſtate. The huſbandman is almoſt without inſtruments, and thoſe he has, are very bad. His plough is frequently no more than the branch of a tree cut below a fork, and uſed without wheels. The ground is tilled by aſſes and cows; rarely by oxen, which would beſpeak too much riches. In the diſtricts expoſed to the Arabs, as in Paleſtine, the countryman muſt ſow with his muſket in his hand; and ſcarcely does the corn turn yellow, before it is reaped and concealed in ſubterraneous caverns. As little as poſſible is employed for ſeed corn, becauſe the peaſants ſow no more than is barely neceſſary for their ſubſiſtence. Their whole induſtry is limited to a ſupply of their immediate wants; and to procure a little bread, a few onions, a blue ſhirt, and a bit of woollen, much labour is not neceſſary. "The peaſant lives therefore in diſtreſs; but at leaſt he "does not enrich his tyrants, and the avarice of deſpotiſm is its own "puniſhment [b]."

This picture, which is drawn by Volney, in deſcribing the ſtate of the peaſants in Syria, ſeems to be confirmed by all the other travellers in theſe countries; and, according to Eton, it repreſents very nearly the condition of the peaſants in the greateſt part of the Turkiſh dominions [c]. Univerſally, the offices of every denomination are ſet up to public ſale, and in the intrigues of the ſeraglio, by which the diſpoſal of all places is regulated, every thing is done by means of bribes. The pachas, in conſequence, who are ſent into the provinces, exert to the utmoſt their power of extortion; but are always outdone by

[a] Voy. de Volney, tom. ii. c. xxxvii. p. 377. [b] Id. p. 379.
[c] Eton's Turkiſh Emp. c. viii. 2d edit. 1799.

the officers immediately below them, who, in their turn, leave room for their ſubordinate agents [a].

The pacha muſt raiſe money to pay the tribute, and alſo to indemnify himſelf for the purchaſe of his office; ſupport his dignity, and make a proviſion in caſe of accidents; and, as all power, both military and civil, centers in his perſon, from his repreſenting the ſultan, the means are at his diſcretion, and the quickeſt are invariably conſidered as the beſt [b]. Uncertain of to-morrow, he treats his province as a mere tranſient poſſeſſion, and endeavours to reap, if poſſible, in one day, the fruit of many years, without the ſmalleſt regard to his ſucceſſor, or the injury that he may do to the permanent revenue [c].

The cultivator is neceſſarily more expoſed to theſe extortions than the inhabitants of the towns. From the nature of his employment, he is fixed to one ſpot, and the productions of agriculture do not admit of being eaſily concealed. The tenure of the land and the right of ſucceſſion are beſides uncertain. When a father dies, the inheritance reverts to the ſultan, and the children can only redeem the ſucceſſion by a conſiderable ſum of money. Theſe conſiderations naturally occaſion an indifference to landed eſtates. The country is deſerted, and each perſon is deſirous of flying to the towns, where he will not only in general meet with better treatment, but may hope to acquire a ſpecies of wealth, which he can more eaſily conceal from the eyes of his rapacious maſters [d].

To complete the ruin of agriculture, a maximum is in many caſes eſtabliſhed, and the peaſants are obliged to furniſh the towns with corn at a fixed price. It is a maxim of Turkiſh policy, originating in the feebleneſs of the government, and the fear of popular tumults, to keep the price of corn low in all the conſiderable towns. In the caſe of a failure in the harveſt, every perſon who poſſeſſes any corn is

[a] Eton's Turkiſh Emp. c. ii. p. 55. [b] Voy. de Volney, tom. ii. c. xxxiii. p. 347.
[c] Id. p. 350. [d] Id. c. xxxvi. p. 369.

obliged to ſell it at the price fixed, under pain of death; and if there be none in the neighbourhood, other diſtricts are ranſacked for it[a]. When Conſtantinople is in want of proviſions, ten provinces are perhaps famiſhed for a ſupply[b]. At Damaſcus, during a ſcarcity in 1784, the people paid only one penny farthing a pound for their bread, while the peaſants in the villages were abſolutely dying with hunger[c].

The effect of ſuch a ſyſtem of government on agriculture, need not be inſiſted upon. The cauſes of the decreaſing means of ſubſiſtence are but too obvious; and the checks which keep the population down to the level of theſe decreaſing reſources, may be traced with nearly equal certainty; and will appear to include almoſt every ſpecies of vice and miſery that is known.

It is obſerved, in general, that the Chriſtian families conſiſt of a greater number of children, than the Mahometan families where polygamy prevails[d]. This is an extraordinary fact; becauſe, though polygamy, from the unequal diſtribution of women which it occaſions, be naturally unfavourable to the population of a whole country; yet the individuals who are able to ſupport a plurality of wives, ought certainly, in the natural courſe of things, to have a greater number of children, than thoſe who are confined to one. The way in which Volney principally accounts for this fact is, that, from the practice of polygamy, and very early marriages, the Turks are enervated while young, and impotence at thirty is very common[e]. Eton notices an unnatural vice, as prevailing in no inconſiderable degree among the common people, and conſiders it as one of the checks to the population[f]; but the five principal cauſes of depopulation which he enumerates, are,

1. The plague, from which the empire is never entirely free.

[a] Voy. de Volney, tom. ii. c. xxxviii. p. 38. [b] Id. c. xxxiii. p. 345.
[c] Id. c. xxxviii. p. 381. [d] Eton's Turkiſh Emp. c. vii. p. 275.
[e] Voy. de Volney, tom. ii. c. xl. p. 445. [f] Eton's Turkiſh Emp. c. vii. p. 275.

2. Thoſe

2. Thoſe terrible diſorders which almoſt always follow it, at leaſt in Aſia.

3. Epidemic and endemic maladies in Aſia, which make as dreadful ravages as the plague itſelf, and which frequently viſit that part of the empire.

4. Famine.

5. And laſtly, the ſickneſſes which always follow a famine, and which occaſion a much greater mortality[a].

He afterwards gives a more particular account of the devaſtations of the plague in different parts of the empire, and concludes by obſerving, that if the numbers of the Mahometans have decreaſed, this cauſe alone is adequate to the effect[b]; and that, things going on in their preſent train, the Turkiſh population will be extinct in another century[c]. But this inference, and the calculations which relate to it, are without doubt erroneous. The increaſe of population in the intervals of theſe periods of mortality, is probably greater than he is aware of. At the ſame time, it muſt be remarked, that in a country where the induſtry of the huſbandman is confined to the ſupply of his neceſſary wants, where he ſows only to prevent himſelf from ſtarving, and is unable to accumulate any ſurplus produce, a great loſs of people is not eaſily recovered, as the natural effects from the diminiſhed numbers cannot be felt in the ſame degree, as in countries where induſtry prevails, and property is ſecure.

According to the Perſian legiſlator, Zoroaſter, to plant a tree, to cultivate a field, to beget children, are meritorious acts; but it appears, from the account of travellers, that many among the lower claſſes of people cannot eaſily attain the latter ſpecies of merit; and in this inſtance, as in numberleſs others, the private intereſt of the individual corrects the errors of the legiſlator. Sir John Chardin ſays, that matrimony in Perſia is very expenſive, and that only men of eſtates will venture upon it, leſt it prove their ruin[d]. The Ruſſian

[a] Eton's Turkiſh Emp. c. vii. p. 264. [b] Id. p. 291. [c] Id. p. 280.
[d] Sir John Chardin's Travels. Harris's Collect. b. iii. c. ii. p. 870.

travellers ſeem to confirm this account, and obſerve, that the lower claſſes of people are obliged to defer marriage till late; and that it is only among the rich that this union takes place early [a].

The dreadful convulſions to which Perſia has been continually ſubject for many hundred years, muſt have been fatal to her agriculture. The periods of repoſe from external wars, and internal commotions, have been ſhort and few, and even during the times of profound peace, the frontier provinces have been conſtantly ſubject to the ravages of the Tartars.

The effect of this ſtate of things is ſuch as might be expected. The proportion of uncultivated, to cultivated land, in Perſia, Sir John Chardin ſtates to be, ten to one [b]; and the mode in which the officers of the Shah and private owners let out their lands to huſbandmen, is not that which is beſt calculated to reanimate induſtry. The grain in Perſia is, beſides, much ſubject to be deſtroyed by hail, drought, locuſts, and other inſects [c], which probably tends rather to diſcourage the employment of capital in the cultivation of the ſoil.

The plague does not extend to Perſia; but the ſmall-pox is mentioned by the Ruſſian travellers, as making very fatal ravages [d].

It will not be worth while to enter more minutely on the checks to population in Perſia, as they ſeem to be nearly ſimilar to thoſe which have been juſt deſcribed in the Turkiſh dominions. The ſuperior deſtruction of the plague in Turkey, is, perhaps, nearly balanced by the greater frequency of internal commotions in Perſia.

[a] Decouv. Ruſſ. tom. ii. p. 293.
[b] Chardin's Travels. Harris's Collect. b. iii. c. ii. p. 902.
[c] Ibid.
[d] Decouv. Ruſſ. tom. ii. p. 377.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Of the Checks to Population in Indoſtan and Tibet.

In the ordinances of Menu, the Indian legiſlator, which Sir Wm. Jones has tranſlated and called the *Inſtitutes of Hindu Law*, marriage is very greatly encouraged, and a male heir is conſidered as an object of the firſt importance.

" By a ſon, a man obtains victory over all people; by a ſon's " ſon, he enjoys immortality; and afterwards, by the ſon of that " grandſon, he reaches the ſolar abode."

" Since the ſon delivers his father from the hell, named put, he " was therefore called puttra, by Brahma himſelf [a]."

Among the different nuptial rites, Menu has aſcribed particular qualities to each.

" A ſon of a *Bráhmì*, or wife, by the firſt ceremony, redeems from " ſin, if he perform virtuous acts, ten anceſtors, ten deſcendants, and " himſelf, the twenty-firſt perſon."

" A ſon born of a wife by the *Daiva* nuptials, redeems ſeven and " ſeven, in higher and lower degrees; of a wife by the *Arſha*, three " and three; of a wife by the *Prájápatya*, ſix and ſix [b]."

A houſekeeper is conſidered as of the moſt eminent order. " The " divine ſages, the manes, the gods, the ſpirits, and gueſts, pray for

[a] Sir Wm. Jones's Works, vol. iii. c. ix. p. 354. Speaking of the Indian laws, the Abbé Raynal ſays, " La population eſt un devoir primitif, un ordre de la nature ſi ſacré, " que la loi permet de tromper, de mentir, de ſe parjurer pour favoriſer un marriage." Hiſt. des Indes, tom. i. l. i. p. 81. 8vo. 10 vols. Paris 1795.
[b] Sir Wm. Jones's Works, vol. iii. c. iii. p. 124.

" benefits

" benefits to maſters of families [a]." An elder brother not married before the younger is mentioned among the perſons who are particularly to be ſhunned [b].

Such ordinances would naturally cauſe marriage to be conſidered as a religious duty; yet it ſeems to be rather a ſucceſſion of male heirs, than a very numerous progeny, that is the object ſo much deſired.

" The father having begotten a ſon, diſcharges his debt to his own " progenitors."

" That ſon alone, by whoſe birth he diſcharges the debt, and " through whom he attains immortality, was begotten from a ſenſe " of duty; all the reſt are conſidered by the wife as begotten from " love of pleaſure [c]."

A widow is, on ſome occaſions, allowed to have one ſon by the brother, or ſome appointed kinſman of the deceaſed huſband, but on no account a ſecond. " The firſt object of the appointment being " obtained, according to law, both the brother and the ſiſter muſt " live together like a father and daughter by affinity [d]."

In almoſt every part of the ordinances of Menu, ſenſuality of all kinds is ſtrongly reprobated, and chaſtity inculcated as a religious duty.

" A man by the attachment of his organs to ſenſual pleaſure incurs " certain guilt; but having wholly ſubdued them, he thence attains " heavenly bliſs."

" Whatever man may obtain all thoſe gratifications, or whatever " man may reſign them completely, the reſignation of all pleaſures " is far better than the attainment of them [e]."

It is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that ſuch paſſages might, in ſome degree, tend to counteract thoſe encouragements to increaſe, which, have been before mentioned, and might prompt ſome religious perſons

[a] Sir Wm. Jones's Works, vol. iii. c. iii. p. 130. [b] Id. p. 141.
[c] Id. c. ix. p. 349. [d] Id. p. 343. [e] Id. c. ii. p. 96.

ſons to deſiſt from further indulgencies when they had obtained one ſon, or to remain more contented than they otherwiſe would have been, in an unmarried ſtate. Strict and abſolute chaſtity, ſeems, indeed, to ſuperſede the obligation of having deſcendants.

" Many thouſands of Brahmens having avoided ſenſuality from " their early youth, and having left no iſſue in their families, have " aſcended nevertheleſs to heaven."

" And, like thoſe abſtemious men, a virtuous wife aſcends to " heaven, though ſhe have no child, if, after the deceaſe of her lord, " ſhe devote herſelf to pious auſterity [a]."

The permiſſion to a brother, or other kinſman, to raiſe up an heir for the deceaſed huſband, which has been noticed, extends only to women of the ſervile claſs [b]. Thoſe of the higher claſſes are not even to pronounce the name of another man, but to

" Continue till death forgiving all injuries, performing harſh duties, " avoiding every ſenſual pleaſure, and cheerfully practiſing the in- " comparable rules of virtue [c]."

Beſides theſe ſtrict precepts relating to the government of the paſſions, other circumſtances would perhaps concur to prevent the full effect of the ordinances which encourage marriage.

The diviſion of the people into claſſes, and the continuance of the ſame profeſſion in the ſame family, would be the means of pointing out to each individual, in a clear and diſtinct manner, his future proſpects reſpecting a livelihood; and from the gains of his father, he would be eaſily enabled to judge whether he could ſupport a family by the ſame employment. And though, when a man cannot gain a ſubſiſtence in the employments appropriate to his claſs, it is allowable for him, under certain reſtrictions, to ſeek it in another; yet ſome kind of diſgrace ſeems to attach to this expedient, and it is not probable that many perſons would marry with the certain proſpect of being

[a] Sir Wm. Jones's Works, vol. iii. c. v. p. 221.
[b] Id. c. ix. p. 343. [c] Id. c. v. p. 221.

being obliged thus to fall from their claſs, and to lower in ſo marked a manner their condition in life.

In addition to this, the choice of a wife ſeems to be a point of conſiderable difficulty. A man might remain unmarried for ſome time, before he could find exactly ſuch a companion as the legiſlator preſcribes. Ten families of a certain deſcription, be they ever ſo great, or ever ſo rich in kine, goats, ſheep, gold, and grain, are ſtudiouſly to be avoided. Girls with too little or too much hair, who are too talkative, who have bad eyes, a diſagreeable name, or any kind of ſickneſs, who have no brother, or whoſe father is not well known, are all, with many others, excluded; and the choice will appear to be in ſome degree confined, when it muſt neceſſarily reſt upon

" A girl, whoſe form has no defect; who has an agreeable name;
" who walks gracefully, like a phenicopteros, or a young elephant;
" whoſe hair and teeth are moderate reſpectively in quantity and
" ſize; whoſe body has exquiſite ſoftneſs [a]."

It is obſerved, that a woman of the ſervile claſs is not mentioned, even in the recital of any ancient ſtory, as the wife of a Brahmen or of a Cſhatriya, though in the greateſt difficulty to find a ſuitable match; which ſeems to imply that ſuch a difficulty might ſometimes occur [b].

Another obſtacle to marriage ariſing from the Hindoo cuſtoms, is, that an elder brother who does not marry, ſeems in a manner to confine all his other brothers to the ſame ſtate; for a younger brother who marries before the elder incurs diſgrace, and is mentioned among the perſons who ought to be ſhunned [c].

The character which the legiſlator draws of the manners and diſpoſition of the women in India is moſt extremely unfavourable.

[a] Sir William Jones's Works, vol. iii. c. iii. p. 120. [b] Id. p. 121.
[c] Id. p. 141.

Among

Among many other paſſages expreſſed with equal ſeverity, he obſerves, that,

" Through their paſſion for men, their mutable temper, their
" want of ſettled affection, and their perverſe nature, (let them be
" guarded in this world ever ſo well), they ſoon become alienated
" from their huſbands [a]."

This character, if true, probably proceeded from their never being allowed the ſmalleſt degree of liberty [b], and from the ſtate of degradation to which they were reduced by the practice of polygamy; but however this may be, ſuch paſſages tend ſtrongly to ſhew, that illicit intercourſe between the ſexes was frequent notwithſtanding the laws againſt adultery. Theſe laws are noticed as not relating to the wives of public dancers or ſingers, or of ſuch baſe men as lived by the intrigues of their wives [c]; a proof that theſe characters were not uncommon, and were to a certain degree permitted. Add to this, that the practice of polygamy [d] among the rich, would ſometimes render it difficult for the lower claſſes of people to obtain wives; and this difficulty would probably fall particularly hard on thoſe who were reduced to the condition of ſlaves.

From all theſe circumſtances combined, it ſeems probable, that among the checks to population in India, the preventive check would have its ſhare; but from the prevailing habits and opinions of the people, there is reaſon to believe, that the tendency to early marriages was ſtill always predominant, and in general prompted every perſon to enter into this ſtate, who could look forward to the ſlighteſt chance of being able to maintain a family. The natural conſequence of this was, that the lower claſſes of people were reduced to extreme poverty, and were compelled to adopt the moſt frugal and ſcanty mode of ſubſiſtence. This frugality was ſtill further increaſed, and extended in ſome degree to the higher claſſes of

[a] Sir William Jones's Works, vol. iii. c. ix. p. 337. [b] Id. c. v. p. 219.
[c] Id. c. viii. p. 325. [d] Id. c. ix. p. 346, 347.

T ſociety,

ſociety, by its being conſidered as an eminent virtue[a]. The population would thus be preſſed hard againſt the limits of the means of ſubſiſtence, and the food of the country would be meted out to the major part of the people in the ſmalleſt ſhares that could ſupport life. In ſuch a ſtate of things, every failure in the crops from unfavourable ſeaſons would be felt moſt ſeverely; and India, as might be expected, has in all ages been ſubject to the moſt dreadful famines.

A part of the ordinances of Menu is expreſsly dedicated to the conſideration of times of diſtreſs, and inſtructions are given to the different claſſes reſpecting their conduct during theſe periods. Brahmens pining with hunger and want are frequently mentioned[b]; and certain ancient and virtuous characters are deſcribed, who had done impure and unlawful acts, but who were conſidered by the legiſlator as juſtified, on account of the extremities to which they were reduced.

" Ajígarta, dying with hunger, was going to deſtroy his own ſon " by ſelling him for ſome cattle; yet he was guilty of no crime, for " he only ſought a remedy againſt famiſhing."

" Vámadéva, who well knew right and wrong, was by no means " rendered impure, though deſirous, when oppreſſed by hunger, of " eating the fleſh of dogs."

" Viſwámitra too, than whom none knew better the diſtinctions " between virtue and vice, reſolved, when he was periſhing with " hunger, to eat the haunch of a dog, which he had received from " a *Chandála*[c]."

If theſe great and virtuous men of the higheſt claſs, whom all perſons were under the obligation of aſſiſting, could be reduced to ſuch extremities, we may eaſily conjecture what muſt have been the ſufferings of the loweſt claſs.

[a] Sir William Jones's Works, vol. iii. c. iii. p. 133. [b] Id. c. iv. p. 165. c. x. p. 397. [c] Id. c. x. p. 397, 398.

Such

Such paſſages clearly prove the exiſtence of ſeaſons of the moſt ſevere diſtreſs, at the early period when theſe ordinances were compoſed; and we have reaſon to think that they have occurred at irregular intervals ever ſince. One of the Jeſuits ſays, that it is impoſſible for him to deſcribe the miſery to which he was witneſs, during the two years famine in 1737 and 1738[a]; but the deſcription which he gives of it, and of the mortality which it occaſioned, is ſufficiently dreadful without further detail. Another Jeſuit, ſpeaking more generally, ſays, " Every year we baptize a thouſand children, whom " their parents can no longer feed, or who, being likely to die, are " ſold to us by their mothers in order to get rid of them[b]."

The poſitive checks to population would of courſe fall principally upon the Sudrá claſs, and thoſe ſtill more miſerable beings, who are the outcaſts of all the claſſes, and are not even ſuffered to live within the towns[c].

On this part of the population the epidemics which are the conſequences of indigence and bad nouriſhment, and the mortality among young children, would neceſſarily make great ravages; and thouſands of theſe unhappy wretches would probably be ſwept off in a period of ſcarcity, before any conſiderable degree of want had reached the middle claſſes of the ſociety. The Abbé Raynal ſays, on what authority I know not, that when the crops of rice fail, the huts of theſe poor outcaſts are ſet on fire, and the flying inhabitants ſhot by the proprietors of the grounds, that they may not conſume any part of the produce[d].

The difficulty of rearing a family, even among the middle and higher claſſes of ſociety, or the fear of ſinking from their caſt, has driven the people in ſome parts of India to adopt the moſt cruel expedients to prevent a numerous offſpring. In a tribe on the frontiers

[a] Lettres Edif. tom. xiv. p. 178. [b] Id. p. 284. [c] Sir William Jones's Works, vol. iii. c. x. p. 390. [d] Hiſt. des Indes, tom. i. liv. i. p. 97. 8vo. 10 vols. Paris, 1795.

of Junapore, a diſtrict of the province of Benares, the practice of deſtroying female infants has been fully ſubſtantiated. The mothers were compelled to ſtarve them. The reaſon that the people gave for this cruel practice, was, the great expence of procuring ſuitable matches for their daughters. One village only furniſhed an exception to this rule, and in this village ſeveral old maids were living. It would naturally occur, that the race could not be continued upon this principle; but it appeared, that the particular exceptions to the general rule, and the intermarriages with other tribes, were ſufficient for this purpoſe. Our Eaſt India Company obliged theſe people to enter into an engagement not to continue this inhuman practice[a].

On the coaſt of Malabar the Nayrs do not enter into regular marriages, and the right of inheritance and ſucceſſion reſts in the mother of the brother, or otherwiſe goes to the ſiſter's ſon, the father of the child being always conſidered as uncertain.

Among the Brahmens, when there are more brothers than one, only the elder, or eldeſt of them, marries. The brothers who thus maintain celibacy cohabit with Nayr women without marriage in the way of the Nayrs. If the eldeſt brother has not a ſon, then the next brother marries.

Among the Nayrs, it is the cuſtom for one Nayr woman to have attached to her two males, or four, or perhaps more.

The lower caſts, ſuch as carpenters, ironſmiths, and others, have fallen into the imitation of their ſuperiors, with this difference, that the joint concern in one woman is confined to brothers and male relations by blood, to the end that no alienation may take place in the courſe of the ſucceſſion[b].

Monteſquieu takes notice of this cuſtom of the Nayrs on the coaſt of Malabar, and accounts for it on the ſuppoſition that it was adopted in order to weaken the family ties of this caſt, that, as ſoldiers, they might

[a] Aſiatic Reſearches, vol. iv. p. 354. [b] Id. vol. v. p. 14.

might be more at liberty to follow the calls of their profeſſion; but I ſhould think that it originated, more probably, in a fear of the poverty ariſing from a large family, particularly, as the cuſtom ſeems to have been adopted by the other claſſes[a].

In Tibet, according to Turner's late account of it, a cuſtom of this kind prevails generally. Without pretending abſolutely to determine the queſtion of its origin, Mr. Turner leans to the ſuppoſition that it aroſe from the fear of a population too great for an unfertile country. From travelling much in the eaſt, he had probably been led to obſerve the effects neceſſarily reſulting from an overflowing population, and is in conſequence one among the very few writers who ſee theſe effects in their true light. He expreſſes himſelf very ſtrongly on this ſubject, and, in reference to the cuſtom above mentioned, ſays, "It certainly appears, that a ſuperabundant "population in an unfertile country muſt be the greateſt of all ca"lamities, and produce eternal warfare or eternal want. Either "the moſt active and the moſt able part of the community muſt be "compelled to emigrate, and to become ſoldiers of fortune, or mer"chants of chance; or elſe, if they remain at home, be liable to "fall a prey to famine, in conſequence of ſome accidental failure in "their ſcanty crops. By thus linking whole families together in the "matrimonial yoke, the too rapid increaſe of population was perhaps "checked, and an alarm prevented, capable of pervading the moſt "fertile region upon the earth, and of giving birth to the moſt in"human and unnatural practice, in the richeſt, the moſt produc"tive, and the moſt populous country in the world. I allude to "the empire of China, where a mother, not foreſeeing the means "of raiſing or providing for a numerous family, expoſes her new"born infant to periſh in the fields; a crime, however odious, by "no means, I am aſſured, unfrequent[b]."

[a] Eſprit des Loix, liv. xvi. c. 5.
[b] Turner's Embaſſy to Tibet, part ii. c. x. p. 351.

In almoſt every country of the globe individuals are impelled, by conſiderations of private intereſt, to habits which tend to repreſs the natural increaſe of population; but Tibet is perhaps the only country where theſe habits are univerſally encouraged by the government, and where to repreſs, rather than to encourage population, ſeems to be a public object.

In the firſt career of life the Bootea is recommended to diſtinction by a continuance in a ſtate of celibacy, as, on the contrary, any matrimonial contract proves almoſt a certain hindrance to his riſe in rank, or his advancement to offices of political importance. Population is thus oppoſed by the two powerful bars of ambition and religion; and the higher orders of men, entirely engroſſed by political or eccleſiaſtical duties, leave to the huſbandman and labourer, to thoſe who till the fields and live by their induſtry, the excluſive charge of propagating the ſpecies[a].

Hence religious retirement is frequent[b], and the number of monaſteries and nunneries is conſiderable. The ſtricteſt laws exiſt to prevent a woman from accidently paſſing a night within the limits of the one, or a man within thoſe of the other; and a regulation is framed, completely to obviate abuſe, and eſtabliſh reſpect towards the ſacred orders of both ſexes.

The nation is divided into two diſtinct and ſeparate claſſes, thoſe who carry on the buſineſs of the world, and thoſe who hold intercourſe with heaven. No interference of the laity ever interrupts the regulated duties of the clergy. The latter, by mutual compact, take charge of all ſpiritual concerns; and the former, by their labours, enrich and populate the ſtate[c].

But, even among the laity, the buſineſs of population goes on very coldly. All the brothers of a family, without any reſtriction of age or of numbers, aſſociate their fortunes with one female, who is

[a] Turner's Embaſſy, part ii. c. i. p. 172. [b] Ibid. [c] Id. c. viii. p. 312.

choſen

choſen by the eldeſt, and conſidered as the miſtreſs of the houſe; and whatever may be the profits of their ſeveral purſuits, the reſult flows into the common ſtore[a].

The number of huſbands is not, apparently, defined or reſtricted within any limits. It ſometimes happens that in a ſmall family there is but one male; and the number, Mr. Turner ſays, may ſeldom exceed that which a native of rank at Teſhoo Loomboo pointed out to him in a family reſident in the neighbourhood, in which five brothers were then living together very happily with one female under the ſame connubial compact. Nor is this ſort of league confined to the lower ranks of people alone, it is found alſo frequently in the moſt opulent families[b].

It is evident that this cuſtom, combined with the celibacy of ſuch a numerous body of eccleſiaſtics, muſt operate in the moſt powerful manner as a preventive check to population. Yet notwithſtanding this exceſſive check, it would appear, from Mr. Turner's account of the natural ſterility of the ſoil, that the population is kept up to the level of the means of ſubſiſtence, and this ſeems to be confirmed by the number of beggars in Teſhoo Loomboo. On theſe beggars, and the charity which feeds them, Mr. Turner's remark, though common, is yet ſo juſt and important, that it cannot be too often repeated.

"Thus I unexpectedly diſcovered," he ſays, "where I had conſtantly ſeen the round of life moving in a tranquil regular routine, "a maſs of indigence and idleneſs of which I had no idea. But yet "it by no means ſurpriſed me, when I conſidered that wherever in"diſcriminate charity exiſts, it will never want objects on which "to exerciſe its bounty, but will always attract expectants more "numerous than it has the means to gratify. No human being "can ſuffer want at Teſhoo Loomboo. It is on this humane "diſpoſition that a multitude even of Muſſelmen, of a frame

[a] Turner's Embaſſy, part ii. c. x. p. 348. 350. [b] Id. p. 349.

"probably

" probably the largeſt and moſt robuſt in the world, place their re-
" liance for the mere maintenance of a feeble life; and beſides theſe,
" I am informed, that no leſs than three hundred Hindoos, Goſeins,
" and Sunniaſſes, are daily fed at this place by the Lama's
" bounty[a]."

[a] Turner's Embaſſy, part ii. c. ix. p. 330.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Of the Checks to Population in China and Japan.

THE account which has lately been given of the population of China is ſo extraordinary, as to ſtartle the faith of many readers, and tempt them to ſuppoſe, either that ſome accidental error muſt have crept into the calculations from an ignorance of the language, or that the mandarin who gave Sir George Staunton the information, muſt have been prompted by a national pride, which is common every where, but is particularly remarkable in China, to exaggerate the power and reſources of his country. It muſt be allowed, that neither of theſe circumſtances is very improbable; at the ſame time it will be found, that the ſtatement of Sir George Staunton, does not very eſſentially differ from other accounts of good authority; and ſo far from involving any contradiction, is rendered probable, by a reference to thoſe deſcriptions of the fertility of China in which all the writers who have viſited the country agree.

According to Duhalde, in the poll made at the beginning of the reign of Kang-hi, there were found 11,052,872 families, and 59,788,364 men able to bear arms; and yet, neither the princes, nor the officers of the court, nor the mandarins, nor the ſoldiers who had ſerved and been diſcharged; nor the literati, the licentiates, the doctors, the bonzas, nor young perſons under twenty years of age; nor the great multitudes living either on the ſea, or on rivers in barks, are comprehended in this number[a].

[a] Duhalde's Hiſt. of China, 2 vols. folio, 1738. vol. i. p. 244.

The proportion which the number of men of a military age, bears to the whole population of any country, is generally eſtimated as 1 to 4. If we multiply 59,788,364 by 4, the reſult will be 239,153,456; but in the general calculations on this ſubject, a youth is conſidered as capable of bearing arms before he is twenty. We ought therefore to have multiplied by a higher number. The exceptions to the poll ſeem to include almoſt all the ſuperior claſſes of ſociety, and a very great number among the lower. When all theſe circumſtances are taken into conſideration, the whole population, according to Duhalde, will not appear to fall very ſhort of the 333,000,000 mentioned by Sir George Staunton [a].

The ſmall number of families, in proportion to the number of perſons able to bear arms, which is a ſtriking part of this ſtatement of Duhalde, is accounted for by a cuſtom noticed by Sir George Staunton as general in China. In the incloſure belonging to one dwelling, he obſerves, that a whole family of three generations, with all their reſpective wives and children, will frequently be found. One ſmall room is made to ſerve for the individuals of each family, ſleeping in different beds, divided only by mats hanging from the ceiling. One common room is uſed for eating [b]. In China there is, beſides, a prodigious number of ſlaves [c], who will, of courſe, be reckoned as part of the families to which they belong. Theſe two circumſtances may perhaps be ſufficient to account for what at firſt appears to be a contradiction in the ſtatement.

To account for this population, it will not be neceſſary to recur to the ſuppoſition of Monteſquieu, that the climate of China is in any peculiar manner favourable to the production of children, and that the women are more prolific than in any other part of the world [d]. The cauſes which have principally contributed to produce this effect, appear to be the following:

[a] Embaſſy to China, vol. ii. Appen. p. 615. 4to. [b] Id. p. 155.
[c] Duhalde's China, vol. i. p. 278. [d] Eſprit des Loix, liv. viii. c. xxi.

First,

First, the excellence of the natural ſoil, and its advantageous poſition in the warmeſt parts of the temperate zone; a ſituation the moſt favourable to the productions of the earth. Duhalde has a long chapter on the plenty which reigns in China, in which he obſerves, that almoſt all that other kingdoms afford, may be found in China; but that China produces an infinite number of things which are to be found no where elſe. This plenty, he ſays, may be attributed as well to the depth of the ſoil, as to the painful induſtry of its inhabitants, and the great number of lakes, rivers, brooks, and canals, wherewith the country is watered [a].

Secondly, The very great encouragement that from the beginning of the monarchy has been given to agriculture, which has directed the labours of the people to the production of the greateſt poſſible quantity of human ſubſiſtence. Duhalde ſays, that what makes theſe people undergo ſuch incredible fatigues in cultivating the earth, is not barely their private intereſt, but rather the veneration paid to agriculture, and the eſteem which the emperors themſelves have always had for it, from the commencement of the monarchy. One emperor of the higheſt reputation was taken from the plough to ſit on the throne. Another found out the art of draining water from ſeveral low countries, which were, till then, covered with it, of conveying it in canals to the ſea, and of uſing theſe canals to render the ſoil fruitful [b]. He beſides wrote ſeveral books on the manner of cultivating land, by dunging, tilling, and watering it. Many other emperors expreſſed their zeal for this art, and made laws to promote it; but none raiſed its eſteem to a higher pitch than Ven-ti, who reigned 179 years before Chriſt. This prince, perceiving that his country was ruined by wars, reſolved to engage his ſubjects to cultivate their lands, by the example of ploughing with his own hands the land belonging to his palace, which obliged all the miniſters and great men of his court to do the ſame [c].

[a] Duhalde's China, vol. i. p. 314. [b] Id. p. 274. [c] Id. p. 275.

 A great

A great feſtival, of which this is thought to be the origin, is ſolemnized every year in all the cities of China on the day that the ſun enters the fifteenth degree of Aquarius, which the Chineſe conſider as the beginning of their ſpring. The emperor goes himſelf in a ſolemn manner to plough a few ridges of land, in order to animate the huſbandman by his own example; and the mandarins of every city perform the ſame ceremony[a]. Princes of the blood, and other illuſtrious perſons, hold the plough after the emperor, and the ceremony is preceded by the ſpring ſacrifice which the emperor, as chief pontiff, offers to Shang-ti to procure plenty in favour of his people.

The reigning emperor, in the time of Duhalde, celebrated this feſtival with extraordinary ſolemnity, and in other reſpects ſhewed an uncommon regard for huſbandmen. To encourage them in their labours, he ordered the governors of all the cities to ſend him notice every year of the perſon in this profeſſion, in their reſpective diſtricts, who was moſt remarkable for his application to agriculture, for unblemiſhed reputation, for preſerving union in his own family, and peace with his neighbours, and for his frugality and averſion to all extravagance[b]. The mandarins in their different provinces encourage with honours the vigilant cultivator, and ſtigmatize with diſgrace the man whoſe lands are neglected[c].

In a country, in which the whole of the government is of the patriarchal kind, and the emperor is venerated as the father of his people, and the fountain of inſtruction, it is natural to ſuppoſe, that theſe high honours paid to agriculture ſhould have a powerful effect. In the gradations of rank, they have raiſed the huſbandman above the merchant or mechanic[d], and the great object of ambition among the lower claſſes, is, in conſequence, to become poſſeſſed of a ſmall portion of land. The number of manufacturers bears but a very inconſiderable proportion to that of huſbandmen in China[e]; and the

[a] Duhalde's China, vol. i. p. 275. [b] Id. p. 276.
[c] Lettres Edif. tom. xix. p. 132. [d] Duhalde's China, vol. i. p. 272.
[e] Embaſſy to China, Staunton, vol. ii. p. 544.

whole

whole ſurface of the empire is, with trifling exceptions, dedicated to the production of food for man alone. There is no meadow, and very little paſture; neither are the fields cultivated in oats, beans, or turnips, for the ſupport of cattle of any kind. Little land is taken up for roads, which are few and narrow, the chief communication being by water. There are no commons, or lands ſuffered to lie waſte by the neglect, or the caprice, or for the ſport, of great proprietors. No arable land lies fallow. The ſoil, under a hot and fertilizing ſun, yields annually, in moſt inſtances, double crops, in conſequence of adapting the culture to the ſoil, and of ſupplying its defects by mixture with other earths, by manure, by irrigation, and by careful and judicious induſtry of every kind. The labour of man is little diverted from that induſtry, to miniſter to the luxuries of the opulent and powerful, or in employments of no real uſe. Even the ſoldiers of the Chineſe army, except during the ſhort intervals of the guards which they are called upon to mount, or the exerciſes, or other other occaſional ſervices, which they perform, are moſtly employed in agriculture. The quantity of ſubſiſtence is increaſed alſo by converting more ſpecies of animals and vegetables to that purpoſe, than is uſual in other countries[a].

This account, which is given by Sir George Staunton, is confirmed by Duhalde, and the other Jeſuits, who agree in deſcribing the perſevering induſtry of the Chineſe, in manuring, cultivating, and watering their lands, and their ſucceſs in producing a prodigious quantity of human ſubſiſtence[b]. The effect of ſuch a ſyſtem of agriculture on population muſt be obvious.

Laſtly, The extraordinary encouragements that have been given to marriage, which have cauſed the immenſe produce of the country to be divided into very ſmall ſhares, and have conſequently rendered

[a] Embaſſy to China, Staunton, vol. ii. p. 545.
[b] Duhalde, chapter on agriculture, vol. i. p. 272. chapter on plenty, p. 314.

China

China more populous in proportion to its means of ſubſiſtence, than perhaps any other country in the world.

The Chineſe acknowledge two ends in marriage [a]; the firſt is, that of perpetuating the ſacrifices in the temple of their fathers; and the ſecond, the multiplication of the ſpecies. Duhalde ſays, that the veneration and ſubmiſſion of children to parents, which is the grand principle of their political government, continues even after death, and that the ſame duties are paid to them as if they were living. In conſequence of theſe maxims, a father feels ſome ſort of diſhonour, and is not eaſy in his mind, if he do not marry off all his children; and an elder brother, though he inherit nothing from his father, muſt bring up the younger children, and marry them, leſt the family ſhould become extinct, and the anceſtors be deprived of the honours and duties they are entitled to from their deſcendants [b].

Sir George Staunton obſerves, that whatever is ſtrongly recommended, and generally practiſed, is at length conſidered as a kind of religious duty, and that the marriage union, as ſuch, takes place in China, wherever there is the leaſt proſpect of ſubſiſtence for a future family. This proſpect, however, is not always realized, and the children are then abandoned by the wretched authors of their being [c]; but even this permiſſion given to parents thus to expoſe their offſpring, tends undoubtedly to facilitate marriage, and encourage population. Contemplating this extreme reſource beforehand, leſs fears are entertained of entering into the married ſtate, and the parental feelings will always ſtep forwards to prevent a recurrence to it, except under the moſt dire neceſſity. Marriage with the poor is, beſides, a meaſure of prudence, becauſe the children, particularly the ſons, are bound to maintain their parents [d].

The effect of theſe encouragements to marriage among the rich, is to ſubdivide property, which has in itſelf a ſtrong tendency to promote population. In China, there is leſs inequality in the fortunes than in the conditions of men. Property in land has been divided into very moderate parcels, by the ſucceſſive diſtribution of the poſſeſſions of every father equally among his ſons. It would rarely happen that there was but one ſon to enjoy the whole property of his deceaſed parents; and, from the general prevalence of early marriages, this property would not often be increaſed by collateral ſucceſſion [a]. Theſe cauſes conſtantly tend to level wealth, and few ſucceed to ſuch an accumulation of it, as to render them independent of any efforts of their own for its increaſe. It is a common remark among the Chineſe, that fortunes ſeldom continue conſiderable in the ſame family beyond the third generation [b].

The effect of the encouragements to marriage on the poor, is to keep the reward of labour as low as poſſible, and conſequently to preſs them down to the moſt abject ſtate of poverty. Sir George Staunton obſerves, that the price of labour is generally found to bear as ſmall a proportion every where to the rate demanded for proviſions as the common people can ſuffer; and that notwithſtanding the advantage of living together in large families, like ſoldiers in a meſs, and the exerciſe of the greateſt economy in the management of theſe meſſes, they are reduced to the uſe of vegetable food, with a very rare and ſcanty reliſh of any animal ſubſtance [c].

Duhalde, after deſcribing the painful induſtry of the Chineſe, and the ſhifts and contrivances, unknown in other countries, to which they have recourſe in order to gain a ſubſiſtence, ſays, "yet it muſt "be owned, that notwithſtanding the great ſobriety and induſtry of "the inhabitants of China, the prodigious number of them occaſions "a great deal of miſery. There are ſome ſo poor, that being unable "to ſupply their children with common neceſſaries, they expoſe "them in the ſtreets."*****"In the great cities, ſuch as Pekin and "Canton, this ſhocking ſight is very common [d]."

[a] Lettres Edif. et Curieuſes, tom. xxiii. p. 448.
[b] Duhalde's China, vol. i. p. 303. [c] Embaſſy to China, vol. ii. p. 157. [d] Ibid.

[a] Embaſſy to China, Staunton, vol. ii. p. 151. [b] Id. p. 152.
[c] Id. p. 156. [d] Duhalde's China, vol. i. p. 277.

The

The Jeſuit Premare, writing to a friend of the ſame ſociety, ſays, " I will tell you a fact, which may appear to be a paradox[a], but is " nevertheleſs ſtrictly true. It is, that the richeſt and moſt flouriſh- " ing empire of the world, is, notwithſtanding, in one ſenſe, the pooreſt " and the moſt miſerable of all. The country, however extenſive and " fertile it may be, is not ſufficient to ſupport its inhabitants. Four " times as much territory would be neceſſary to place them at their " eaſe. In Canton alone, there is, without exaggeration, more than " a million of ſouls, and in a town three or four leagues diſtant, a " ſtill greater number. Who then can count the inhabitants of this " province? But what is this to the whole empire, which contains " fifteen great provinces all equally peopled. To how many millions " would ſuch a calculation amount. A third part of this infinite " population would hardly find ſufficient rice to ſupport itſelf " properly.

" It is well known that extreme miſery impels people to the moſt " dreadful exceſſes. A ſpectator in China, who examines things " cloſely, will not be ſurpriſed that mothers deſtroy, or expoſe, many " of their children; that parents ſell their daughters for a trifle; that " the people ſhould be intereſted; and that there ſhould be ſuch a " number of robbers. The ſurpriſe is, that nothing ſtill more dread- " ful ſhould happen, and that, in the times of famines, which are " here but too frequent, millions of people ſhould periſh with hunger, " without having recourſe to thoſe dreadful extremities, of which we " read examples in the hiſtories of Europe.

" It cannot be ſaid in China, as in Europe, that the poor are idle, " and might gain a ſubſiſtence if they would work. The labours " and efforts of theſe poor people are beyond conception. A Chi- " neſe will paſs whole days in digging the earth, ſometimes up to " his knees in water, and in the evening is happy to eat a little

[a] Lettres Edif. et Curieuſes, tom. xvi. p. 394.

" ſpoonful

" ſpoonful of rice, and to drink the inſipid water in which it was " boiled. This is all that they have in general[a]."

A great part of this account is repeated in Duhalde, and, even allowing for ſome exaggeration, it ſhews, in a ſtrong point of view, to what degree population has been forced in China, and the wretchedneſs which has been the conſequence of it. The population which has ariſen naturally from the fertility of the ſoil, and the encouragements to agriculture, may be conſidered as genuine and deſireable; but all that has been added by the encouragements to marriage, has not only been an addition of ſo much pure miſery in itſelf, but has completely interrupted the happineſs which the reſt might have enjoyed.

The territory of China is eſtimated at about eight times the territory of France[b]. Taking the population of France only at 26 millions, eight times that number will give 208,000,000; and when the three powerful cauſes of population, which have been ſtated, are conſidered, it will not appear incredible, that the population of China ſhould be to the population of France, according to their reſpective ſuperficies, as 333 to 208, or a little more than 3 to 2.

The natural tendency to increaſe is every where ſo great, that it will generally be eaſy to account for the height at which the population is found in any country. The more difficult, as well as the more intereſting part of the inquiry, is to trace the immediate cauſes which ſtop its further progreſs. The procreative power would, with as much facility, double, in twenty-five years, the population of China, as that of any of the ſtates of America; but we know that it cannot do this, from the palpable inability of the ſoil to ſupport ſuch an additional number. What then becomes of this mighty power in China? and what are the kinds of reſtraint, and the forms of premature death, which keep the population down to the level of the means of ſubſiſtence?

[a] Lettres Edif. et Curieuſes, tom. xvi. p. 394. et ſeq.
[b] Embaſſy to China, Staunton, vol. ii. p. 546.

Notwithſtanding the extraordinary encouragements to marriage in China, we ſhould perhaps be led into an error, if we were to ſuppoſe that the preventive check to population does not operate. Duhalde ſays, that the number of bonzas is conſiderably above a million, of which there are two thouſand unmarried, at Pekin, beſides three hundred and fifty thouſand more in their temples eſtabliſhed in different places by the emperor's patents, and that the literary bachelors alone are about ninety thouſand [a].

The poor, though they would probably always marry when the ſlighteſt proſpect opened to them of being able to ſupport a family, and, from the permiſſion of infanticide, would run great riſks in this reſpect; yet they would undoubtedly be deterred from entering into this ſtate under the certainty of being obliged to expoſe all their children, or to ſell themſelves and families as ſlaves; and from the extreme poverty of the lower claſſes of people, ſuch a certainty would often preſent itſelf. But it is among the ſlaves themſelves, of which, according to Duhalde, the miſery in China produces a prodigious multitude, that the preventive check to population principally operates. A man ſometimes ſells his ſon, and even himſelf and wife, at a very moderate price. The common mode is, to mortgage themſelves with a condition of redemption, and a great number of men and maid-ſervants are thus bound in a family [b]. Hume, in ſpeaking of the practice of ſlavery among the ancients, remarks very juſtly, that it will generally be cheaper to buy a full grown ſlave, than to rear up one from a child. This obſervation appears to be particularly applicable to the Chineſe. All writers agree in mentioning the frequency of the dearths in China, and, during theſe periods, it is probable that ſlaves would be ſold in great numbers for little more than a bare main-

[a] Duhalde's China, vol. i. p. 244.

[b] Id. p. 278. La miſere et le grand nombre d'habitans de l'empire y cauſent cette multitude prodigieuſe d'eſclaves: preſque tous les valets, et generalement toutes les filles de ſervice d'une maiſon ſont eſclaves. Lettres Edif. tom. xix. p. 145.

maintenance. It could very rarely therefore anſwer to the maſter of a family to encourage his ſlaves to breed; and we may ſuppoſe, in conſequence, that a great part of the ſervants in China, as in Europe, remain unmarried.

The check to population ariſing from a vicious intercourſe with the ſex, does not appear to be very conſiderable in China. The women are ſaid to be modeſt and reſerved, and adultery is rare. Concubinage is however generally practiſed, and, in the large towns, publick women are regiſtered; but their number is not great, being proportioned, according to Sir George Staunton, to the ſmall number of unmarried perſons, and of huſbands abſent from their families [a].

The poſitive checks to population from diſeaſe, though conſiderable, do not appear to be ſo great as might be expected. The climate is in general extremely healthy. One of the miſſionaries goes ſo far as to ſay, that plagues, or epidemic diſorders, are not ſeen once in a century [b]; but this is undoubtedly an error, as they are mentioned by others, as if they were by no means ſo infrequent. In ſome inſtructions to mandarins relating to the burying of the poor, who have in general no regular places of ſepulture, it is obſerved, that, when epidemic diſeaſes prevail, the roads are found covered with bodies ſufficient to infect the air to a great diſtance [c]; and the expreſſion of years of contagion [d], occurs ſoon after, in a manner which ſeems to imply that they are not uncommon. On the firſt and fifteenth day of every month, the mandarins aſſemble, and give their people a long diſcourſe, wherein every governor acts the part of a father who inſtructs his family [e]. In one of theſe diſcourſes which Duhalde produces, the following paſſage occurs: "Beware of thoſe years which happen "from time to time, when epidemic diſtempers, joined to a ſcarcity "of corn, make all places deſolate. Your duty is then to have com-

[a] Embaſſy to China, vol. ii. p. 157. [b] Lettres Edif. tom. xxii. p. 187.
[c] Id. tom. xix. p. 126. [d] Id. p. 127. [e] Duhalde's China, vol. i. p. 254.

" paſſion on your fellow citizens, and aſſiſt them with whatever you " can ſpare [a]."

It is probable that the epidemics, as is uſually the caſe, fall ſeverely on the children. One of the Jeſuits, ſpeaking of the number of infants whom the poverty of their parents condemns to death the moment that they are born, writes thus: " There is ſeldom a year in " which the churches at Pekin do not reckon five or ſix thouſand of " theſe children purified by the waters of baptiſm. This harveſt is " more or leſs abundant according to the number of catechiſts which " we can maintain. If we had a ſufficient number, their cares need " not be confined alone to the dying infants that are expoſed. There " would be other occaſions for them to exerciſe their zeal, particu- " larly at certain times of the year, when the ſmall-pox, or epide- " mic diſorders, carry off an incredible number of children [b]." It is indeed almoſt impoſſible to ſuppoſe, that the extreme indigence of the lower claſſes of people, ſhould not produce diſeaſes, that would be fatal to a conſiderable part of thoſe children, whom their parents might attempt to rear in ſpite of every difficulty.

Reſpecting the number of infants which are actually expoſed, it would be difficult to form the ſlighteſt gueſs; but, if we believe the Chineſe writers themſelves, the practice muſt be very common. Attempts have been made at different times by the government to put a ſtop to it, but always without ſucceſs. In a book of inſtructions before alluded to, written by a mandarin celebrated for his humanity and wiſdom, a propoſal is made for the eſtabliſhment of a foundling hoſpital in his diſtrict, and an account is given of ſome antient eſtabliſhments of the ſame kind [c], which appear to have fallen into diſuſe. In this book, the frequency of the expoſure of children, and the dreadful poverty which prompts it, are particularly deſcribed. We ſee, he ſays, people ſo poor, that they cannot furniſh the nouriſhment neceſ-

[a] Duhalde's China, vol. i. p. 256.
[b] Lettres Edif. tom. xix. p. 100. [c] Id. p. 110.

ſary

ſary for their own children. It is on this account that they expoſe ſo great a number. In the metropolis, in the capitals of the provinces, and in the places of the greateſt commerce, their number is the moſt conſiderable; but many are found in parts that are leſs frequented, and even in the country. As the houſes in towns are more crowded together, the practice is more obvious; but every where theſe poor unfortunate infants have need of aſſiſtance [a].

In the ſame work, part of an edict to prevent the drowning of children, runs thus: " When the tender offspring juſt produced, is thrown " without pity into the waves, can it be ſaid, that the mother has " given, or that the child has received life, when it is loſt as ſoon as " it is begun to be enjoyed? The poverty of the parents is the cauſe " of this crime. They have hardly enough to ſupport themſelves, " much leſs are they able to pay a nurſe, and provide for the ex- " pences neceſſary for the ſupport of their children. This drives " them to deſpair, and not being able to bring themſelves to ſuffer " two people to die that one may live, the mother, to preſerve the " life of her huſband, conſents to ſacrifice her child. It coſts much, " however, to the parental feelings; but the reſolution is ultimately " taken, and they think that they are juſtified in diſpoſing of the " life of their child to prolong their own. If they expoſed their chil- " dren in a ſecret place, the babe might work upon their compaſſion " with its cries. What do they do then? They throw it into the " current of the river, that they may loſe ſight of it immediately, " and take from it at once all chance of life [b]."

Such writings appear to be moſt authentick documents reſpecting the general prevalence of infanticide.

Sir George Staunton has ſtated, from the beſt information which he could collect, that the number of children expoſed annually at Pekin is about two thouſand [c]; but it is highly probable, that the

[a] Lettres Edif. tom. xix. p. 111.
[b] Id. p. 124. [c] Embaſſy to China, vol. ii. p. 159.

number

number varies extremely from year to year, and depends very much upon ſeaſons of plenty or ſeaſons of ſcarcity. After any great epidemic or deſtructive famine, the number is probably very ſmall; it is natural that it ſhould increaſe gradually on the return to a crowded population, and is, without doubt, the greateſt, when an unfavourable ſeaſon takes place, at a period in which the average produce is already inſufficient to ſupport the overflowing multitude.

Theſe unfavourable ſeaſons do not appear to be infrequent, and the famines which follow them, are perhaps the moſt powerful of all the poſitive checks to the Chineſe population; though at ſome periods, the checks from wars and internal commotions have not been inconſiderable [a]. In the annals of the Chineſe monarchs, famines are often mentioned [b]; and it is not probable that they would find a place among the moſt important events and revolutions of the empire, if they were not deſolating and deſtructive to a great degree.

One of the Jeſuits remarks, that the occaſions when the mandarins pretend to ſhew the greateſt compaſſion for the people are, when they are apprehenſive of a failure in the crops, either from drought, from exceſſive rains, or from ſome other accident, ſuch as a multitude of locuſts, which ſometimes overwhelms certain provinces [c]. The cauſes here enumerated, are probably thoſe which principally contribute to the failure of the harveſts in China; and the manner in which they are mentioned, ſeems to ſhew that they are not uncommon.

Meares ſpeaks of violent hurricanes, by which whole harveſts are diſſipated, and a famine follows. From a ſimilar cauſe, he ſays, accompanied by exceſſive drought, a moſt dreadful dearth prevailed in 1787, throughout all the ſouthern provinces of China, by which an incredible number of people periſhed. It was no uncommon thing at Canton, to ſee the famiſhed wretch breathing his laſt, while

[a] Annals of the Chineſe Monarchs. Duhalde's China, vol. i. p. 136.
[b] Ibid. [c] Lettres Edif. tom. xix. p. 154.

mothers

mothers thought it a duty to deſtroy their infant children, and the young to give the ſtroke of fate to the aged, to ſave them from the agonies of ſuch a dilatory death [a].

The Jeſuit Parennin, writing to a member of the Royal Academy of Sciences, ſays, "another thing that you can ſcarcely believe, is, "that dearths ſhould be ſo frequent in China [b];" and in the concluſion of his letter he remarks, that if famine did not, from time to time, thin the immenſe number of inhabitants which China contains, it would be impoſſible for her to live in peace [c]. The cauſes of theſe frequent famines, he endeavours to inveſtigate, and begins by obſerving, very juſtly, that, in a time of dearth, China can obtain no aſſiſtance from her neighbours, and muſt neceſſarily draw the whole of her reſources from her own provinces [d]. He then deſcribes the delays and artifices which often defeat the emperor's intentions to aſſiſt from the public granaries thoſe parts of the country which are the moſt diſtreſſed. When a harveſt fails in any province, either from exceſſive drought, or a ſudden inundation, the great mandarins have recourſe to the public granaries; but often find them empty, owing to the diſhoneſty of the inferior mandarins, who have the charge of them. Examinations and reſearches are then made, and an unwillingneſs prevails to inform the court of ſuch diſagreeable intelligence. Memorials are however at length preſented. Theſe memorials paſs through many hands, and do not reach the emperor till after many days. The great officers of ſtate are then ordered to aſſemble, and to deliberate on the means of relieving the miſery of the people. Declarations, full of expreſſions of compaſſion for the people, are in the mean time publiſhed throughout the empire. The reſolution of the tribunal is at length made known; but numberleſs other ceremonies delay its execution; while thoſe who are ſuffering, have the time to die with hunger before the remedy arrives. Thoſe

[a] Meares's Voyage, ch. vii. p. 92. [b] Lettres Edif. et Curieuſes, tom. xxii. p. 174.
[c] Id. p. 186. [d] Id. p. 175.

who

who do not wait for this laſt extremity, crawl as well as they can into other diſtricts, where they hope to get ſupport, but leave the greateſt part of their number dead on the road[a].

If, when a dearth occurs, the court do not make ſome attempt to relieve the people, ſmall parties of plunderers ſoon collect, and their numbers increaſe by degrees, ſo as to interrupt the tranquillity of the province. On this account, numerous orders are always given, and movements are continually taking place, to amuſe the people, till the famine is over; and as the motives to relieve the people are generally rather reaſons of ſtate, than genuine compaſſion, it is not probable that they ſhould be relieved at the time, and in the manner, that their wants require[b].

The laſt cauſe of famine, which is mentioned in this inveſtigation, and on which the writer lays conſiderable ſtreſs, is the very great conſumption of grain in making ſpirits[c]; but in ſtating this as a cauſe of famine, he has evidently fallen into a very groſs error; yet, in the Abbé Groſier's general deſcription of China, this error has been copied, and the cauſe above mentioned has been conſidered as one of the grand ſources of the evil[d]. But, in reality, the whole tendency of this cauſe is in a contrary direction. The conſumption of corn in any other way but that of neceſſary food, checks the population before it arrives at the utmoſt limits of ſubſiſtence; and as the grain may be withdrawn from this particular uſe in the time of a ſcarcity, a public granary is thus opened, richer, probably, than could have been formed by any other means. When ſuch a conſumption has been once eſtabliſhed, and has become permanent, its effect is exactly as if a piece of land with all the people upon it were removed from the country. The reſt of the people would certainly be preciſely in the ſame ſtate as they were before, neither better nor worſe in years of average plenty; but in a time of dearth the produce of this

[a] Lettres Edif. tom. xxii. p. 180. [b] Id. p. 187. [c] Id. p. 184.
[d] Vol. i. b. iv. c. iii. p. 396. 8vo. Eng tran.

land would be returned to them, without the mouths to help them to eat it. China, without her diſtilleries, would certainly be more populous, but on a failure of the ſeaſons, would have ſtill leſs reſource than ſhe has at preſent, and as far as the magnitude of the cauſe would operate, would in conſequence be more ſubject to famines, and thoſe famines would be more ſevere.

The ſtate of Japan reſembles in ſo many reſpects that of China, that a particular conſideration of it would lead into too many repetitions. Monteſquieu attributes its populouſneſs to the birth of a greater number of females[a]; but the principal cauſe of this populouſneſs is, without doubt, as in China, the perſevering induſtry of the natives, directed, as it has always been, principally to agriculture.

In reading the preface to Thunburgh's account of Japan, it would ſeem extremely difficult to trace the checks to the population of a country, the inhabitants of which are ſaid to live in ſuch happineſs and plenty; but the continuation of his own work contradicts the impreſſion of his preface; and, in the valuable hiſtory of Japan by Kæmfer, theſe checks are ſufficiently obvious. In the extracts from two hiſtorical chronicles publiſhed in Japan, which he produces[b], a very curious account is given of the different mortalities, plagues, famines, bloody wars, and other cauſes of deſtruction which have occurred ſince the commencement of theſe records. The Japaneſe are diſtinguiſhed from the Chineſe, in being much more warlike, ſeditious, diſſolute, and ambitious; and it would appear, from Kæmfer's account, that the check to population from infanticide, in China, is balanced by the greater diſſoluteneſs of manners with regard to the ſex, and the greater frequency of wars and inteſtine commotions, which prevail in Japan. With regard to the poſitive checks to population from diſeaſe and famine, the two countries ſeem to be nearly on a level.

[a] Liv. xxiii. c. xii. It is ſurpriſing that Monteſquieu, who appears ſometimes to underſtand the ſubject of population, ſhould at other times make ſuch obſervations as this.
[b] Book ii.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the Checks to Population among the Greeks.

It has been generally allowed, and will not indeed admit of a doubt, that the more equal diviſion of property among the Greeks and Romans, in the early period of their hiſtory, and the direction of their induſtry principally to agriculture, muſt have tended greatly to encourage population. Agriculture is not only, as Hume ſtates [a], that ſpecies of induſtry, which is chiefly requiſite to the ſubſiſtence of multitudes, but it is in fact the *ſole* ſpecies by which multitudes can exiſt; and all the numerous arts and manufactures of the modern world, by which ſuch numbers appear to be ſupported, have no tendency whatever to increaſe population, except as far as they tend to increaſe the quantity, and to facilitate the diſtribution, of the products of agriculture.

In countries where, from the operation of particular cauſes, property in land is divided into very large ſhares, theſe arts and manufactures are abſolutely neceſſary to the exiſtence of any conſiderable population. Without them, modern Europe would be unpeopled. But where property is divided into ſmall ſhares, the ſame neceſſity for them does not appear. The diviſion itſelf attains immediately one great object, that of diſtribution; and if the demand for men be conſtant, to fight the battles, and ſupport the power and dignity of the ſtate, we may eaſily conceive that this motive, joined to the natural

[a] Eſſay xi. p. 467. 4to. edit.

love

love of a family, might be ſufficient to induce each proprietor to cultivate his land to the utmoſt, in order that it might ſupport the greateſt number of deſcendants.

The diviſion of people into ſmall ſtates, during the early periods of Greek and Roman hiſtory, gave additional force to this motive. Where the number of free citizens did not perhaps exceed ten or twenty thouſand, each individual would naturally feel the value of his own exertions, and knowing that the ſtate to which he belonged, ſituated in the midſt of envious and watchful rivals, muſt depend chiefly on its population for its means of defence and ſafety, would be ſenſible, that in ſuffering the lands which were allotted to him to lie idle, he would be deficient in his duty as a citizen. Theſe cauſes appear to have produced a conſiderable attention to agriculture without the intervention of the artificial wants of mankind to encourage it. Population followed the products of the earth with more than equal pace; and when the overflowing numbers were not taken off by the drains of war or diſeaſe, they found vent in frequent and repeated colonization. The neceſſity of theſe frequent colonizations, joined to the ſmallneſs of the ſtates, which brought the ſubject immediately home to every thinking perſon, could not fail to point out to the legiſlators and philoſophers of theſe times, the ſtrong tendency of population to increaſe beyond the means of ſubſiſtence; and they did not, like the ſtateſmen and projectors of modern days, overlook the conſideration of a queſtion which ſo deeply affects the happineſs and tranquillity of ſociety. However we may juſtly execrate the barbarous expedients which they adopted to remove the difficulty, we cannot but give them ſome credit for their penetration in ſeeing it; and in being fully aware, that, if not conſidered and obviated, it would be ſufficient of itſelf to deſtroy their beſt planned ſchemes of republican equality and happineſs.

The power of colonization is neceſſarily limited, and after the lapſe of ſome time, it might be extremely difficult, if not impoſſible, in a country, not particularly well ſituated for this purpoſe, to find a

 vacant

vacant ſpot proper for the ſettlement of its expatriated citizens. It was neceſſary, therefore, to conſider of other reſources beſides colonization.

It is probable that the practice of infanticide had prevailed from the earlieſt ages in Greece. In the parts of America where it was found to exiſt, it appears to have originated from the extreme difficulty of rearing many children in a ſavage and wandering life, expoſed to frequent famines and perpetual wars. We may eaſily conceive that it had a ſimilar origin among the anceſtors of the Greeks, or the native inhabitants of the country. And when Solon permitted the expoſing of children, it is probable that he only gave the ſanction of law to a cuſtom already prevalent.

In this permiſſion he had, without doubt, two ends in view. Firſt, that which is moſt obvious, the prevention of ſuch an exceſſive population as would cauſe univerſal poverty and diſcontent; and, ſecondly, that of keeping the population up to the level of what the territory could ſupport, by removing the terrors of too numerous a family and, conſequently, the principal obſtacle to marriage. From the effect of this practice in China, we have reaſon to think that it is better calculated to attain the latter, than the former purpoſe. But if the legiſlator, either did not ſee this, or if the barbarous habits of the times prompted parents invariably to prefer the murder of their children to poverty, the practice would appear to be very particularly calculated to anſwer both the ends in view, and to preſerve, as completely and as conſtantly as the nature of the thing would permit, the requiſite proportion between the food and the numbers which were to conſume it.

On the very great importance of attending to this proportion, and the evils that muſt neceſſarily reſult, of weakneſs on the one hand, or of poverty on the other, from the deficiency or the exceſs of population, the Greek political writers ſtrongly inſiſt; and propoſe in conſequence various modes of maintaining the relative proportion deſired.

Plato,

Plato, in the republick which he conſiders in his books of laws, limits the number of free citizens, and of habitations, to five thouſand and forty; and this number he thinks may be preſerved, if the father of every family chuſe one out of his ſons for his ſucceſſor to the lot of land which he has poſſeſſed, and diſpoſing of his daughters in marriage according to law, diſtribute his other ſons, if he have any, to be adopted by thoſe citizens who are without children. But if the number of children, upon the whole, be either too great or too few, the magiſtrate is to take the ſubject particularly into his conſideration, and to contrive ſo, that the ſame number of five thouſand and forty families ſhould ſtill be maintained. There are many modes, he thinks, of effecting this object. Procreation, when it goes on too faſt, may be checked, or when it goes on too ſlow, may be encouraged, by the proper diſtribution of honours and marks of ignominy, and by the admonitions of the elders to prevent or promote it according to circumſtances [a].

In his philoſophical republick [b] he enters more particularly into this ſubject, and propoſes that the moſt excellent among the men ſhould be joined in marriage to the moſt excellent among the women, and the inferior citizens matched with the inferior females; and that the offſpring of the firſt ſhould be brought up; of the others, not. On certain feſtivals appointed by the laws, the young men and women who are betrothed, are to be aſſembled, and joined together with ſolemn ceremonies. But the number of marriages is to be determined by the magiſtrates, that, taking into conſideration the drains from wars, diſeaſes, and other cauſes, they may preſerve, as nearly as poſſible, ſuch a proportion of citizens as will be neither too numerous nor too few, according to the reſources and demands of the ſtate. The children who are thus born from the moſt excellent of the citizens are to be carried to certain nurſes deſtined to this office, inhabiting a ſeparate part of the city; but thoſe

[a] Plato de Legibus, lib. v. [b] Plato de Republicâ, lib. v.

which

which are born from the inferior citizens, and any from the others which are imperfect in their limbs, are to be buried in some obscure and unknown place.

He next proceeds to consider the proper age for marriage, and determines it to be twenty for the woman, and thirty for the man. Beginning at twenty, the woman is to bear children for the state till she is forty, and the man is to fulfil his duty in this respect, from thirty to fifty-five. If a man produce a child into publick either before or after this period, the action is to be considered in the same criminal and profane light as if he had produced one without the nuptial ceremonies, and instigated solely by incontinence. The same rule should hold, if a man, who is of the proper age for procreation, be connected with a woman who is also of the proper age, but without the ceremony of marriage by the magistrate; he is to be considered as having given to the state a spurious, profane, and incestuous offspring. When both sexes have passed the age assigned for presenting children to the state, Plato allows a great latitude of intercourse, but no child is to be brought to light. Should any infant by accident be born alive, it is to be exposed in the same manner as if the parents could not support it [a].

From these passages it is evident, that Plato fully saw the tendency of population to increase beyond the means of subsistence. His expedients for checking it are indeed execrable; but the expedients themselves, and the extent to which they were to be used, shew his conceptions of the magnitude of the difficulty. Contemplating, as he certainly must do in a small republick, a great proportional drain of people by wars; if he could still propose to destroy the children of all the inferior and less perfect citizens; to destroy also all that were born not within the prescribed ages, and with the prescribed forms; to fix the age of marriage late, and after all to regulate the number of these marriages; his experience and his

[a] Plato de Repub. lib. v.

reasonings

reasonings must have strongly pointed out to him the great power of the principle of increase, and the necessity of checking it.

Aristotle appears to have seen this necessity still more clearly. He fixes the proper age of marriage at thirty-seven for the men, and eighteen for the women; which must of course condemn a great number of women to celibacy, as there never can be so many men of thirty-seven as there are women of eighteen. Yet though he has fixed the age of marriage for the men at so late a period, he still thinks that there may be too many children, and proposes that the number allowed to each marriage should be regulated; and if any woman be pregnant after she has produced the prescribed number, that an abortion should be procured before the fœtus has life.

The period of procreating children for the state, is to cease with the men at fifty-four or fifty-five, because the offspring of old men, as well as of men too young, is imperfect both in body and mind. When both sexes have passed the prescribed age, they are allowed to continue a connexion; but, as in Plato's republick, no child which may be the result, is to be brought to light [a].

In discussing the merits of the republick proposed by Plato in his books of laws, Aristotle is of opinion, that he has by no means been sufficiently attentive to the subject of population; and accuses him of inconsistency, in equalizing property without limiting the number of children. The laws on this subject, Aristotle very justly observes, require to be much more definite and precise in a state where property is equalized than in others. Under ordinary governments an increase of population would only occasion a greater subdivision of landed property; whereas in such a republick the supernumeraries would be altogether destitute, because the lands, being reduced to equal, and as it were elementary, parts, would be incapable of further partition [b].

He

[a] Aristotelis Opera. De Repub. lib. vii. c. xvi.

[b] De Repub. lib. ii. c. vi. Gillies's Aristotle, vol. ii. b. ii. p. 87. For the convenience of those who may not chuse the trouble of consulting the original, I refer at the

He then remarks, that it is neceſſary, in all caſes, to regulate the proportion of children that they may not exceed the proper number. In doing this, deaths and barrenneſs are of courſe to be taken into conſideration. But, if, as in the generality of ſtates, every perſon be left free to have as many children as he pleaſes, the neceſſary conſequence muſt be poverty; and poverty is the mother of villany and ſedition. On this account Pheidon of Corinth, one of the moſt ancient writers on the ſubject of politicks, introduced a regulation directly the reverſe of Plato's, and limited population without equalizing poſſeſſions [a].

Speaking afterwards of Phaleas of Chalcedon, who propoſed as a moſt ſalutary inſtitution, to equalize wealth among the citizens, he adverts again to Plato's regulations reſpecting property, and obſerves, that thoſe who would thus regulate the extent of fortunes, ought not to be ignorant that it is abſolutely neceſſary at the ſame time to regulate the number of children. For, if children multiply beyond the means of ſupporting them, the law will neceſſarily be broken, and families will be ſuddenly reduced from opulence to beggary; a revolution always dangerous to publick tranquillity [b].

It appears from theſe paſſages, that Ariſtotle clearly ſaw, that the ſtrong tendency of the human race to increaſe, unleſs checked by ſtrict and poſitive laws, was abſolutely fatal to every ſyſtem founded on equality of property; and there cannot ſurely be a ſtronger argument againſt any ſyſtem of this kind, than the neceſſity of ſuch laws as Ariſtotle himſelf propoſes.

From a remark which he afterwards makes reſpecting Sparta, it appears ſtill more clearly that he fully underſtood the principle of population. From the improvidence of the laws relating to ſucceſ-

the ſame time to Gillies's tranſlation; but ſome paſſages he has wholly omitted, and of others he has not given the literal ſenſe, his object being a free verſion.

[a] De Repub. lib. ii. c. vii. Gillies's Ariſtot. vol. ii. b. ii. p. 87.

[b] De Repub. lib. ii. c. vii. Gillies's Ariſtot. vol. ii. b. ii. p. 91.

ſion, the landed property in Sparta had been engroſſed by a few, and the effect was greatly to diminiſh the populouſneſs of the country. To remedy this evil, and to ſupply men for continual wars, the kings preceding Lycurgus had been in the habit of naturalizing ſtrangers. It would have been much better, however, according to Ariſtotle, to have increaſed the number of citizens by a nearer equalization of property. But the law relating to children was directly adverſe to this improvement. The legiſlator wiſhing to have many citizens, had encouraged as much as poſſible the procreation of children. A man who had three ſons was exempted from the night-watch; and he who had four, enjoyed a complete immunity from all publick burdens. But it is evident, Ariſtotle moſt juſtly obſerves, that the birth of a great number of children, the diviſion of the lands remaining the ſame, would neceſſarily cauſe only an accumulation of poverty [a].

He here ſeems to ſee exactly the error, into which many other legiſlators beſides Lycurgus have fallen, and to be fully aware, that, to encourage the birth of children, without providing properly for their ſupport, is to obtain a very ſmall acceſſion to the population of a country at the expence of a very great acceſſion of miſery.

The legiſlator of Crete [b] as well as Solon, Pheidon, Plato, and Ariſtotle, ſaw the neceſſity of checking population in order to prevent general poverty; and, as we muſt ſuppoſe that the opinions of ſuch men, and the laws founded upon them, would have conſiderable influence, it is probable, that the preventive check to increaſe from late marriages and other cauſes, operated to a conſiderable degree among the free citizens of Greece.

For the poſitive checks to population, we need not look beyond the wars in which theſe ſmall ſtates were almoſt continually en-

[a] De Repub. lib. ii. c. ix. Gillies's Ariſtot. vol. ii. b. ii. p. 107.

[b] Ariſtot. de Repub. lib. ii. c. x. Gillies's Ariſtot. vol. ii. b. ii. p. 113.

gaged, though we have an account of one waſting plague at leaſt, in Athens; and Plato ſuppoſes the caſe of his republick being greatly reduced by diſeaſe [a]. Their wars were not only almoſt conſtant, but extremely bloody. In a ſmall army, the whole of which would probably be engaged in cloſe fight, a much greater number in proportion would be ſlain, than in the large modern armies, a conſiderable part of which often remains untouched [b]; and as all the free citizens of theſe republicks were generally employed as ſoldiers in every war, loſſes would be felt very ſeverely, and would not appear to be very eaſily repaired.

[a] De legibus, lib. v. [b] Hume, Eſſay xi. p. 451.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the Checks to Population among the Romans.

THE havock made by war in the ſmaller ſtates of Italy, particularly during the firſt ſtruggles of the Romans for power, ſeems to have been ſtill greater than in Greece. Wallace, in his diſſertation on the numbers of mankind, after alluding to the multitudes which fell by the ſword in theſe times, obſerves, "On an accurate re-"view of the hiſtory of the Italians during this period, we ſhall "wonder how ſuch vaſt multitudes could be raiſed as were en-"gaged in thoſe continual wars till Italy was entirely ſubdued [a]." And Livy expreſſes his utter aſtoniſhment that the Volci and Æqui, ſo often as they were conquered, ſhould have been able to bring freſh armies into the field [b]. But theſe wonders will perhaps be ſufficiently accounted for, if we ſuppoſe, what ſeems to be highly probable, that the conſtant drains from wars had introduced the habit of giving nearly full ſcope to the power of population, and that a much greater number of youths, in proportion to the whole people, were yearly riſing into manhood, and becoming fit to bear arms, than is uſual in other ſtates not ſimilarly circumſtanced. It was, without doubt, the rapid influx of theſe ſupplies, which enabled them, like the ancient Germans, to aſtoniſh future hiſtorians, by renovating in ſo extraordinary a manner their defeated and half-deſtroyed armies.

Yet there is reaſon to believe, that the practice of infanticide pre-

[a] Diſſertation, p. 62. 8vo. 1763, Edinburgh. [b] Lib. vi. c. xii.

vailed in Italy as well as in Greece, from the earlieſt times. A law of Romulus forbad the expoſing of children before they were three years old[a], which implies, that the cuſtom of expoſing them as ſoon as they were born had before prevailed. But this practice was of courſe never reſorted to but when the drains from wars were inſufficient to make room for the riſing generation; and conſequently, though it may be conſidered as one of the poſitive checks to the full power of increaſe, yet, in the actual ſtate of things, it certainly contributed rather to promote than impede population.

Among the Romans themſelves, engaged as they were in inceſſant wars, from the beginning of their republick to the end of it, many of which were dreadfully deſtructive, the poſitive check to population from this cauſe alone, muſt have been enormouſly great. But this cauſe alone, great as it was, would never have occaſioned that want of Roman citizens, under the emperors, which prompted Auguſtus and Trajan to iſſue laws for the encouragement of marriage and of children, if other cauſes ſtill more powerful in depopulation had not concurred.

When the equality of property, which had formerly prevailed in the Roman territory, had been deſtroyed by degrees, and the land had fallen into the hands of a few great proprietors, the citizens who were by this change ſucceſſively deprived of the means of ſupporting themſelves, would naturally have no reſource to prevent them from ſtarving, but that of ſelling their labour to the rich, as in modern ſtates; but from this reſource they were completely cut off by the prodigious number of ſlaves, which, increaſing by conſtant influx with the increaſing luxury of Rome, filled up every employment both in agriculture and manufactures. Under ſuch circumſtances, ſo far from being aſtoniſhed that the number of free citizens ſhould decreaſe, the wonder ſeems to be, that any ſhould exiſt beſides the proprietors. And, in fact, many could not

[a] Dionyſius Halicarn. lib. ii. 151

have

have exiſted, but for a ſtrange and prepoſterous cuſtom, which however, perhaps, the ſtrange and unnatural ſtate of the city required, that of diſtributing vaſt quantities of corn to the poorer citizens gratis. Two hundred thouſand received this diſtribution in Auguſtus's time; and it is highly probable that a great part of them had little elſe to depend upon. It is ſuppoſed to have been given to every man of full years; but the quantity was not enough for a family, and too much for an individual[a]. It could not therefore enable them to increaſe; and, from the manner in which Plutarch ſpeaks of the cuſtom of expoſing children among the poor[b], there is great reaſon to believe that many were deſtroyed in ſpite of the jus trium liberorum. The paſſage in Tacitus in which, ſpeaking of the Germans, he alludes to this cuſtom in Rome, ſeems to point to the ſame concluſion[c]. What effect, indeed, could ſuch a law have among a ſet of people who appear to have been ſo completely barred out from all the means of acquiring a ſubſiſtence, except that of charity, that they would be ſcarcely able to ſupport themſelves, much leſs a wife and two or three children. If half of the ſlaves had been ſent out of the country, and the people had been employed in agriculture and manufactures, the effect would have been to increaſe the number of Roman citizens with more certainty and rapidity than ten thouſand laws for the encouragement of children.

It is poſſible that the jus trium liberorum, and the other laws of the ſame tendency, might have been of ſome little uſe among the

[a] Hume, Eſſay xi. p. 488.

[b] De amore prolis.

[c] De moribus Germanorum, 19. How completely the laws relating to the encouragement of marriage and of children were deſpiſed, appears from a ſpeech of Minucius Felix in Octavio, cap. 30. "*Vos enim video procreatos filios nunc feris et avibus exponere, nunc adſtrangulatos miſero mortis genere elidere; ſunt quæ in ipſis viſceribus medicaminibus epotis originem futuri hominis extinguant, et parricidium faciant antequam pariant.*"
This crime had grown ſo much into a cuſtom in Rome that even Pliny attempts to excuſe it; "Quoniam aliquarum fecunditas plena liberis tali veniâ indiget." Lib. xxix. c. iv.

higher

higher classes of the Roman citizens; and, indeed, from the nature of these laws, consisting as they did principally of privileges, it would appear that they were directed chiefly to this part of society. But vicious habits of every possible kind, preventive of population [a], seem to have been so generally prevalent at this period, that no corrective laws could have any considerable influence. Montesquieu justly observes, that "the corruption of manners had destroyed the office "of censor, which had been established itself to destroy the corrup- "tion of manners; but when the corruption of manners becomes "general, censure has no longer any force [b]." Thirty-four years after the passing of the law of Augustus respecting marriage, the Roman knights demanded its repeal. On separating the married and the unmarried, it appeared that the latter considerably exceeded in number the former; a strong proof of the inefficacy of the law [c].

In most countries, vicious habits preventive of population appear to be rather a consequence than a cause of the infrequency of marriage; but in Rome the depravity of morals seems to have been the direct cause which checked the marriage union, at least among the higher classes. It is impossible to read the speech of Metellus Numidicus in his censorship without indignation and disgust. "If it "were possible," he says, "entirely to go without wives, we would "deliver ourselves at once from this evil; but as the laws of nature "have so ordered it, that we can neither live happy with them, nor "continue the species without them, we ought to have more regard "for our lasting security than for our transient pleasures [d]."

Positive laws to encourage marriage and population, enacted on the urgency of the occasion, and not mixed with religion, as in

[a] Sed jacet aurato vix ulla puerpera lecto
Tantum artes hujus, tantum medicamina possunt.
Quæ steriles facit, atque homines in ventre necandos
Conducit. Juvenal, sat. vi. 593.

[b] Esprit des Loix, liv. xxiii. c. 21. [c] Ibid. [d] Aulus Gellius, lib. i. c. 6.

China

China and some other countries, are seldom calculated to answer the end which they aim at, and therefore generally indicate ignorance in the legislator who proposes them; but the apparent necessity of them almost invariably indicates a very great degree of moral and political depravity in the state; and, in the countries in which they are most strongly insisted on, not only vicious manners will generally be found to prevail, but political institutions extremely unfavourable to industry, and consequently to population.

On this account, I cannot but agree with Wallace [a] in thinking that Hume was wrong in his supposition that the Roman world was probably the most populous during the long peace under Trajan and the Antonines [b]. We well know that wars do not depopulate much, while industry continues in vigour; and that peace will not increase the number of people when they cannot find the means of subsistence. The renewal of the laws relating to marriage under Trajan indicates the continued prevalence of vicious habits, and of a languishing industry, and seems to be inconsistent with the supposition of a great increase of population.

It might be said, perhaps, that the vast profusion of slaves would more than make up for the want of Roman citizens; but it appears that the labour of these slaves was not sufficiently directed to agriculture to support a very great population. Whatever might be the case with some of the provinces, the decay of agriculture in Italy seems to be generally acknowledged. The pernicious custom of importing great quantities of corn to distribute gratis to the people had given it a blow which it never afterwards recovered. Hume observes, that "when the Roman authors complain that Italy, "which formerly exported corn, became dependent on all the pro- "vinces for its daily bread, they never ascribe this alteration to the "increase of its inhabitants, but to the neglect of tillage and agri- "culture [c]." And in another place he says, "All ancient authors

[a] Dissertation, Appendix, p. 247. [b] Essay xi. p. 505. [c] Id. p. 504.

"tell

" tell us, that there was a perpetual flux of ſlaves to Italy from the " remoter provinces, particularly Syria, Cilicia, Cappadocia, and " the Leſſer Aſia, Thrace, and Egypt; yet the number of people " did not increaſe in Italy; and writers complain of the continual " decay of induſtry and agriculture[a]." It ſeems but little probable that the peace under Trajan and the Antonines ſhould have given ſo ſudden a turn to the habits of the people as eſſentially to alter this ſtate of things.

On the condition of ſlavery it may be obſerved, that there cannot be a ſtronger proof of its unfavourableneſs, to the propagation of the ſpecies in the countries where it prevails, than the neceſſity of this continual influx. This neceſſity forms at once a complete refutation of the obſervation of Wallace, that the antient ſlaves were more ſerviceable in raiſing up people than the inferior ranks of men in modern times[b]. Though it is undoubtedly true, as he obſerves, that all our labourers do not marry, and that many of their children die, and become ſickly and uſeleſs through the poverty and negligence of their parents[c]; yet notwithſtanding theſe obſtacles to increaſe, there is, perhaps, ſcarcely an inſtance to be produced, where the lower claſſes of ſociety, in any country, if free, do not raiſe up people, fully equal to the demand for their labour.

To account for the checks to population which are peculiar to a ſtate of ſlavery, and which render a conſtant recruit of numbers neceſſary, we muſt adopt the compariſon of ſlaves to cattle, which Wallace and Hume have made; Wallace, to ſhew that it would be the intereſt of maſters to take care of their ſlaves and rear up their offspring[d]; and Hume, to prove that it would more frequently be the intereſt of the maſter to prevent than to encourage their breeding[e]. If Wallace's obſervation had been juſt, it is not to be doubted that the ſlaves would have kept up their own numbers with eaſe by procrea-

[a] Hume, Eſſay xi. p. 433. [b] Diſſert. on the numbers of mankind, p. 91.
[c] Id. p. 88. [d] Id. p. 89. [e] Hume, Eſſay xi. p. 433.

tion; and as it is acknowledged that they did not do this, the truth of Hume's obſervation is clearly evinced. " To rear a child in Lon- " don till he could be ſerviceable, would coſt much dearer, than to " buy one of the ſame age from Scotland or Ireland, where he had " been raiſed in a cottage, covered with rags, and fed on oatmeal and " potatoes. Thoſe who had ſlaves, therefore, in all the richer and " more populous countries, would diſcourage the pregnancy of the " females, and either prevent or deſtroy the birth[a]." It is acknowledged by Wallace, that the male ſlaves greatly exceeded in number the females[b], which muſt neceſſarily be an additional obſtacle to their increaſe. It would appear, therefore, that the preventive check to population, muſt have operated with very great force among the Greek and Roman ſlaves; and as they were often ill treated, fed perhaps ſcantily, and ſometimes great numbers of them confined together in cloſe and unwholeſome ergaſtula, or dungeons[c], it is probable that the poſitive checks to population from diſeaſe, were alſo ſevere, and that when epidemicks prevailed they would be moſt deſtructive in this part of the ſociety.

The unfavourableneſs of ſlavery to the propagation of the ſpecies in the country where it prevails, is not, however, deciſive of the queſtion reſpecting the abſolute population of ſuch a country, or, the greater queſtion, reſpecting the populouſneſs of antient and modern nations. We know that ſome countries could afford a great and conſtant ſupply of ſlaves, without being in the ſmalleſt degree depopulated themſelves; and if theſe ſupplies were poured in, as they probably would be, exactly in proportion to the demand for labour in the nation which received them, the queſtion reſpecting the populouſneſs of this nation, would reſt preciſely on the ſame grounds as in modern ſtates, and depend upon the number of people which it could employ and ſupport. Whether the practice of domeſtick ſlavery, therefore,

[a] Hume, Eſſay xi. p. 433.
[b] Appendix to Diſſertation, p. 182. [c] Hume, Eſſay, xi. p. 430.

prevail or not, it may be laid down as a position not to be controverted, that, taking a sufficient extent of territory to include within it exportation and importation, and allowing some variation for the prevalence of luxury, or of frugal habits, that the population of these countries will always be in proportion to the food which the earth is made to produce. And no cause, physical or moral, unless it operate in an excessive and unusual manner[a], can have any considerable and permanent effect on the population, except in as far as it influences the production and distribution of the means of subsistence.

In the controversy concerning the populousness of antient and modern nations, this point has not been sufficiently attended to, and physical and moral causes have been brought forward on both sides, from which no just inference in favour of either party could be drawn. It seems to have escaped the attention of both writers, that the more productive and populous a country is, in its actual state, the less probably will be its power of obtaining a further increase of produce, and consequently the more checks must necessarily be called into action to keep the population down to the level of this stationary, or slowly-increasing produce. From finding such checks, therefore, in antient or modern nations, no inference can be drawn against the absolute populousness of either. On this account, the prevalence of the small-pox, and of other disorders unknown to the antients, can by no means be considered as an argument against the populousness of modern nations, though to these physical causes, both Hume[b] and Wallace[c] allow considerable weight.

[a] The extreme insalubrity of Batavia, and perhaps the plague in some countries, may be considered as physical causes operating in an excessive degree. The extreme and unusual attachment of the Romans to a vicious celibacy, and the promiscuous intercourse in Otaheite, may be considered as moral causes of the same nature. Such instances may perhaps form exceptions to the general observation.

[b] Essay xi. p. 425. [c] Dissertation, p. 80.

In

In the moral causes which they have brought forward, they have fallen into a similar error. Wallace introduces the positive encouragements to marriage among the antients, as one of the principal causes of the superior populousness of the antient world[a]; but the necessity of positive laws to encourage marriage, certainly rather indicates a want than an abundance of people; and in the instance of Sparta, to which he particularly refers, it appears from the passage in Aristotle, mentioned in the last chapter, that the laws to encourage marriage were instituted for the express purpose of remedying a marked deficiency of people. In a country with a crowded and overflowing population, a legislator would never think of making express laws to encourage marriage and the procreation of children. Other arguments of Wallace will be found upon examination to be almost equally ineffectual to his purpose.

Some of the causes which Hume produces, are in the same manner unsatisfactory, and rather make against the inference which he has in view than for it. The number of footmen, housemaids, and other persons remaining unmarried in modern states, he allows to be an argument against their populousness[b]. But the contrary inference of the two, appears to be the more probable. When the difficulties attending the rearing of a family are very great, and consequently, many persons of both sexes remain single, we may naturally enough infer that population is stationary, but by no means that it is not absolutely great; because the difficulty of rearing a family may arise from the very circumstance of a great absolute population, and the consequent fullness of all the channels to a livelihood; though the same difficulty may undoubtedly exist in a thinly-peopled country, which is yet stationary in its population. The number of unmarried persons in proportion to the whole number, may form some criterion by which we can judge whether population be increasing, stationary, or decreasing; but will not enable us to determine any thing respecting

[a] Dissertation, p. 93. [b] Essay xi.

abſolute populouſneſs. Yet even in this criterion, we are liable to be deceived. In ſome of the ſouthern countries early marriages are general, and very few women remain in a ſtate of celibacy, yet the people not only do not increaſe, but the actual number is perhaps ſmall. In this caſe the removal of the preventive check is made up by the exceſſive force of the poſitive check. The ſum of all the poſitive and preventive checks taken together, forms undoubtedly the immediate cauſe which repreſſes population; but we never can expect to obtain and eſtimate accurately this ſum in any country; and we can certainly draw no ſafe concluſion from the contemplation of two or three of theſe checks taken by themſelves, becauſe it ſo frequently happens, that the exceſs of one check is balanced by the defect of ſome other. Cauſes which affect the number of births or deaths, may, or may not, affect the average population, according to circumſtances; but cauſes which affect the production and diſtribution of the means of ſubſiſtence muſt neceſſarily affect population; and it is therefore only on theſe cauſes, beſides actual enumerations, on which we can with any certainty rely.

All the checks to population which have been hitherto conſidered in the courſe of this review of human ſociety, are clearly reſolvable into moral reſtraint, vice, and miſery.

Of moral reſtraint, though it might be raſh to affirm that it has not had ſome ſhare in repreſſing the natural power of population, yet it muſt be allowed to have operated very feebly indeed, compared to the others. Of the preventive check, conſidered generally, and without reference to its producing vice, though its effect appears to have been very conſiderable in the later periods of Roman Hiſtory, and in ſome few other countries; yet upon the whole, its operation ſeems to have been inferior to the poſitive checks. A large portion of the procreative power appears to have been called into action, the redundancy from which was checked by violent cauſes. Among theſe, war is the moſt prominent and ſtriking feature; and after this, may

may be ranked famines and violent diſeaſes. In moſt of the countries conſidered, the population ſeems to have been ſeldom meaſured accurately according to the average and permanent means of ſubſiſtence, but generally to have vibrated between the two extremes, and conſequently the oſcillations between want and plenty, are ſtrongly marked, as we ſhould naturally expect among leſs civilized nations.

ESSAY, &c.

BOOK II.

OF THE CHECKS TO POPULATION IN THE DIFFERENT STATES OF MODERN EUROPE.

CHAP. I.

Of the Checks to Population in Norway.

In reviewing the ſtates of modern Europe, we ſhall be aſſiſted in our inquiries by regiſters of births, deaths, and marriages, which, when they are complete and correct, point out to us with ſome degree of preciſion, whether the prevailing checks to population are of the poſitive, or of the preventive kind. The habits of moſt European nations, are of courſe much alike, owing to the ſimilarity of the circumſtances in which they are placed; and it is to be expected, therefore, that their tables of mortality ſhould ſometimes give the ſame reſults. Relying, however, too much upon this occaſional coincidence, political calculators have been led into the error of ſuppoſing, that there is, generally ſpeaking, an invariable order of mor-

tality in all countries; but it appears, on the contrary, that this order is extremely variable; that it is very different in different places of the ſame country, and, within certain limits, depends upon circumſtances, which it is in the power of man to alter.

Norway, during nearly the whole of the laſt century, was in a peculiar degree exempt from the drains of people by war. The climate is remarkably free from epidemick ſickneſſes, and, in common years, the mortality is leſs than in any other country in Europe, the regiſters of which are known to be correct[a]. The proportion of the annual deaths to the whole population, on an average throughout the whole country, is only as 1 to 48[b]. Yet the population of Norway never ſeems to have increaſed with great rapidity. It has made a ſtart within the laſt ten or fifteen years, but, till that period, its progreſs muſt have been very ſlow, as we know that the country was peopled in very early ages, and in 1769 its population was only 723,141[c].

Before we enter upon an examination of its internal economy, we muſt feel aſſured, that, as the poſitive checks to its population have been ſo ſmall, the preventive checks muſt have been proportionably great; and we accordingly find from the regiſters, that the proportion of yearly marriages to the whole population, is as 1 to 130[d], which is a ſmaller proportion of marriages than appears in the regiſters of any other country, except Switzerland.

One cauſe of this ſmall number of marriages is the mode in which the enrolments for the army have been conducted, till within a very few years. Every man in Denmark and Norway born of a farmer or labourer is a ſoldier[e]. Formerly, the commanding officer of the

[a] The regiſters for Ruſſia give a ſmaller mortality; but it is ſuppoſed that they are defective.

[b] Thaarup's Statiſtik der Daniſchen Monarchie, vol. ii. p. 4.

[c] Id. Table ii. p. 5. [d] Id. vol. ii. p. 4.

[e] The few particulars which I ſhall mention relating to Norway, were collected during a ſummer excurſion in that country in the year 1799.

diſtrict

diſtrict might take theſe peaſants at any age he pleaſed, and he in general preferred thoſe that were from twenty-five to thirty, to ſuch as were younger. After being taken into the ſervice, a man could not marry without producing a certificate ſigned by the miniſter of the pariſh, that he had ſubſtance enough to ſupport a wife and family; and even then, it was further neceſſary for him to obtain the permiſſion of the officer. The difficulty, and ſometimes the expence, attendant on the obtaining of this certificate and permiſſion, generally deterred thoſe who were not in very good circumſtances, from thinking of marriage till their ſervice of ten years was expired; and as they might be enrolled at any age under thirty-ſix, and the officers were apt to take the oldeſt firſt, it would often be late in life before they could feel themſelves at liberty to ſettle.

Though the miniſter of the pariſh had no legal power to prevent a man from marrying who was not enrolled for ſervice; yet it appears, that cuſtom had in ſome degree ſanctioned a diſcretionary power of this kind, and the prieſt often refuſed to join a couple together, when the parties had no probable means of ſupporting a family.

Every obſtacle, however, of this nature, whether ariſing from law or cuſtom, has now been entirely removed. A full liberty is given to marry at any age, without leave either of the officer or prieſt; and in the enrolments for the army, all thoſe of the age of twenty, are taken firſt, then all thoſe at twenty-two, and ſo on till the neceſſary number is completed.

The officers in general diſapprove of this change. They ſay that a young Norwegian has not arrived at his full ſtrength, and does not make a good ſoldier at twenty. And many are of opinion, that the peaſants will now marry too young, and that more children will be born than the country can ſupport.

But, independently of any regulations reſpecting the military enrolments, the peculiar ſtate of Norway throws very ſtrong obſtacles in the way of early marriages. There are no large manufacturing towns to take off the overflowing population of the country; and as

each

each village naturally furniſhes from itſelf a ſupply of hands more than equal to the demand, a change of place in ſearch of work ſeldom promiſes any ſucceſs. Unleſs, therefore, an opportunity of foreign emigration offer, the Norwegian peaſant generally remains in the village in which he was born; and as the vacancies in houſes and employments muſt occur very ſlowly, owing to the ſmall mortality that takes place, he will often ſee himſelf compelled to wait a conſiderable time, before he can attain a ſituation which will enable him to rear a family.

The Norway farms have in general a certain number of married labourers employed upon them, in proportion to their ſize, who are called houſe-men. They receive from the farmer a houſe and a quantity of land nearly ſufficient to maintain a family; in return for which, they are under the obligation of working for him at a low and fixed price whenever they are called upon. Except in the immediate neighbourhood of the towns, and on the ſeacoaſt, the vacancy of a place of this kind, is the only proſpect which preſents itſelf of providing for a family. From the ſmall number of people, and the little variety of employment, the ſubject is brought diſtinctly within the view of each individual; and he muſt feel the abſolute neceſſity of repreſſing his inclinations to marriage, till ſome ſuch vacancy offer. If, from the plenty of materials, he ſhould be led to build a houſe himſelf, it could not be expected that the farmer, if he had a ſufficient number of labourers before, ſhould give him an adequate portion of land with it; and though he would, in general, find employment for three or four months in the ſummer, yet there would be little chance of his earning enough to ſupport a family during the whole year. It is probable, that it was in caſes of this kind, where the impatience of the parties prompted them to build, or propoſe to build, a houſe themſelves, and truſt to what they could earn, that the pariſh prieſts exerciſed the diſcretionary power of refuſing to marry.

The young men and women therefore, are obliged to remain with

with the farmers as unmarried ſervants, till a houſeman's place becomes vacant: and of theſe unmarried ſervants, there is in every farm, and every gentleman's family, a much greater proportion than the work would ſeem to require. There is but little diviſion of labour in Norway. Almoſt all the wants of domeſtick economy are ſupplied in each ſeparate houſehold. Not only the common operations of brewing, baking, and waſhing, are carried on at home, but many families make, or import, their own cheeſe and butter, kill their own beef and mutton, import their own grocery ſtores; and the farmers, and country people, in general, ſpin their own flax and wool, and weave their own linen and woollen clothes. In the largeſt towns, ſuch as Chriſtiania and Drontheim, there is nothing that can be called a market. It is extremely difficult to get a joint of freſh meat; and a pound of freſh butter is an article not to be purchaſed, even in the midſt of ſummer. Fairs are held at certain ſeaſons of the year, and ſtores of all kinds of proviſions that will keep, are laid in at theſe times; and if this care be neglected, great inconveniences are ſuffered, as ſcarcely any thing is to be bought retail. Perſons who make a temporary reſidence, in the country, or ſmall merchants not poſſeſſed of farms, complain heavily of this inconvenience; and the wives of merchants who have large eſtates ſay, that the domeſtick economy of a Norway family is ſo extenſive and complicated, that the neceſſary ſuperintendence of it requires their whole attention, and that they can find no time for any thing elſe.

It is evident that a ſyſtem of this kind muſt require a great number of ſervants. It is ſaid beſides, that they are not remarkable for diligence, and that to do the ſame quantity of work, more are neceſſary than in other countries. The conſequence is, that in every eſtabliſhment two or three times the number of ſervants will be found, as in a family, living at the ſame rate in England; and it is not uncommon for a farmer in the country, who, in his appear-

ance, is not to be diſtinguiſhed from any of his labourers, to have a houſehold of twenty perſons, including his own family.

The means of maintenance to a ſingle man are, therefore, much leſs confined than to a married man; and under ſuch circumſtances, the lower claſſes of people cannot increaſe much, till the increaſe of mercantile ſtock, or the diviſion and improvement of farms, furniſhes a greater quantity of employment for married labourers. In countries more fully peopled this ſubject is always involved in great obſcurity. Each man naturally thinks that he has as good a chance of finding employment as his neighbour, and that if he cannot get it in one place, he ſhall, in ſome other. He marries, therefore, and truſts to fortune; and the effect too frequently is, that the redundant population occaſioned in this manner is repreſſed by the poſitive checks of poverty and diſeaſe. In Norway the ſubject is not involved in the ſame obſcurity. The number of additional families which the increaſing demand for labour will ſupport, is more diſtinctly marked. The population is ſo ſmall, that, even in the towns, it is difficult to fall into any conſiderable error on this ſubject; and in the country, the diviſion and improvement of an eſtate, and the creation of a greater number of houſemen's places, muſt be a matter of complete notoriety. If a man can obtain one of theſe places, he marries, and is able to ſupport a family; if he cannot obtain one, he remains ſingle. A redundant population is thus prevented from taking place, inſtead of being deſtroyed after it has taken place.

It is not to be doubted, that the general prevalence of the preventive check to population, owing to the ſtate of ſociety which has been deſcribed, together with the obſtacles thrown in the way of early marriages from the enrolments for the army, have powerfully contributed to place the lower claſſes of people in Norway in a better ſituation, than could be expected from the nature of the ſoil and climate. On the ſeacoaſt, where, on account

account of the hopes of an adequate ſupply of food, from fiſhing, the preventive check does not prevail in the ſame degree, the people are very poor and wretched; and, beyond compariſon, in a worſe ſtate, than the peaſants in the interior of the country.

The greateſt part of the ſoil in Norway is abſolutely incapable of bearing corn, and the climate is ſubject to the moſt ſudden and fatal changes. There are three nights about the end of Auguſt which are particularly diſtinguiſhed by the name of iron nights, on account of their ſometimes blaſting the promiſe of the faireſt crops. On theſe occaſions, the lower claſſes of people neceſſarily ſuffer; but, as there are ſcarcely any independent labourers, except the houſemen that have been mentioned, who all keep cattle, the hardſhip of being obliged to mix the inner bark of the pine with their bread, is mitigated, by the ſtores of cheeſe, of ſalt butter, of ſalt meat, ſalt fiſh, and bacon, which they were enabled to lay up for winter proviſion. The period in which the want of corn preſſes the moſt ſeverely, is, generally, about two months before harveſt; and at this time the cows, of which the pooreſt houſemen have generally two or three, and many five or ſix, begin to give milk, which muſt be a great aſſiſtance to the family, particularly to the younger part of it. In the ſummer of the year 1799, the Norwegians appeared to wear a face of plenty and content, while their neighbours, the Swedes, were abſolutely ſtarving: and I particularly remarked, that the ſons of houſemen, and the farmers boys, were fatter, larger, and had better calves to their legs, than boys of the ſame age and in ſimilar ſituations in England.

It is alſo, without doubt, owing to the prevalence of the preventive check to population, rather than to any peculiar healthineſs of the air, that the mortality in Norway is ſo ſmall. There is nothing in the climate, or the ſoil, that would lead to the ſuppoſition of its being in any extraordinary manner favourable to the general health of the inhabitants; but as in every country the principal mortality takes place among very young children, the ſmaller

number

number of theſe in Norway, in proportion to the whole population, will naturally occaſion a ſmaller mortality, than in other countries, ſuppoſing the climate to be equally healthy.

It may be ſaid, perhaps, and with truth, that one of the principal reaſons of the ſmall mortality in Norway, is, that the towns are inconſiderable and few, and that few people are employed in unwholeſome manufactories. In ſome of the agricultural villages in England, where the preventive check to population does not prevail in the ſame degree, the mortality is as ſmall as in Norway. But it ſhould be recollected, that the calculation, in this caſe, is for thoſe particular villages alone; whereas in Norway the calculation of 1 in 48 is for the whole country. The redundant population of the villages in England is diſpoſed of by conſtant emigrations to the towns, and the deaths of a great part of thoſe that are born in the pariſh do not appear in the regiſters. But in Norway all the deaths are within the calculation, and it is clear that if more were born than the country could ſupport, a great mortality muſt take place in ſome form or other. If the people were not deſtroyed by diſeaſe, they would be deſtroyed by famine. It is indeed well known that bad and inſufficient food will produce diſeaſe and death in the pureſt air and the fineſt climate. Suppoſing, therefore, no great foreign emigration, and no extraordinary increaſe in the reſources of the country, nothing but the more extenſive prevalence of the preventive check to population in Norway could ſecure to her a ſmaller mortality than in other countries, however pure her air may be, or however healthy the employments of her people.

Norway ſeems to have been antiently divided into large eſtates or farms, called Gores; and as, according to the law of ſucceſſion, all the brothers divide the property equally, it is a matter of ſurpriſe, and a proof how ſlowly the population has hitherto increaſed, that theſe eſtates have not been more ſubdivided. Many of them are indeed now divided into half gores, and quarter gores, and ſome ſtill lower; but it has in general been the cuſtom, on the death of the

the father, for a commiſſion to value the eſtate at a low rate, and if the eldeſt ſon can pay his brothers' and ſiſters'[a] ſhares, according to this valuation, by mortgaging his eſtate, or otherwiſe, the whole is awarded to him; and the force of habit, and natural indolence, too frequently prompt him to conduct the farm after the manner of his foreſathers, with few or no efforts at improvement.

Another great obſtacle to the improvement of farms in Norway, is a law which is called Odel's right, by which, any lineal deſcendant can repurchaſe an eſtate which had been ſold out of the family, by paying the original purchaſe-money. Formerly, collateral as well as lineal deſcendants had this power, and the time was abſolutely unlimited, ſo that the purchaſer could never conſider himſelf as ſecure from claims. Afterwards, the time was limited to twenty years, and, in 1771, it was ſtill further limited to ten years, and all the collateral branches were excluded. It muſt, however, be an uninterrupted poſſeſſion of ten years; for if before the expiration of this term, a perſon who has a right to claim under the law, give notice to the poſſeſſor that he does not forego his claim, though he is not then in a condition to make the purchaſe, the poſſeſſor is obliged to wait ſix years more before he is perfectly ſecure. And as, in addition to this, the eldeſt in the lineal deſcent may reclaim an eſtate that has been repurchaſed by a younger brother, the law, even in its preſent amended ſtate, muſt be conſidered as a very great bar to improvement; and in its former ſtate when the time was unlimited, and the ſale of eſtates in this way was more frequent, it ſeems as if it muſt have been a moſt complete obſtacle to the amelioration of farms, and obviouſly accounts for the very ſlow increaſe of the population in Norway for many centuries.

A further difficulty in the way of clearing and cultivating the land, ariſes from the fears of the great timber merchants reſpecting the woods. When a farm has been divided among children and

[a] A daughter's portion is the half of the ſon's portion.

grandchildren,

grandchildren, as each proprietor has a certain right in the woods, each, in general, endeavours to cut as much as he can; and the timber is thus felled before it is fit, and the woods ſpoiled. To prevent this, the merchants buy large tracts of woods of the farmers, who enter into a contract, that the farm ſhall not be any further ſubdivided or more houſemen placed upon it; at leaſt, that if the number of families be increaſed, they ſhould have no right in the woods. It is ſaid, that the merchants who make theſe purchaſes are not very ſtrict, provided the ſmaller farmers and houſemen do not take timber for their houſes. The farmers who ſell theſe tracts of wood are obliged by law to reſerve to themſelves the right of paſturing their cattle, and of cutting timber ſufficient for their houſes, repairs, and firing.

A piece of ground round a houſeman's dwelling cannot be incloſed for cultivation, without an application, firſt, to the proprietor of the woods, declaring that the ſpot is not fit for timber, and afterwards to a magiſtrate of the diſtrict, whoſe leave on this occaſion is alſo neceſſary, probably for the purpoſe of aſcertaining whether the leave of the proprietor had been duly obtained.

In addition to theſe obſtacles to improved cultivation, which may be conſidered as artificial, the nature of the country preſents an inſuperable obſtacle to a cultivation and population in any reſpect proportioned to the ſurface of the ſoil. The Norwegians, though not in a nomadic ſtate, are ſtill in a conſiderable degree in the paſtoral ſtate, and depend very much upon their cattle. The high grounds that border on the mountains, are abſolutely unfit to bear corn, and the only uſe to which they can be put, is to paſture cattle upon them for three or four months during the ſummer. The farmers, accordingly, ſend all their cattle to theſe grounds at this time of the year, under the care of a part of their families; and it is here that they make all their butter and cheeſe for ſale, or for their own conſumption. The great difficulty is to ſupport their cattle during

ing the long winter, and for this purpoſe, it is neceſſary that a conſiderable proportion of the moſt fertile land in the vallies ſhould be mowed for graſs. If too much of it were taken into tillage, the number of cattle muſt be proportionably diminiſhed, and the greateſt part of the higher grounds would become abſolutely uſeleſs; and it might be a queſtion, in that caſe, whether the country, upon the whole, would ſupport a greater population.

Notwithſtanding, however, all theſe obſtacles, there is a very conſiderable capacity of improvement in Norway, and of late years it has been called into action. I heard it remarked by a profeſſor at Copenhagen, that the reaſon why the agriculture of Norway had advanced ſo ſlowly, was, that there were no gentlemen farmers who might ſet examples of improved cultivation, and break the routine of ignorance and prejudice in the conduct of farms, that had been handed down from father to ſon for ſucceſſive ages. From what I ſaw of Norway, I ſhould ſay that this want is now, in ſome degree, ſupplied. Many intelligent merchants and well-informed general officers are at preſent engaged in farming. In the country round Chriſtiania, very great improvements have taken place in the ſyſtem of agriculture; and even in the neighbourhood of Drontheim the culture of artificial graſſes has been introduced, which, in a country where ſo much winter feed is neceſſary for cattle, is a point of the higheſt importance. Almoſt every where the cultivation of potatoes has ſucceeded, and they are growing more and more into general uſe, though in the diſtant parts of the country they are not yet reliſhed by the common people.

It has been more the cuſtom of late years, than formerly, to divide farms; and, as the vent for commodities in Norway is not perhaps ſufficient to encourage the complete cultivation of large farms, this diviſion of them has probably contributed to the improvement of the land. It ſeems, indeed, to be univerſally agreed, among thoſe who are in a ſituation to be competent judges, that the agriculture of

Norway in general has advanced conſiderably of late years; and the regiſters ſhew that the population has followed with more than equal pace. On an average of ten years, from 1775 to 1784, the proportion of births to deaths was 141 to 100 [a]. But this ſeems to have been rather too rapid an increaſe; as the following year, 1785, was a year of ſcarcity and ſickneſs, in which the deaths conſiderably exceeded the births; and for four years afterwards, particularly in 1789, the exceſs of births was not great. But in the five years from 1789 to 1794, the proportion of births to deaths was nearly 150 to 100 [b].

Many of the moſt thinking and beſt informed perſons expreſs their apprehenſions on this ſubject, and on the probable reſult of the new regulations reſpecting the enrolments for the army, and the apparent intention of the court of Denmark to encourage, at all events, the population. No very unfavourable ſeaſon has occurred in Norway ſince 1785; but it is feared that, in the event of ſuch a ſeaſon, the moſt ſevere diſtreſs might be felt from the increaſed population.

Norway is, I believe, almoſt the only country in Europe where a traveller will hear any apprehenſions expreſſed of a redundant population, and where the danger to the happineſs of the lower claſſes of people, from this cauſe, is, in ſome degree, ſeen and underſtood. This obviouſly ariſes from the ſmallneſs of the population altogether, and the conſequent narrowneſs of the ſubject. If our attention were confined to one pariſh, and there were no power of emigrating from it, the moſt careleſs obſerver could not fail to remark that if all married at twenty, it would be perfectly impoſſible for the farmers, however carefully they might improve their land, to find employment and food for thoſe that would grow up; but, when a great number of theſe pariſhes are added together in a populous

[a] Thaarup's Statiſtik der Daniſchen Monarchie, vol. ii. p. 4.
[b] Id. table i. p. 4.

kingdom,

kingdom, the largeneſs of the ſubject, and the power of moving from place to place, obſcure and confuſe our view. We loſe ſight of a truth which before appeared completely obvious; and, in a moſt unaccountable manner, attribute to the aggregate quantity of land a power of ſupporting people beyond compariſon greater than the ſum of all its parts.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of the Checks to Population in Sweden.

SWEDEN is, in many reſpects, in a ſtate ſimilar to that of Norway. A very large proportion of its population is, in the ſame manner, employed in agriculture; and in moſt parts of the country the married labourers who work for the farmers, like the houſemen of Norway, have a certain portion of land for their principal maintenance, while the young men and women that are unmarried, live as ſervants in the farmers' families. This ſtate of things, however, is not ſo complete and general, as in Norway; and from this cauſe, added to the greater extent and population of the country, the ſuperior ſize of the towns, and the greater variety of employment, it has not occaſioned, in the ſame degree, the prevalence of the preventive check to population, and conſequently the poſitive check has operated with more force, or the mortality has been greater.

According to a paper publiſhed by M. Wargentin in the *Memoires abrégés de l'Academie Royale des Sciences de Stockholm* [a], the yearly average mortality in all Sweden, for nine years, ending in 1663, was to the population as 1 to $34\frac{3}{4}$ [b]. M. Wargentin furniſhed Dr. Price with a continuance of theſe tables, and an average of 21 years gives a reſult of 1 to $34\frac{3}{4}$, nearly the ſame [c]. This is undoubtedly a very great mortality, conſidering the large proportion of the population in Sweden which is employed in agriculture.

[a] 1 vol. 4to. printed at Paris, 1772. [b] P. 27.
[c] Price's Obſerv. on Reverſ. Paym. vol. ii. p. 126.

It appears from ſome calculations in Cantzlaer's account of Sweden, that the inhabitants of the towns are to the inhabitants of the country only as 1 to 13 [a]; whereas, in well-peopled countries, the proportion is often as 1 to 3, or above [b]. The ſuperior mortality of towns, therefore, could not much affect the general proportion in Sweden.

The average mortality of villages, according to Suſmilch, is 1 in 40 [c]. In Pruſſia and Pomerania, which include a number of great and unhealthy towns, and where the inhabitants of the towns are to the inhabitants of the country as 1 to 4, the mortality is leſs than 1 in 37 [d]. The mortality in Norway, as has been mentioned before, is 1 in 48, which is in a very extraordinary degree leſs than in Sweden, though the inhabitants of the towns in Norway bear a greater proportion to the inhabitants of the country than in Sweden [e]. The towns in Sweden are indeed larger, and more unhealthy, than in Norway; but there is no reaſon to think that the country is naturally more unfavourable to the duration of human life. The mountains of Norway are in general not habitable. The only peopled parts of the country are the vallies. Many of theſe vallies are deep and narrow clefts in the mountains; and the cultivated ſpots in the bottom, ſurrounded as they are by almoſt perpendicular cliffs of a prodigious height [f], which intercept the rays

[a] Memoires pour ſervir a la connoiſſance des affaires politiques et économiques du Royaume de Swede, 4to. 1776, ch. vi. p. 187. This work is conſidered as very correct in its information, and is in great credit at Stockholm.
[b] Suſmilch's Gottliche Ordnung, vol. i. ch. ii. ſect. xxxiv. edit. 1798.
[c] Suſmilch's Gottliche Ordnung, vol. i. ch. ii. ſect. xxxv. p. 91. [d] Id. vol. iii. p. 60.
[e] Thaarup's Statiſtik der Daniſchen Monarchie, vol. ii. tab. ii. p. 5. 1765.
[f] Some of theſe vallies are ſtrikingly picturesque. The principal road from Chriſtiania to Drontheim leads, for nearly 180 Engliſh miles, through a continued valley of this kind, by the ſide of a very fine river, which in one part ſtretches out into the extenſive lake Mioſen. I am inclined to believe that there is not any river in all Europe, the courſe of which, affords ſuch a conſtant ſucceſſion of beautiful and romantic

rays of the ſun for many hours, do not ſeem as if they could be ſo healthy, as the more expoſed and drier ſoil of Sweden.

It is difficult, therefore, entirely to account for the mortality of Sweden, without ſuppoſing that, the habits of the people, and the continual cry of the government for an increaſe of ſubjects, tend to preſs the population too hard againſt the limits of ſubſiſtence, and, conſequently, to produce diſeaſes which are the neceſſary effect of poverty and bad nouriſhment; and this, from obſervation, appears to be really the caſe.

Sweden does not produce food ſufficient for its population. Its annual want in the article of grain, according to a calculation made from the years 1768 and 1772, is 440,000 tuns[a]. This quantity, or near it, has in general been imported from foreign countries, beſides pork, butter, and cheeſe, to a conſiderable amount[b].

The diſtillation of ſpirits in Sweden is ſuppoſed to conſume above 400,000 tuns of grain; and when this diſtillation has been prohibited by government, a variation in defect appears in the tables of importations[c]; but no great variations in exceſs are obſervable, to ſupply the deficiencies in years of ſcanty harveſts, which, it is well known, occur frequently. In years the moſt abundant, when the diſtillation has been free, it is aſſerted, that 388,000 tuns have in general been imported[d]. It follows, therefore, that the Swedes conſume all the produce of their beſt years, and nearly 400,000 more; and that, in their worſt years, their conſumption muſt be diminiſhed by nearly the whole deficiency in their crops. The maſs of the

mantic ſcenery. It goes under different names in different parts. The verdure in the Norway vallies is peculiarly ſoft, the foliage of the trees luxuriant, and in ſummer, no traces appear of a northern climate.

[a] Memoires du Royaume de Suede, table xvii. p. 174. [b] Id. c. vi. p. 198.

[c] Id. table xlii. p. 418. c. vi. p. 201. I did not find out exactly the meaſure of the Swediſh tun. It is rather leſs than our ſack or half quarter.

[d] Memoires du Royaume de Suede, c. vi. p. 201.

people

people appears to be too poor to purchaſe nearly the ſame quantity of corn at a very advanced price. There is no adequate encouragement, therefore, to corn merchants to import in great abundance; and the effect of a deficiency of one fourth, or one third, in the crops, is, to oblige the labourer to content himſelf with nearly three-fourths or two thirds of the corn which he uſed before, and to ſupply the reſt by the uſe of any ſubſtitutes which neceſſity, the mother of invention, may ſuggeſt. I have ſaid, nearly, becauſe it is difficult to ſuppoſe that the importations ſhould not be ſomething greater in years of ſcarcity than in common years, though no marked differences of this kind appear in the tables publiſhed by Cantzlaer. The greateſt importation, according to theſe tables, was in the year 1768, when it amounted to 590,265 tuns of grain[a]; but even this greateſt importation is only 150,000 tuns above the average wants of the country; and what is this, to ſupply a deficiency of one fourth or one third of a crop? The whole importation is indeed in this reſpect trifling.

The population of Sweden, at the time that Cantzlaer wrote, was about two millions and an half[b]. He allows four tuns of grain to a man[c]. Upon this ſuppoſition the annual wants of Sweden would be ten millions of tuns, and four or five hundred thouſand would go but a little way in ſupplying a deficiency of two millions and a half, or three millions; and, if we take only the difference from the average importation, it will appear, that the aſſiſtance which the Swedes receive from importation in a year of ſcarcity is perfectly futile.

The conſequence of this ſtate of things is, that the population of Sweden is in a peculiar manner affected by every variation of the ſeaſons; and we cannot be ſurpriſed at a very curious and inſtructive remark of M. Wargentin, that the regiſters of Sweden ſhew, that the population and the mortality increaſe or decreaſe, accord-

[a] Memoires du Royaume de Suede, table xlii. p. 418.

[b] Id. ch. vi. p. 184. [c] Id. p. 196.

ing

ing as the harveſts are abundant or deficient. From the nine years of which he had given tables, he inſtances the following.

		Marriages.	Births.	Deaths.
Barren years.	1757	18799	81878	68054
	1758	19584	83299	74370
Abundant years.	1759	23210	85579	62662
	1760	23383	90635	60083 [a].

Here it appears, that in the year 1760 the births were to the deaths as 15 to 10; but in the year 1758 only as 11 to 10. By referring to the enumerations of the population in 1757 and 1760 [b], which M. Wargentin has given, it appears, that the number of marriages in the year 1760, in proportion to the whole population, was as 1 to 101; in the year 1757, only as 1 to about 124. The deaths in 1760, were to the whole population as 1 to 39; in 1757 as 1 to 32, and in 1758 as 1 to 31.

In making ſome obſervations on the tables which had been produced, M. Wargentin ſays, that in the unhealthy years about 1 in 29 have died annually, and in the healthy years 1 in 39; and that, taking a middle term, the average mortality might be conſidered at 1 in 36 [c]. But this inference does not appear to be juſt, as a mean between 29 and 39 would give 34; and indeed the tables which he has himſelf brought forward, contradict an average mortality of 1 in 36, and prove that it is about 1 in $34\frac{1}{2}$.

The proportion of yearly marriages to the whole population, appears to be, on an average, nearly as 1 to 112, and to vary between the extremes of 1 to 101, and 1 to 124, according to the temporary proſpect of a ſupport for a family. Probably, indeed, it varies between much greater extremes, as the period from which theſe calculations are made is merely for nine years.

[a] Mémoires Abrégés de l'Académie de Stockholm, p. 29.
[b] Id. p. 21, 22. [c] Id. p. 29.

In another paper which M. Wargentin publiſhed in the ſame collection, he again remarks, that in Sweden, the years which are the moſt fruitful in produce, are the moſt fruitful in children [a].

If accurate obſervations were made in other countries, it is highly probable that differences of the ſame kind would appear, though not to the ſame extent [b]. With regard to Sweden, they clearly prove that its population has a very ſtrong tendency to increaſe; and that it is not only always ready to follow with the greateſt alertneſs any average increaſe in the means of ſubſiſtence, but that it makes a ſtart forwards at every temporary and occaſional increaſe of food, by which means, it is continually going beyond the average increaſe, and is repreſſed by the periodical returns of ſevere want, and the diſeaſes ariſing from it.

Yet notwithſtanding this conſtant and ſtriking tendency to overflowing numbers, ſtrange to ſay! the government and the political economiſts of Sweden, are continually calling out for population, population. Cantzlaer obſerves, that the government, not having the power of inducing ſtrangers to ſettle in the country, or of augmenting at pleaſure the number of births, has occupied itſelf ſince 1748 in every meaſure which appeared proper to increaſe the population of the country [c]. But ſuppoſe, that the government really poſſeſſed the power of inducing ſtrangers to ſettle, or of increaſing the number of births at pleaſure, what would be the conſequence? If the ſtrangers were not ſuch as to introduce a better ſyſtem of agriculture, they would either be ſtarved themſelves, or cauſe more of the Swedes to be ſtarved; and if the yearly number of births were conſiderably increaſed, it appears to me perfectly clear, from the tables of M. Wargentin, that the principal effect would be merely an increaſe of mor-

[a] Memoires abrégés de l'Acad. de Stockholm, p. 31.
[b] This has been confirmed, with regard to England, by the abſtracts of pariſh regiſters which have lately been publiſhed. The years 1795 and 1800, are marked by a diminution of marriages and births, and an increaſe of deaths.
[c] Memoires du Royaume de Suede, c. vi. p. 188.

tality. The actual population might, perhaps, even be diminiſhed by it, as when epidemicks have once been generated by bad nouriſhment and crowded houſes, they do not always ſtop when they have taken off the redundant population, but take off with it a part, and ſometimes a very conſiderable part, of that which the country might be able properly to ſupport.

In all very northern climates, in which the principal buſineſs of agriculture muſt neceſſarily be compreſſed into the ſmall ſpace of a few ſummer months, it will almoſt inevitably happen, that during this period a want of hands is felt; but this temporary want ſhould be carefully diſtinguiſhed from a real and effectual demand for labour, which includes the power of giving employment and ſupport through the whole year, and not merely for two or three months. The population of Sweden in the natural courſe of its increaſe, will always be ready fully to anſwer this effectual demand; and a ſupply beyond it, whether from ſtrangers or an additional number of births, could only be productive of miſery.

It is aſſerted by Swediſh authors, that a given number of men and of days, produces, in Sweden, only a third part of what is produced by the ſame number of each, in ſome other countries[a]; and heavy accuſations are in conſequence brought againſt the national induſtry. Of the general grounds for ſuch accuſations, a ſtranger cannot be a competent judge; but in the preſent inſtance, it appears to me, that more ought to be attributed to the climate and ſoil, than to an actual want of induſtry in the natives. For a large portion of the year their exertions are neceſſarily cramped by the ſeverity of the climate; and during the time when they are able to engage in agricultural operations, the natural indifference of the ſoil, and the extent of ſurface required for a given produce, inevitably employ a great proportional quantity of labour. It is well known in England, that a farm of large extent conſiſting of a poor ſoil, is worked at a much greater

[a] Memoires du Royaume de Suede, (Cantzlaer) ch. vi. p. 191.

expence

expence for the ſame produce, than a ſmall one of rich land. The natural poverty of the ſoil in Sweden, generally ſpeaking, cannot be denied.

In a journey up the weſtern ſide of the country, and afterwards in croſſing it from Norway to Stockholm, and thence up the eaſtern coaſt to the paſſage over to Finland, I confeſs that I ſaw fewer marks of a want of national induſtry than I ſhould have expected. As far as I could judge, I very ſeldom ſaw any land uncultivated which would have been cultivated in England, and I certainly ſaw many ſpots of land in tillage, which never would have been touched with a plough here. Theſe were lands in which, every five or ten yards, there were large ſtones or rocks, round which the plough muſt neceſſarily be turned, or be lifted over them; and the one or the other is generally done according to their ſize. The plough is very light, and drawn by one horſe, and in ploughing among the ſtumps of the trees when they are low, the general practice is to lift it over them. The man who holds the plough does this very nimbly, with little or no ſtop to the horſe.

Of the value of thoſe lands for tillage, which are at preſent covered with immenſe foreſts, I could be no judge; but both the Swedes and the Norwegians are accuſed of clearing theſe woods away too precipitately, and without previouſly conſidering what is likely to be the real value of the land when cleared. The conſequence is, that, for the ſake of one good crop of rye, which may always be obtained from the manure afforded by the aſhes of the burnt trees, much growing timber is ſometimes ſpoiled, and the land, perhaps, afterwards, becomes almoſt entirely uſeleſs. After the crop of rye has been obtained, the common practice is to turn cattle in upon the graſs, which may accidentally grow up. If the land be naturally good, the feeding of the cattle prevents freſh firs from riſing; but if it be bad, the cattle of courſe cannot remain long in it, and the ſeeds with which every wind is ſurcharged, ſow the ground again thickly with firs.

On obſerving many ſpots of this kind both in Norway and Sweden, I could not help being ſtruck with the idea, that, though for other reaſons, it was very little probable, ſuch appearances certainly made it ſeem poſſible, that theſe countries might have been better peopled formerly, than at preſent; and that lands, which are now covered with foreſts, might have produced corn a thouſand years ago. Wars, plagues, or that greater depopulator than either, a tyrannical government, might have ſuddenly deſtroyed, or expelled, the greateſt part of the inhabitants, and a neglect of the land for twenty or thirty years in Norway or Sweden, would produce a very ſtrange difference in the face of the country. But this is merely an idea which I could not help mentioning, but which the reader already knows has not had weight enough with me, to make me ſuppoſe the fact in any degree probable.

To return to the agriculture of Sweden. Independently of any deficiency in the national induſtry, there are certainly ſome circumſtances in the political regulations of the country, which tend to impede the natural progreſs of its cultivation. There are ſtill ſome burdenſome corvées remaining, which the poſſeſſors of certain lands are obliged to perform for the domains of the crown [a]. The poſting of the country is undoubtedly very cheap and convenient to the traveller; but is conducted in a manner to occaſion a great waſte of labour to the farmer, both in men and horſes. It is calculated by the Swediſh economiſts, that the labour which would be ſaved by the abolition of this ſyſtem alone, would produce annually 300,000 tuns of grain [b]. The very great diſtance of the markets in Sweden, and the very incomplete diviſion of labour which is almoſt a neceſſary conſequence of it, occaſion alſo a great waſte of time and exertion. And, if there be no marked want of diligence and activity among the Swediſh peaſants, there is certainly a want of knowledge

[a] Memoires du Royaume de Suede, ch. vi. p. 202. [b] Id. p. 204.

in

in the beſt modes of regulating the rotation of their crops, and of manuring and improving their lands [a].

If the government were employed in removing theſe impediments, and in endeavours to encourage and direct the induſtry of the farmers, and circulate the beſt information on agricultural ſubjects, it would do much more for the population of the country, than by the eſtabliſhment of five hundred foundling hoſpitals.

According to Cantzlaer, the principal meaſures in which the government had been engaged for the encouragement of the population, were, the eſtabliſhment of colleges of medicine, and of lying-in and foundling hoſpitals [b]. The eſtabliſhment of colleges of medicine, for the cure of the poor, gratis, may in many caſes be extremely beneficial, and was ſo, probably, in the particular circumſtances of Sweden; but the example of the hoſpitals of France, which have the ſame object, may create a doubt, whether even ſuch eſtabliſhments are univerſally to be recommended. Lying-in hoſpitals, as far as they have an effect, are probably rather prejudicial than otherwiſe, as, according to the principle on which they are generally conducted, their tendency is certainly to encourage vice. Foundling hoſpitals, whether they attain their profeſſed and immediate object, or not, are in every view hurtful to the ſtate; but the mode in which they operate, I ſhall have occaſion to diſcuſs more particularly in another chapter.

The Swediſh government, however, has not been excluſively employed in meaſures of this nature. By an edict in 1776, the commerce of grain was rendered completely free throughout the whole interior of the country, and, with regard to the province of Scania, which grows more than its conſumption, exportation free of every duty was allowed [c]. Till this period, the agriculture of the ſouthern provinces had been checked by the want of vent for their grain, on account of the difficulty of tranſport, and the abſolute pro-

[a] Memoires du Royaume de Suede, ch. vi. [b] Id. p. 188. [c] Id. p. 204.

hibition

hibition of ſelling it to foreigners at any price. The northern provinces are ſtill under ſome little difficulties in this reſpect, though, as they never grow a quantity ſufficient for their conſumption, theſe difficulties are not ſo much felt[a]. It may be obſerved, however, in general, that there is no check more fatal to improving cultivation, than any difficulty in the vent of its produce, which prevents the farmer from being able to obtain, in good years, a price for his corn, not much below the general average.

But what perhaps has contributed more than any other cauſe to the increaſing population of Sweden, is the abolition of a law in 1748, which limited the number of perſons to each henman, or farm[b]. The object of this law appears to have been, to force the children of the proprietors to undertake the clearing and cultivation of freſh lands, by which, it was thought, that the whole country would be ſooner improved. But it appeared from experience, that theſe children being without ſufficient funds for ſuch undertakings, were obliged to ſeek their fortune in ſome other way, and great numbers, in conſequence, are ſaid to have emigrated. A father may now, however, not only divide his landed property into as many ſhares as he thinks proper; but theſe diviſions are particularly recommended by the government, and, conſidering the immenſe ſize of the Swediſh henmans, and the impoſſibility of their being cultivated completely by one family, ſuch diviſions muſt in every point of view be highly uſeful.

The population of Sweden in 1751, was 2,229,661[c]. In 1799, according to an account which I received in Stockholm from profeſſor Nicander, the ſucceſſor to M. Wargentin, it was 3,043,731. This is a very conſiderable addition to the permanent population of the country, which has followed a proportional increaſe in the produce of the ſoil, as the imports of corn are not greater than they were

[a] Memoires du Royaume de Suede, ch. vi. p. 204.
[b] Id. p. 177. [c] Id. p. 184.

formerly,

formerly, and there is no reaſon to think that the condition of the people is, on an average, worſe.

This increaſe, however, has not gone forwards, without periodical checks, which, if they have not, for the time, entirely ſtopped its progreſs, have always retarded the rate of it. How often theſe checks have recurred during the laſt 50 years, I am not furniſhed with ſufficient data to be able to ſay, but I can mention ſome of them. From the paper of M. Wargentin[a], already quoted in this chapter, it appears, that the years 1757 and 1758, were barren, and comparatively mortal years. If we were to judge from the increaſed importation of 1768[b], this would alſo appear to be an unproductive year. According to the additional tables with which M. Wargentin furniſhed Dr. Price, the years 1771, 1772, and 1773, were particularly mortal[c]. The year 1789 muſt have been very highly ſo, as, in the accounts which I received from profeſſor Nicander, this year alone materially affected the average proportion of births to deaths for the twenty years ending in 1795. This proportion, including the year 1789, was 100 to 77; but abſtracting it, was 100 to 75; which is a great difference for one year to make in an average of twenty. To conclude the catalogue, the year 1799, when I was in Sweden, muſt have been a very fatal one. In the provinces bordering on Norway, the peaſants called it the worſt that they had ever remembered. The cattle had all ſuffered extremely during the winter, from the drought of the preceding year; and, in July, about a month before the harveſt, a conſiderable portion of the people was living upon bread made of the inner bark of the fir, and of dried ſorrel, abſolutely without any mixture of meal, to make it more palatable and nouriſhing. The ſallow looks, and melancholy countenances of the people, betrayed the unwholeſomeneſs of their nouriſhment. Many had died, but the

[a] Memoires de l'Academie de Stockholm, p. 29.
[b] Memoires du Royaume de Suede, table xlii.
[c] Price's Obſerv. on Reverſ. Pay. vol. ii. p. 125.

full effects of such a diet had not then been felt. They would probably appear afterwards in the form of some epidemick sickness.

The patience with which the lower classes of people in Sweden bear these severe pressures, is perfectly astonishing, and can only arise from their being left entirely to their own resources, and from the belief that they are submitting to the great law of necessity, and not to the caprices of their rulers. Most of the married labourers, as has been before observed, cultivate a small portion of land; and when, from an unfavourable season, their crops fail or their cattle die, they see the cause of their want, and bear it as the visitation of providence. Every man will submit, with becoming patience, to evils which he believes to arise from the general laws of nature; but when the vanity and mistaken benevolence of the government and the higher classes of society, have, by a perpetual interference with the concerns of the lower classes, endeavoured to persuade them, that all the good which they enjoy is conferred upon them by their rulers and rich benefactors, it is very natural that they should attribute all the evil which they suffer to the same sources, and patience, under such circumstances, cannot reasonably be expected. Though to avoid still greater evils, we may be allowed to repress this impatience by force, if it shew itself in overt acts, yet the impatience itself appears to be clearly justified in this case; and those are in a great degree answerable for its consequences, whose conduct has tended evidently to encourage it.

Though the Swedes had supported the severe dearth of 1799 with extraordinary resignation; yet afterwards, on an edict of the government to prohibit the distillation of spirits, it is said that there were considerable commotions in the country. The measure itself was certainly calculated to benefit the people; and the manner in which it was received, affords a curious proof of the different temper with which people bear an evil, arising from the laws of nature, or a privation caused by the edicts of a government.

The sickly periods in Sweden which have retarded the rate of its

increase in population, appear in general to have arisen from the unwholesome nourishment occasioned by severe want. And this want has been caused by unfavourable seasons falling upon a country which was without any reserved store, either in its general exports, or in the liberal division of food to the labourer in common years, and which was therefore peopled fully up to its produce, before the occurrence of the scanty harvest. Such a state of things is a clear proof, that if, as some of the Swedish economists assert, their country ought to have a population of nine or ten millions[a], they have nothing further to do, than to make it produce food sufficient for such a number, and they may rest perfectly assured that they will not want mouths to eat it, without the assistance of lying-in, and foundling hospitals.

Notwithstanding the mortal year of 1789, it appeared from the accounts which I received from professor Nicander, that the general healthiness of the country had increased. The average mortality for the twenty years ending 1795, was 1 in 37, instead of 1 in less than 35, which had been the average of the preceding twenty years. As the rate of increase had not been accelerated in the twenty years ending in 1795, the diminished mortality must have been occasioned by the increased operation of the preventive check. Another calculation which I received from the professor, seemed to confirm this supposition. According to M. Wargentin, as quoted by Susmilch[b], 5 standing marriages produced yearly 1 child; but in the latter period, the proportion of standing marriages to annual births, was as $5\frac{1}{170}$, and subtracting illegitimate children, as $5\frac{3}{170}$ to 1; a proof, that in the latter period the marriages had not been quite so early and so prolifick,

[a] Memoires du Royaume de Suede, ch. vi. p. 196.
[b] Gottliche Ordnung, vol. i. c. vi. s. 120. p. 231.

CHAP. III.

Of the Checks to Population in Ruſſia.

THE liſts of births, deaths, and marriages, in Ruſſia, preſent ſuch extraordinary reſults, that it is impoſſible not to receive them with a conſiderable degree of ſuſpicion; at the ſame time, the regular manner in which they have been collected, and their agreement with each other in different years, entitle them to attention.

In a paper preſented in 1786, by B. F. Herman, to the academy of Peterſburgh, and publiſhed in the *Nova Acta Academiæ, tom. iv.* a compariſon is made of the births, deaths, and marriages, in the different provinces and towns of the empire, and the following proportions are given:

In Peterſburgh the births are to the burials, as	13 to 10
In the government of Moſcow, - -	21 — 10
Diſtrict of Moſcow, excepting the town,	21 — 10
Tver, - - - -	26 — 10
Novogorod, - - - -	20 — 10
Pſkovſk, - - - -	22 — 10
Reſan, - - - -	20 — 10
Veroneſch, - - - -	29 — 10
Vologda, - - - -	23 — 10
Koſtroma, - - - -	20 — 10
Archangel, - - - -	13 — 10
Tobolſk, - - - -	21 — 10
Town of Tobolſk, - - -	13 — 10
Reval, - - - - -	11 — 10
Vologda, - - - -	12 — 10

Some

Some of theſe proportions, it will be obſerved, are extraordinarily high. In Veroneſch, for inſtance, the births are to the deaths, nearly as 3 to 1, which is as great a proportion, I believe, as ever was known in America. The average reſult, however, of theſe proportions, has been confirmed by ſubſequent obſervations. Mr. Tooke, in his View of the Ruſſian Empire, makes the general proportion of births to burials throughout the whole country, as 225 to 100[a], which is 2 and $\frac{1}{4}$ to 1; and this proportion is taken from the liſts of 1793[b].

From the number of yearly marriages, and yearly births, M. Herman draws the following concluſions:

In Peterſburgh one marriage yields -	4 children,
In the government of Moſcow, about -	3
Tver, - - - - - -	3
Novogorod, - - - -	3
Pſkovſk, - - - -	3
Reſan, - - - - -	3
Veroneſch, - - -	4
Vologda, - - - -	4
Koſtroma, - - - -	3
Archangel, - - - -	4
Reval, - - - -	4
Government of Tobolſk, - - -	4
Town of Tobolſk, from 1768 to 1778, -	3
. . . . . from 1779 to 1783, -	5
. . . . . in 1783, - -	6

M. Herman obſerves, that the fruitfulneſs of marriages in Ruſſia, does not exceed that of other countries, though the mortality is much leſs; as appears from the following proportions, drawn from a rough calculation of the number of inhabitants in each government:

In Peterſburgh, - -	1 in 28 dies annually.
In the government of Moſcow, -	1 — 32

[a] Vol. ii. b. iii. p. 162. [b] Id. p. 145.

Diſtrict of Moſcow,	1 in	74 dies annually.
Tver,	1 —	75
Novogorod,	1 —	$68\frac{6}{7}$
Pſkovſk,	1 —	$70\frac{4}{5}$
Reſan,	1 —	50
Veroneſch,	1 —	79
Vologda,	1 —	65
Koſtroma,	1 —	59
Archangel,	1 —	$28\frac{3}{5}$
Reval,	1 —	29
Government of Tobolſk,	1 —	44
Town of Tobolſk,	1 —	32
..... in 1783,	1 —	$22\frac{1}{4}$

It may be concluded, M. Herman ſays, that in the greateſt number of the Ruſſian provinces, the yearly mortality is 1 in 60 [a].

This average number is ſo high, and ſome of the proportions in the particular provinces are ſo extraordinary, that it is almoſt impoſſible to believe them accurate. They have been nearly confirmed, however, by ſubſequent liſts, which, according to Mr. Tooke, make the general mortality in all Ruſſia, 1 in 58 [b]. But Mr. Tooke himſelf ſeems to doubt the accuracy of this particular department of the regiſters; and I have ſince heard from good authority, that there is reaſon to believe, that the omiſſions in the burials are in all the provinces much greater than the omiſſions in the births, and conſequently, that the very great exceſs of births, and very ſmall mortality, are more apparent than real. It is ſuppoſed that many children, particularly in the Ukraine, are privately interred by their fathers without information to the prieſt. The numerous and repeated levies of recruits take off great numbers whoſe deaths are not recorded. From the

[a] Nova Acta Academiæ, tom. iv.
[b] View of the Ruſſian Empire, vol. ii. b. iii. p. 148.

frequent

frequent emigrations of whole families to different parts of the empire, and the tranſportation of malefactors to Siberia, great numbers neceſſarily die on journies, or in parts where no regular liſts are kept; and ſome omiſſions are attributed to the neglect of the pariſh prieſts who have an intereſt in recording the births, but not the deaths.

To theſe reaſons I ſhould add, that the population of each province, is probably eſtimated by the number of boors belonging to each eſtate in it; but it is well known that a great part of them has leave to reſide in the towns. Their births, therefore, appear in the province, but their deaths do not. The apparent mortality of the towns is not proportionably increaſed by this emigration, becauſe it is eſtimated according to actual enumeration. The bills of mortality in the towns expreſs correctly the numbers dying out of a certain number known to be actually preſent in theſe towns; but the bills of mortality in the provinces, purporting to expreſs the numbers dying out of the eſtimated population of the province, do really only expreſs the numbers dying out of a much ſmaller population, becauſe a conſiderable part of the eſtimated population is abſent.

In Peterſburgh, it appeared by an enumeration in 1784, that the number of males was 126,827, and of females only 65,619 [a]. The proportion of males was therefore very nearly double, ariſing from the numbers who came to the town, to earn their capitation tax, leaving their families in the country, and from the cuſtom among the lords, of retaining a prodigious number of their boors as houſehold ſervants, in Peterſburgh and Moſcow.

The number of births in proportion to the whole population in Ruſſia, is not different from a common average in other countries, being about 1 in 26 [b].

According to the paper of M. Herman, already quoted, the proportion of boys dying within the firſt year, is, at Peterſburgh, $\frac{1}{3}$. In

[a] Memoire par W. L. Krafft, Nova Acta Academiæ, tom. iv.
[b] Tooke's View of Ruſſian Empire, vol. ii. b. iii. p. 147.

the

the government of Tobolſk $\frac{1}{16}$. In the town of Tobolſk $\frac{1}{3}$. In Vologda $\frac{1}{14}$. In Novogorod $\frac{1}{31}$. In Veroneſch $\frac{1}{24}$. In Archangel $\frac{1}{5}$. The very ſmall mortality of infants in ſome of theſe provinces, particularly, as the calculation does not ſeem to be liable to much error, makes the ſmallneſs of the general mortality more credible. In Sweden, throughout the whole country, the proportion of infants which dies within the firſt year, is $\frac{1}{5}$ or more [a].

The proportion of yearly marriages in Ruſſia to the whole population, is, according to M. Herman, in the towns, about 1 in 100, and in the provinces about 1 in 70 or 80. According to Mr. Tooke, in the fifteen governments of which he had liſts, the proportion was 1 in 92 [b]. This is not very different from other countries. In Peterſburgh, indeed, the proportion was 1 in 140 [c]; but this is clearly accounted for, by what has already been ſaid of the extraordinary number of the males in compariſon of the females.

The regiſters for the city of Peterſburgh are ſuppoſed to be ſuch as can be entirely depended upon; and theſe tend to prove the general ſalubrity of the climate. But there is one fact recorded in them, which is directly contrary to what has been obſerved in all other countries. This is a much greater mortality of female children than of male. In the period from 1781 to 1785, of 1000 boys born, 147 only, died within the firſt year, but of the ſame number of girls 310 [d]. The proportion is as 10 to 21, which is inconceivable, and muſt indeed have been, in ſome meaſure, accidental, as, in the preceding periods, the proportion was only as 10 to 14; but even this is very extraordinary, as it has been generally remarked, that, in every ſtage of life, except during the period of childbearing, the mortality among females is leſs than among males. The climate of Sweden does not appear to be very different from that of Ruſſia; and M. Wargentin

[a] Memoires Abrégés de l'Academie de Stockholm, p. 28. [b] View of Ruſſ. Emp. vol. ii. b. iii. p. 146. [c] Memoire par W. L. Krafft, Nova Acta Academiæ, tom. iv. [d] Id. tom. iv.

gentin obſerves, with reſpect to the Swediſh tables, that it appears from them, that the ſmaller mortality of females, is not merely owing to a more regular and leſs laborious life, but is a natural law which operates conſtantly from infancy to old age [a].

According to M. Krafft [b], the half of all that are born in Peterſburgh, live to 25; which ſhews a degree of healthineſs in early life very unuſual for ſo large a town; but after twenty, a mortality, much greater than in any other town in Europe, takes place, which is juſtly attributed to the immoderate uſe of brandy [c]. The mortality between 10 and 15 is ſo ſmall, that only 1 in 47 males, and 1 in 29 females, die. From 20 to 25, the mortality is ſo great, that 1 in 9 males, and 1 in 13 females, die. The tables ſhew, that this extraordinary mortality is occaſioned principally by pleureſies, high fevers, and conſumptions. Pleureſies deſtroy $\frac{1}{4}$, high fevers $\frac{1}{7}$, and conſumptions $\frac{1}{6}$, of the whole population. The three together take off $\frac{5}{7}$ of all that die.

The general mortality during the period from 1781 to 1785, was, according to M. Krafft, 1 in 37. In a former period, it has been 1 in 35, and in a ſubſequent period, when epidemick diſeaſes prevailed, 1 in 29 [d]. This average mortality is ſmall for a large town; but there is reaſon to think, from a paſſage in M. Krafft's memoir [e], that the deaths in the hoſpitals, the priſons, and in the *maiſon des Enfans trouvés*, are either entirely omitted, or not given with correctneſs; and undoubtedly, the inſertion of theſe deaths might make a great difference in the apparent healthineſs of the town.

In the *maiſon des Enfans trouvés* alone, the mortality is prodigious. No regular liſts are publiſhed, and verbal communications are always liable to ſome uncertainty. I cannot, therefore, rely upon the information which I collected on the ſubject; but, from the moſt

[a] Memoires Abrégés de l'Academie de Stockholm, p. 28. [b] Nova Acta Academiæ, tom. iv. [c] Tooke's View of the Ruſſian Empire, vol. ii. b iii. p. 155. [d] Id. p. 151. [e] See a Note in Tooke's View of Ruſſ. Emp. vol. ii. b. iii. p. 150.

careful inquiries which I could make of the attendants at the houſe in Peterſburgh, I underſtood that 100 a month was the common average. In the preceding winter, which was the winter of 1788, it had not been uncommon to bury 18 a day. The average number received in the day, is about 10; and though they are all ſent into the country to be nurſed three days after they have been in the houſe, yet, as many of them are brought in a dying ſtate, the mortality muſt neceſſarily be great. The number ſaid to be received, appears, indeed, almoſt incredible; but, from what I ſaw myſelf, I ſhould be inclined to believe, that both this and the mortality before mentioned, might not be far from the truth. I was at the houſe about noon, and four children had been juſt received, one of which was evidently dying, and another did not ſeem as if it would long ſurvive.

A part of the houſe is deſtined to the purpoſe of a lying-in hoſpital, where every woman that comes is received, and no queſtions are aſked. The children which are thus born, are brought up by nurſes in the houſe, and are not ſent into the country like the others. A mother, if ſhe chuſe it, may perform the office of nurſe to her own child, in the houſe, but is not permitted to take it away with her. A child brought to the houſe, may at any time be reclaimed by its parents, if they can prove themſelves able to ſupport it; and all the children are marked and numbered on being received, that they may be known and produced to the parents, when required, who, if they cannot reclaim them, are permitted to viſit them.

The country nurſes receive only two roubles a month, which, as the current paper rouble is ſeldom worth more than half a crown, is only about fifteen pence a week; yet, the general expences are ſaid to be 100,000 roubles a month. The regular revenues belonging to the inſtitution are not nearly equal to this ſum; but the government takes on itſelf the management of the whole affair, and conſequently bears all the additional expences. As the children are

received without any limit, it is abſolutely neceſſary, that the expences ſhould alſo be unlimited. It is evident that the moſt dreadful evils muſt reſult from an unlimited reception of children, and only a limited fund to ſupport them. Such inſtitutions, therefore, if managed properly, that is, if the extraordinary mortality do not prevent the rapid accumulation of expence, cannot exiſt long except under the protection of a very rich government; and even under ſuch protection there muſt ultimately be a limit.

At ſix or ſeven years old the children who have been ſent into the country, return to the houſe, where they are taught all ſorts of trades, and manual operations. The common hours of working are, from 6 to 12, and from 2 till 4. The girls leave the houſe at 18, and the boys at 20 or 21. When the houſe is too full, ſome of thoſe which have been ſent into the country are not brought back.

The principal mortality, of courſe, takes place among the infants who are juſt received, and the children which are brought up in the houſe; but there is a conſiderable mortality among thoſe which are returned from the country, and are in the firmeſt ſtages of life. I was, in ſome degree, ſurpriſed at hearing this, after having been particularly ſtruck with the extraordinary degree of neatneſs, cleanlineſs, and ſweetneſs, which appeared to prevail in every department. The houſe itſelf had been a palace, and all the rooms were large, airy, and even elegant. I was preſent while 180 boys were dining. They were all dreſſed very neatly; the table-cloth was clean, and each had a ſeparate napkin to himſelf. The proviſions appeared to be extremely good, and there was not the ſmalleſt diſagreeable ſmell in the room. In the dormitories there was a ſeparate bed for each child; the bedſteads were of iron without teſter or curtains, and the coverlids and ſheets particularly clean.

This degree of neatneſs, almoſt inconceivable in a large inſtitution, was to be attributed principally to the preſent empreſs dowager, who intereſted herſelf in all the details of the management; and, when at Peterſburgh, ſeldom paſſed a week without in-

ſpecting them in perſon. The mortality which takes place in ſpite of all theſe attentions, is a clear proof, that the conſtitution, in early youth, cannot ſupport confinement and work for 8 hours in the day. The children had all rather a pale and ſickly countenance, and if a judgment had been formed of the national beauty from the girls and boys in this eſtabliſhment, it would have been moſt unfavourable.

It is evident, that if the deaths belonging to this inſtitution be omitted, the bills of mortality for Peterſburgh cannot give a repreſentation, in any degree near the truth, of the real ſtate of the city, with reſpect to healthineſs. At the ſame time, it ſhould be recollected, that ſome of the obſervations which atteſt its healthineſs, ſuch as the number dying in a thouſand, &c. are not influenced by this circumſtance; unleſs indeed we ſay, what is perhaps true, that nearly all thoſe who would find any difficulty in rearing their children, ſend them to the foundling hoſpital, and the mortality among the children of thoſe who are in eaſy circumſtances, and live in comfortable houſes, and airy ſituations, will of courſe be much leſs than a general average taken from all that are born.

The *maiſon des Enfans trouvés*, at Moſcow, is conducted exactly upon the ſame principles as that at Peterſburgh; and Mr. Tooke gives an account of the ſurpriſing loſs of children which it had ſuſtained in twenty years, from the time of its firſt eſtabliſhment to the year 1786. On this occaſion, he obſerves, that if we knew preciſely the number of thoſe who died immediately after reception, or who brought in with them the germ of diſſolution, a ſmall part only of the mortality would probably appear to be fairly attributable to the foundling-hoſpital; as none would be ſo unreaſonable, as to lay the loſs of theſe certain victims to death to the account of a philanthropical inſtitution, which enriches the country from year to year with an ever-increaſing number of healthy, active, and induſtrious burghers[a].

[a] View of the Ruſſian Empire, vol. ii. b. iii. p. 201.

It

It appears to me, however, that the greateſt part of this premature mortality is clearly to be attributed to theſe inſtitutions, miſcalled philanthropical. If any reliance can be placed on the accounts which are given of the infant mortality in the Ruſſian towns and provinces, it would appear to be unuſually ſmall. The greatneſs of it, therefore, at the foundling hoſpitals, may juſtly be laid to the account of inſtitutions which encourage a mother to deſert her child, at the very time, when of all others, it ſtands moſt in need of her foſtering care. The frail tenure by which an infant holds its life, will not allow of a remitted attention, even for a few hours.

The ſurpriſing mortality which takes place at theſe two foundling hoſpitals of Peterſburgh and Moſcow, which are managed in the beſt poſſible manner, as all who have ſeen them, with one conſent, aſſert, appears to me incontrovertibly to prove, that the nature of theſe inſtitutions is not calculated to anſwer the immediate end that they have in view, which I conceive to be, the preſervation of a certain number of citizens to the ſtate, which might otherwiſe, perhaps, periſh from poverty or falſe ſhame. It is not to be doubted, that if the children received into theſe hoſpitals, had been left to the management of their parents, taking the chance of all the difficulties in which they might be involved, a much greater proportion of them would have reached the age of manhood, and have become uſeful members of the ſtate.

When we look a little deeper into this ſubject, it will appear, that theſe inſtitutions not only fail in their immediate object, but by encouraging, in the moſt marked manner, habits of licentiouſneſs, diſcourage marriage, and thus weaken the main ſpring of population. All the well-informed men with whom I converſed on this ſubject, at Peterſburgh, agreed invariably, that the inſtitution had produced this effect in a ſurpriſing degree. To have a child, was conſidered as one of the moſt trifling faults which a girl could commit. An Engliſh merchant at Peterſburgh told me, that a Ruſſian girl, living in his family, under a miſtreſs, who was conſidered as

very ſtrict, had ſent ſix children to the foundling hoſpital without the loſs of her place.

It ſhould be obſerved, however, that generally ſpeaking, ſix children are not common in this kind of intercourſe. Where habits of licentiouſneſs prevail, the births are never in the ſame proportion to the number of people, as in the married ſtate; and therefore the diſcouragement to marriage, ariſing from this licentiouſneſs, and the diminiſhed number of births which is the conſequence of it, will much more than counterbalance any encouragement to marriage, from the proſpect held out to parents of diſpoſing of the children which they cannot ſupport.

Conſidering the extraordinary mortality which occurs in theſe inſtitutions, and the habits of licentiouſneſs which they have an evident tendency to create, it may be ſaid, perhaps, with truth, that if a perſon wiſhed to check population, and were not ſolicitous about the means, he could not propoſe a more effectual meaſure, than the eſtabliſhment of a ſufficient number of foundling hoſpitals, unlimited in their reception of children. And with regard to the moral feelings of a nation, it is difficult to conceive that they muſt not be very ſenſibly impaired by encouraging mothers to deſert their offſpring, and endeavouring to teach them, that their love for their new-born infants is a prejudice, which it is the intereſt of their country to eradicate. An occaſional child-murder, from falſe ſhame, is ſaved at a very high price, if it can only be done by the ſacrifice of ſome of the beſt and moſt uſeful feelings of the human heart in a great part of the nation.

On the ſuppoſition that foundling hoſpitals attained their propoſed end, the ſtate of ſlavery in Ruſſia would, perhaps, render them more juſtifiable in that country than in any other; becauſe, every child brought up at the foundling hoſpitals becomes a free citizen, and in this capacity is likely to be more uſeful to the ſtate, than if it had merely increaſed the number of ſlaves belonging to an individual proprietor. But in countries not ſimilarly circumſtanced, the moſt

moſt complete ſucceſs in inſtitutions of this kind would be a glaring injuſtice to other parts of the ſociety. The true encouragement to marriage is, the high price of labour, and an increaſe of employments, which require to be ſupplied with proper hands; but if the principal part of theſe employments, apprenticeſhips, &c. be filled up by foundlings, the demand for labour among the legitimate part of the ſociety muſt be proportionally diminiſhed, the difficulty of ſupporting a family be increaſed, and the beſt encouragement to marriage removed.

Ruſſia has great natural reſources. Its produce is, in its preſent ſtate, above its conſumption, and it wants nothing but greater freedom of induſtrious exertion, and an adequate vent for its commodities in the interior parts of the country, to occaſion an increaſe of population aſtoniſhingly rapid. The principal obſtacle to this, is, the vaſſalage, or rather ſlavery, of the peaſants, and the ignorance and indolence, which almoſt neceſſarily accompany ſuch a ſtate. The fortune of a Ruſſian nobleman is meaſured by the number of boors that he poſſeſſes, which in general are ſaleable, like cattle, and not *adſcripti glebæ*. His revenue ariſes from a capitation tax on all the males. When the boors upon an eſtate are increaſing, new diviſions of land are made at certain intervals, and either more is taken into cultivation, or the old ſhares are ſubdivided. Each family is awarded ſuch a portion of land as it can properly cultivate, and will enable it to pay the tax. It is evidently the intereſt of the boor not to improve his lands much, and appear to get conſiderably more than is neceſſary to ſupport his family and pay the poll-tax; becauſe the natural conſequence will be, that in the next diviſion that takes place, the farm, which he before poſſeſſed, will be conſidered as capable of ſupporting two families, and he will be deprived of the half of it. The indolent cultivation that ſuch a ſtate of things muſt produce, is eaſily conceivable. When a boor is deprived of much of the land which he had before uſed, he makes complaints of inability to pay his

his tax, and demands permiſſion for himſelf, or his ſons, to go and earn it in the towns. This permiſſion is in general eagerly ſought after, and is granted without much difficulty by the ſeigneurs, in conſideration of a ſmall increaſe of the poll-tax. The conſequence is, that the lands in the country are left half cultivated, and the genuine ſpring of population impaired in its ſource.

A Ruſſian nobleman at Peterſburgh, of whom I aſked ſome queſtions, reſpecting the management of his eſtate, told me, that he never troubled himſelf to inquire whether it was properly cultivated or not, which he ſeemed to conſider as a matter in which he was not in the ſmalleſt degree concerned. *Cela m'eſt egal*, ſays he, *cela me fait ni bien ni mal.* He gave his boors permiſſion to earn their tax how and where they liked, and as long as he received it, he was ſatisfied. But it is evident, that, by this kind of conduct, he ſacrificed the future population of his eſtate, and the conſequent future increaſe of his revenues, to conſiderations of indolence and preſent convenience.

It is certain, however, that of late years many noblemen have attended more to the improvement and population of their eſtates, inſtigated, principally, by the precepts and examples of the empreſs Catherine, who made the greateſt exertions to advance the cultivation of the country. Her immenſe importations of German ſettlers, not only contributed to people her ſtate with free citizens, inſtead of ſlaves, but what was perhaps of ſtill more importance, to ſet an example of induſtry, and of modes of directing that induſtry, totally unknown before to the Ruſſian peaſants.

Theſe exertions have been crowned, upon the whole, with great ſucceſs; and it is not to be doubted, that, during the reign of the late empreſs, and ſince, a very conſiderable increaſe of cultivation and of population has been going forward, in almoſt every part of the Ruſſian empire.

In the year 1763, an enumeration of the people, eſtimated by the poll-tax, gave a population of 14,726,696; and the ſame kind of enumeration in 1783, gave a population of 25,677,000, which, if correct, ſhews a very extraordinary increaſe; but it is ſuppoſed, that the enumeration in 1783, was more correct and complete than the one in 1763. Including the provinces not ſubject to the poll-tax, the general calculation for 1763, was 20,000,000, and for 1796, 36,000,000[a].

[a] Tooke's View of the Ruſſian Empire, vol. ii. book iii. ſect. i. p. 126, et ſeq.

CHAP. IV.

On the fruitfulneſs of Marriages.

NOTWITHSTANDING the extraordinary proportions of births to deaths in Ruſſia, which have been noticed in the laſt chapter, and the confirmation of theſe proportions, in a conſiderable degree, by actual enumerations, which eſtabliſh a very rapid increaſe, it appears, that, in moſt of the provinces, each marriage yields only three children.

But if we reflect a moment, it will be clear, that to prevent the population of a country from regularly decreaſing, it is abſolutely neceſſary that each marriage, on an average, ſhould yield a marriage, that is, yield two children who live to be married. If the reſult fall ſhort of this, the number of marriages muſt be gradually diminiſhing, and the number of children to each marriage remaining the ſame, the population, of courſe, will continue decreaſing. If each marriage yield accurately two marrying children, the number of marriages, and the number of children, being the ſame in every generation, the population can be neither retrograde nor progreſſive, but muſt remain exactly ſtationary.

Suppoſing each marriage to produce three children, as appears to be the caſe, according to the liſts in ſome of the provinces of Ruſſia, it will be granted, that one, out of three, is but a ſmall proportion to allow for all who die in infancy and celibacy. But admitting this proportion, which may perhaps be true in the preſent inſtance, though it is very rarely ſo in other ſituations, it will follow that exactly

exactly two children, and no more, from every marriage, live to form a freſh union; in which caſe, from what has been before obſerved, no increaſe is poſſible. And yet in theſe ſame provinces, the proportion of the births to the deaths is given as 26 to 10; 22 to 10; 21 to 10; 20 to 10, &c: which implies a very rapid increaſe. The liſts therefore involve a moſt complete contradiction. Yet there is no reaſon to ſuſpect the accuracy of the ſtatements reſpecting the births and marriages; and, allowing for ſome omiſſions in the burials, the exceſs of births will ſtill be great, and indeed, the increaſing ſtate of the population has been aſcertained by the enumerations, mentioned in the laſt chapter.

Contradictory as theſe liſts appear, they do not involve a greater contradiction than the liſts of other countries, which purport to expreſs the number of births which each marriage yields. And it may perhaps contribute to the better underſtanding of the tables, which I ſhall have occaſion to notice in the next chapter, if I endeavour to explain a very important error into which all the writers in political arithmetic, that I have ever met with, have fallen, relative to this ſubject.

Theſe liſts are, in reality, enumerations of the annual marriages and the annual births; and the proportion between them, of courſe, accurately expreſſes the proportion of births to marriages which takes place in the year; but this proportion has been aſſumed to expreſs the number of births which each individual marriage in the courſe of its duration yields. On what grounds this aſſumption has been made, will appear from the following conſiderations.

If, in a country where there were no exports or imports of people, we could obtain the number of births and of marriages that had taken place in the courſe of a very long period, it is evident, that double the number of marriages, or, which is the ſame thing, the number of married people, would expreſs accurately the proportion of the born which had lived to be married; and the difference between this number and the number of births, would alſo expreſs

 accurately,

accurately, the proportion of the born which had died in infancy and celibacy. But the whole numbers of births and marriages, during this period, are evidently nothing more than the ſum of the annual births, and the ſum of the annual marriages. If, therefore, in any country, an average proportion can be obtained between the annual births and annual marriages, this proportion will manifeſtly expreſs the ſame thing as the whole numbers; that is, the number of perſons annually married, compared with the number of annual births, will accurately expreſs the proportion of the born which lives to be married; and the difference between them, the proportion of the born which dies in infancy and celibacy. For inſtance, if the average proportion of annual marriages to annual births, in any country, be as 1 to 4, this will imply, that, out of four children born, two of them live to marry, and the other two die in infancy and celibacy. This is a moſt important and intereſting piece of information, from which the moſt uſeful inferences are to be drawn; but it is totally different from the number of births which each individual marriage yields in the courſe of its duration; ſo much ſo, that on the ſuppoſition which has been juſt made, that half of the born live to be married, which is a very uſual proportion, the annual marriages would be to the annual births as 1 to 4, whether each individual marriage yielded 4 births, 2 births, or 100 births. If the latter number be taken, then, according to the preſent ſuppoſition, 50 would live to be married; and out of every 100 births there would be 25 marriages, and the marriages would ſtill be to the births as 1 to 4. The ſame proportion would evidently hold good in the caſe of two births yielded by each marriage, as this proportion is not in the ſmalleſt degree affected by the number of children which a marriage in the courſe of its duration may yield, but merely relates to the number of theſe children who live to be married, or the number of births from which one marriage reſults.

The only caſe in which the proportion of annual births to annual marriages, is the ſame, as the proportion of births which each individual

vidual marriage yields, is, when the births and deaths are exactly equal; and the reaſon of their being the ſame in this caſe is, that, in order to make the births and deaths exactly equal, we muſt aſſume, that each marriage yields exactly another marriage, and that, whatever be the number of children born from each union, they all die in infancy and celibacy, except one pair. Thus, if each marriage yield five children, two of which only live to form a freſh union, the proportion of annual marriages, to annual births, will be as 1 to 5, which is the ſame as the number of births yielded by each individual marriage, by hypotheſis. But whenever each marriage yields either more or leſs than one marrying pair, that is, whenever the population is either increaſing or decreaſing, then the proportion of annual births to annual marriages, can never be the ſame, as the proportion of births yielded by each individual marriage in the courſe of its duration.

Hence it follows, that whenever we aſſume them to be the ſame, any increaſe of population is impoſſible. Thus, if the foregoing reaſoning be admitted, and it be granted that the proportion of perſons yearly married, to the number of children yearly born, truly expreſſes the proportion of the born which lives to be married; then, aſſuming at the ſame time, what is aſſumed by thoſe who produce theſe liſts, that they expreſs the number of births yielded by each individual marriage, it is evident, that all ſuch liſts prove that the population is ſtationary; whereas, perhaps, from other accounts, it is known with certainty, that a rapid increaſe is going forwards. Thus, in Sweden, if we allow that the proportion of yearly marriages to yearly births, which is as 1 to 4 and $\frac{1}{10}$, expreſſes, what it really does, that out of 4 and $\frac{1}{10}$ births, one pair lives to marry; and ſuppoſe, at the ſame time, according to Wargentin, Suſmilch, Crome, Price, and others, that each marriage, in the courſe of its duration, yields only $4\frac{1}{10}$ births, it would follow, that, out of $4\frac{1}{10}$ births, 2 and $\frac{1}{10}$ die in infancy and celibacy, and only two children from each marriage live to form a freſh union, in which caſe no increaſe would be poſſible, though, from

the exceſs of births above the deaths, and even from actual enumerations, it might be completely aſcertained, that the progreſs of the population was conſiderable.

Dr. Price had conſidered this ſubject ſufficiently to ſee, that, in countries where an increaſe or decreaſe of population was taking place, theſe liſts did not accurately expreſs the number of births yielded by each marriage; but that he was very far from coming at what I conceive to be the juſt concluſion on this point, appears, from his obſerving that, on the ſuppoſition that half of the born live to marry, if the prolifickneſs of marriages were to increaſe, the births would riſe above quadruple the weddings [a]; whereas, in fact, as long as exactly half of the born live to be married, the annual births will always be exactly quadruple the annual weddings, let the prolifickneſs of marriages vary in any conceivable degree [b].

As a further proof that Dr. Price did not underſtand this ſubject, though he has a long and elaborate note on it, he often mentions the liſts of the yearly births and marriages, as expreſſing the number of children born to each marriage, and particularly notices the proportion in Sweden, as ſhewing the degree of prolifickneſs in the marriages of that country [c]. He merely thought that the liſts of annual births and marriages, did not, in all caſes, expreſs accurately the prolifickneſs of marriages; but he does not ſeem to have been in the ſmalleſt degree aware, that they had abſolutely nothing to do with it; and that, ſo far from being merely inaccurate, it would be impoſſible,

[a] Obſervations on Reverſ. Paym. vol. i. p. 270, note.

[b] That is, when a ſufficient time has elapſed, to let the births affect the marriages. Before this period, indeed, Dr. Price's obſervation would be juſt; but, practically, it ſeldom happens that the women of a country become all at once more prolifick than uſual; and in the general tables of mortality from which the deductions are made, if they be not ſuch, as for the births to affect the marriages, they cannot expreſs a juſt average of any kind, and are in every point of view almoſt entirely uſeleſs.

[c] Obſervations on Reverſ. Paym. vol. i. p. 275.

ble, from ſuch liſts, unaccompanied by other information, to tell with certainty, whether the prolifickneſs in the marriages of any country were ſuch as to yield 2 births, or 100 births in the courſe of their duration.

Such liſts, therefore, conſidered as expreſſing the prolifickneſs of marriages, muſt be rejected as perfectly uſeleſs; but conſidered as expreſſing the proportion of the born which lives to be married, ſhould be preſerved as highly valuable, and as giving a moſt intereſting and deſirable piece of information.

The late empreſs Catherine, in her inſtructions for a new code of laws in Ruſſia, ſays, "our peaſants have for the moſt part twelve, "fifteen, and even as far as twenty children from one marriage [a]." This is certainly an exaggeration; but the probability is, that the aſſertion was founded on a knowledge that the Ruſſian women were generally prolifick; and yet, according to the liſts which have been produced, it would appear that in moſt of the provinces, one marriage yields only three children, which is perfectly irreconcileable with the aſſertions of the empreſs. But, according to the foregoing reaſonings, theſe liſts merely expreſs that, out of three children born, two live to be married, which agrees with the extraordinary healthineſs in early life noticed in ſome of the provinces. The probability is, that each marriage in theſe provinces, yields about 6 births, 4 of which live to marry; and this ſuppoſition, which retains the proper proportion of the births to the marriages, according to the liſts, will account for the exceſs of the births above the deaths, and the rapid increaſe of the population.

In thoſe provinces where the annual births are to the annual marriages as 4 to 1, there, according to the principles laid down, only 2 out of 4, inſtead of 2 out of 3, live to be married; and to produce the exceſs of births, obſerved in ſome of theſe provinces, even after

[a] Chap. xii. p. 188. 4to. 1770. Peterſburgh.

making

making great allowances for omiſſions in the burials[a], it will be neceſſary to ſuppoſe, that there were full as many as 8 births to each marriage in the courſe of its duration.

Taking the general proportion of annual births to marriages for the whole country, as given by Mr. Tooke, then it would appear, that, out of 362 births, 200 lived to marry[b]; and to produce a proportion of births to deaths, as 2 to 1, inſtead of $2\frac{1}{4}$ to 1, as given by Mr. Tooke, that is, allowing the $\frac{1}{4}$ for the omiſſions in the burials, it will be neceſſary to ſuppoſe 7 or $7\frac{1}{2}$ births to each marriage, which may in ſome degree juſtify the aſſertions of the empreſs[c].

Theſe are rough calculations, formed by conſtructing tables on the plan of one produced by Wallace, in his Diſſertation on the Numbers of Mankind, and obſerving the proportions of births to deaths, which reſult from different ſuppoſitions reſpecting the number of children born, and the number which live to be married. As this diſſertation is not in every perſon's hands, I inſert the table, in order that the reader may ſee the grounds on which I have gone in theſe calculations.

It ſets out with a ſingle pair, but of courſe it is the ſame thing, whether we begin with 2 people or 2 millions of people. There are 8 columns, the contents of which are explained at the top of each.

[a] I am inclined to believe, that where only half of the born live to be married, the proportion of the births to the deaths can never riſe quite ſo high as 2 to 1, whatever may be the number of children to a marriage. The liſts, therefore, ſuch as thoſe of Veroneſch, which imply that only half of the born live to be married, at the ſame time that the births are to the deaths in the proportion of above 2 to 1, can only be accounted for by great omiſſions in the deaths, and by emigrations.

[b] Tooke's View of Ruſſian Empire, vol. ii. b. iii. p. 147.

[c] On the ſuppoſition that I have not aſſumed the proper proportions of births to deaths, which, from not knowing how to eſtimate the acknowledged omiſſions in the burials, is very probable, the reſults of courſe will be changed, and therefore too much ſtreſs ſhould not be laid on them.

TABLE

TABLE I.

Periods of the ſcheme.	Years of the ſcheme.	Born ſince the laſt period.	Of whom died ſince laſt period.	And remain in life to propagate.	Died ſince the laſt period at an advanced age.	The ſum of all who are alive at the reſpective periods.	The ſum of the laſt column collected.
Col. 1.	Col. 2.	Col. 3.	Col. 4.	Col. 5.	Col. 6.	Col. 7.	Col. 8.
0	1	0	0	0	0	2	2
1	$33\frac{1}{3}$	6	2	4	0	2+4	6
2	$66\frac{2}{3}$	12	4	8	2	6+8−2	12
3	100	24	8	16	4	12+16−4	24
4	$133\frac{1}{3}$	48	16	32	8	24+32−8	48
5	$166\frac{2}{3}$	96	32	64	16	48+64−16	96
6	200	192	64	128	32	96+128−32	192

The object of Mr. Wallace, in this table, was merely to ſhew the progreſs of population from a ſingle pair, and the period of doubling; but, if no eſſential fault be found with the conſtruction of it, it may be applied more extenſively and uſefully.

The periods are taken at $33\frac{1}{3}$ years; but the real period of a generation will, of courſe, vary in different countries, according to the average age of marriage. Each marriage is ſuppoſed to yield 6 children, 2 of whom, or one third, die in infancy or celibacy; and 4, or two thirds, forming two marriages, are left alive to breed.

If we examine the numbers in the ſecond period, we ſhall find 12, in the 3d column, which expreſſes the births; 4, in the 4th column, which expreſſes the deaths in infancy and celibacy; and 2, in the 6th column, which expreſſes the deaths of the parents. Conſequently the births are to the deaths, in the ſame period, as 12 to 4+2, as 12 to 6, or 2 to 1, and the proportions continue the ſame in all the other

periods. From which, I think, we may ſafely infer, that, if in any country the births be to the deaths as 2 to 1, and two thirds of the born live to marry, that each marriage muſt yield exactly 6 children.

If we examine the births and marriages in any of the contemporaneous periods, we ſhall find, in the ſecond period, 12 births, and 8 marrying perſons, or the proportion of 12 births to 4 marriages; in the third period, 24 births and 16 marrying perſons, or the proportion of 24 births to 8 marriages; and ſo on always in the proportion of 3 to 1. But the proportion of the ſum of births to the ſum of marriages, during theſe periods, muſt be the ſame, as any correct annual average; and conſequently, the annual births are to the annual marriages as 3 to 1; from which, according to the uſual mode of calculation, it would be inferred, that each marriage yielded 3 children, though we ſet out with the ſuppoſition of 6 children to each marriage; a contradiction, which ſtrongly confirms the reaſonings of the foregoing part of this chapter, and ſhews, that the proportion of annual births to annual marriages does not expreſs the number of children to each marriage, but a very different thing, namely, the number of the born which live to marry.

If, inſtead of two thirds, as in the preſent inſtance, we ſuppoſe that only half of the born live to marry, which is a more common proportion; then, for the ſecond period, we ſhall have in the third column, expreſſing the births, the number 9, and in the fifth column, expreſſing the marrying perſons $4\frac{1}{2}$: conſequently, the marriages will be to the births as 1 to 4, which is the moſt uſual average of Europe; though, in the preſent inſtance, we ſtill ſuppoſe, that each marriage yields ſix children in the courſe of its duration. On the ſame ſuppoſition, the births will be to the deaths, as 9 to $4\frac{1}{2}+2$, as 18 to 13, or about $13\frac{4}{5}$ to 10; and conſequently it may be inferred, that, when the births are to the deaths as $13\frac{4}{5}$ to 10, or 138 to 100, and half of the born live to marry, each marriage muſt yield ſix births.

If we ſuppoſe five births to a marriage, and that half of the born live to marry, then, according to the table, the births will be to the deaths,

deaths, as, about $12\frac{1}{5}$ to 10; and conſequently we may infer, in the ſame manner, that when the births are to the deaths as $12\frac{1}{5}$ to 10, and half of the born live to marry, that each marriage muſt yield 5 children.

Upon theſe principles, if we can obtain, in any country, the proportion of births to deaths, and of births to marriages, we may calculate pretty nearly the number of children born to each marriage[a]. This number will indeed turn out to be very different from the reſults of the old mode of calculation; but this circumſtance is rather in favour of its correctneſs; becauſe the known facts reſpecting population, cannot poſſibly be accounted for, according to the uſual mode of eſtimating the number of births to a marriage, which gives leſs than four, for the general average of Europe.

Buffon has inſerted in his work ſome tables of mortality, which he means ſhould be conſidered as applicable to the whole human race. By theſe, it appears, that half of the born die under eight years and one month old[b]. If we apply the average of four children to a marriage, to Buffon's eſtimate of mortality, it would appear, that the population of Europe, inſtead of having a ſtrong tendency to increaſe, is in danger of being extinct in the courſe of ſome years. Inſtead of increaſing in a geometrical ratio, it would be decreaſing in a geometrical ratio. If two, out of the four children allowed to each marriage, were to die under 8 years and a month old, the utmoſt that we could poſſibly expect, is, that $1\frac{1}{2}$ ſhould ſurvive, to form a freſh union, or that four preſent marriages ſhould yield three in the next generation; a ratio of decreaſe, which would, in no very long period, unpeople Europe.

But the truth is, that both the calculations are incorrect. Buffon's tables were taken from the regiſters of Paris, and its neighbouring

[a] That is, upon the ſuppoſition, that there is no incorrectneſs in the conſtruction of the table, or in the inferences which I think may be drawn from it. At preſent I do not ſee any.

[b] Hiſtoire Naturelle de l'Homme, tom. iv. p. 420. 12mo. 1752.

villages, and can by no means be conſidered as generally applicable. The ſource of the other error has been attempted to be pointed out in this chapter.

It is only in unhealthy towns, or villages very peculiarly circumſtanced, that half of the born die under 8 or 9 years of age. Taking an average throughout Europe, I have little doubt, that not only above half of the born live beyond the age of puberty, but that each marriage yields conſiderably above four births, I ſhould think, more than five. The poverty which checks population, tends much more powerfully to increaſe the number of deaths, than to diminiſh the number of births.

In forming concluſions reſpecting the proportion of the born which lives to be married from the liſts of annual births and annual marriages, which, according to the principles laid down, is the only point of view in which they are uſeful; there is one circumſtance, which, if not particularly attended to, may lead to conſiderable error.

In country pariſhes, from which there are emigrations, the proportion which lives to be married will be given too ſmall, and in towns which receive continually an acceſſion of ſtrangers, this proportion will be given much too great. The proportion of annual births to annual marriages, is in general higher, in the country, than in towns; but if there were no changing of inhabitants, the proportion in the towns would be much the higheſt. If, in a country pariſh, the births be to the weddings, as 4, or $4\frac{1}{2}$, to 1, this implies, that, out of 4 or $4\frac{1}{2}$ births, in that place, 2 lived to be married in that place; but many probably emigrated and married in other places, and therefore we cannot poſitively infer, from this proportion, that only 2 out of the 4, or $4\frac{1}{2}$, lived to be married.

In towns, the proportion of births to marriages is very often only 3, and $3\frac{1}{2}$, to 1, which would ſeem to imply that, out of 3, or $3\frac{1}{2}$ children, 2 lived to be married; but in theſe towns, it is known perhaps from the bills of mortality, that much above half of the born die under the age of puberty. The proportion which has been mentioned,

mentioned, therefore, cannot poſſibly expreſs the real proportion of the children born in the town, which lives to be married, but is cauſed by the acceſſion of ſtrangers, whoſe marriages appear in the regiſters, though not their births. In towns, where there is a great mortality in early life, if no marriages were regiſtered but of thoſe who were born in the place, the proportion of annual births to annual marriages, would be greater than the proportion of children born to each marriage, in the courſe of its duration, and would amount, perhaps, to 6 or 7 to 1, inſtead of 3, or $3\frac{1}{2}$, to 1.

In Leipſic, the proportion of births to weddings, is only 2 and $\frac{8}{10}$ to 1 [a]; and Suſmilch, ſuppoſing this to imply that there were only 2 and $\frac{8}{10}$ children born to each marriage, puzzles himſelf to account for this extraordinary unfruitfulneſs; but this appearance in the regiſters, without doubt, ariſes, either from a great acceſſion of ſtrangers, or from a cuſtom among the inhabitants of the neighbouring country, of celebrating their marriages in the town.

At Geneva, where the regiſters are ſuppoſed to be kept with conſiderable care, the number of marriages, from the year 1701 to 1760, was 21,493, and the number of births in the ſame period, 42,076; from which it is inferred, that each marriage had yielded, on an average, leſs than two children. The author of a valuable paper in the Bibliotheque Britannique, who mentions theſe numbers [b], naturally expreſſes ſome ſurpriſe at the reſult, but ſtill adopts it as the meaſure of the fruitfulneſs of the Geneva women. The circumſtance, however, ariſes undoubtedly from the conſtant influx of new ſettlers, whoſe marriages appear in the regiſters but not their births. If the number of children from each individual mother were traced with care in the bills of mortality at Geneva, I am confident that the reſult would be very different.

In Paris the proportion of annual births to annual marriages, is about $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 [c], and the women have, in conſequence, been

[a] Suſmilch's Gottliche Ordnung, vol. i. c. v. ſ. lxxxiii. p. 171. [b] Tom. iv. p. 38. note.
[c] Suſmilch's Gottliche Ordnung, vol. i. c. v. ſ. lxxxv. p. 174.

conſidered as more prolifick than uſual for a large town; but no ſuch inference can properly be drawn from this proportion, which is probably cauſed, merely by the infrequency of marriages among perſons not born in the town, and the cuſtom of celebrating marriages in the neighbouring villages. The ſmall number of weddings which takes place in Paris, in proportion to the whole population [a], and the more than uſual number in the villages round Paris, ſeem to confirm this ſuppoſition.

The rapidity of the increaſe in population depends upon the number of children born to each marriage, and the proportion of that number which lives to form a freſh union. The meaſure of this rapidity is the proportion, which the exceſs of the births above the deaths, bears to the whole population.

That the reader may ſee at once the tendency to increaſe, and the period of doubling, which would reſult from any obſerved proportion of births to deaths, and of theſe to the whole population, I ſubjoin two tables from Suſmilch, calculated by Euler, which I believe are very correct. The firſt is confined to the ſuppoſition of a mortality of 1 in 36, and therefore can only be applied to countries where ſuch a mortality is known to take place. The other is general, depending ſolely upon the proportion, which the exceſs of the births above the burials, bears to the whole population, and therefore may be applied univerſally to all countries, whatever may be the degree of their mortality.

It will be obſerved, that when the proportion between the births and burials is given, the period of doubling will be ſhorter, the

[a] In Paris the proportion of annual marriages to the whole population, is, according to Suſmilch, 1 to 137; according to Crome, 1 to 160. In Geneva, it is as 1 to 64; and this extraordinary proportion of marriages, is certainly owing principally to the great influx of foreign ſettlers. In places, where the proportion of annual births to annual marriages is much influenced by new ſettlers, or emigrations, few accurate inferences can be drawn from them, in any way. They neither expreſs the fruitfulneſs of marriages, nor the proportion of the born which lives to be married.

greater

greater the mortality; becauſe the births, as well as deaths, are increaſed by this ſuppoſition, and they both bear a greater proportion to the whole population, than if the mortality were ſmaller, and there were a greater number of people in advanced life.

The general mortality of Ruſſia, according to Mr. Tooke, as has before been ſtated, is 1 in 58, and the proportion of births 1 in 26. Allowing ſomething for the omiſſions in the burials, if we aſſume the mortality to be 1 in 52, then the births will be to the deaths as 2 to 1, and the proportion, which the exceſs of births bears to the whole population, will be $\frac{1}{52}$. According to Table III. the period of doubling will, in this caſe, be about 36 years. But if we were to keep the proportion of births to deaths as 2 to 1, and ſuppoſe a mortality of 1 in 36, as in Table II. the exceſs of births above the burials would be $\frac{1}{36}$ of the whole population, and the period of doubling would be only 25 years.

It is evident, that in countries which are very healthy, and where, in conſequence, the number of grown up people is great, the births can never bear the ſame proportion to the whole population, as where the number of grown people is ſmaller; and therefore the exceſs of births above the deaths, cannot, in ſo ſhort a time, produce a number equal to the former population.

TABLE

TABLE II.

When in any country there are 100,000 perſons living and the mortality is 1 in 36.

If the proportion of deaths to births be as	Then the exceſs of the births will be	The proportion of the exceſs of the births, to the whole population, will be	And therefore the period of doubling will be
10 : 11	277	$\frac{1}{361}$	250 years.
12	555	$\frac{1}{180}$	125
13	833	$\frac{1}{120}$	$83\frac{1}{2}$
14	1110	$\frac{1}{90}$	$62\frac{3}{4}$
15	1388	$\frac{1}{72}$	$50\frac{1}{4}$
16	1666	$\frac{1}{60}$	42
17	1943	$\frac{1}{51}$	$35\frac{3}{4}$
18	2221	$\frac{1}{45}$	$31\frac{2}{3}$
19	2499	$\frac{1}{40}$	28
20	2777	$\frac{1}{36}$	$25\frac{3}{10}$
22	3332	$\frac{1}{30}$	$21\frac{1}{8}$
25	4165	$\frac{1}{24}$	17
30	5554	$\frac{1}{18}$	$12\frac{4}{5}$

TABLE III.

The proportion of the exceſs of births above the deaths, to the whole of the living.	Periods of doubling in years, and ten thouſandth parts.	The proportion of the exceſs of births above the deaths, to the whole of the living.	Periods of doubling in years, and ten thouſandth parts.
1 : 10	7.2722	1 : 21	14.9000
11	7.9659	22	15.5932
12	8.6595	23	16.2864
13	9.3530	24	16.9797
14	10.0465	25	17.6729
15	10.7400	26	18.3662
16	11.4333	27	19.0594
17	12.1266	28	19.7527
18	12.8200	29	20.4458
19	13.5133	30	21.1391
20	14.2066		

The proportion of the exceſs of births above the deaths, to the whole of the living.	Periods of doubling in years, and ten thouſandth parts.	The proportion of the exceſs of births above the deaths, to the whole of the living.	Periods of doubling in years, and ten thouſandth parts.
1 : 32	22.5255	1 : 210	145.9072
34	23.9119	220	152.8387
36	25.2983	230	159.7702
38	26.6847	240	166.7017
40	28.0711	250	173.6332
42	29.4574	260	180.5647
44	30.8438	270	187.4961
46	32.2302	280	194.4275
48	33.6165	290	201.3590
50	35.0029	300	208.2905
1 : 55	38.4687	1 : 310	215.2220
60	41.9345	320	222.1535
65	45.4003	330	229.0850
70	48.8661	340	236.0164
75	52.3318	350	242.9479
80	55.7977	360	249.8794
85	59.2634	370	256.8109
90	62.7292	380	263.7425
95	66.1950	390	270.6740
100	69.6607	400	277.6055
1 : 110	76.5923	1 : 410	284.5370
120	83.5238	420	291.4685
130	90.4554	430	298.4000
140	97.3868	440	305.3314
150	104.3183	450	312.2629
160	111.2598	460	319.1943
170	118.1813	470	326.1258
180	125.1128	480	333.0573
190	132.0443	490	339.9888
200	138.9757	500	346.9202
		1 : 1000	693.49

CHAP. V.

Of the Checks to Population in the middle parts of Europe.

I HAVE dwelt longer on the northern ſtates of Europe, than their relative importance might, to ſome, appear to demand, becauſe their internal economy is, in many reſpects, eſſentially different from our own, and a perſonal, though ſlight, acquaintance with theſe countries, has enabled me to mention a few particulars which have not yet been before the publick. In the middle parts of Europe, the diviſion of labour, the diſtribution of employments, and the proportion of the inhabitants of towns to the inhabitants of the country, differ ſo little from what is obſervable in England, that it would be in vain to ſeek for the checks to their population in any peculiarity of habits and manners ſufficiently marked to admit of deſcription. I ſhall, therefore, endeavour to direct the reader's attention, principally, to ſome inferences drawn from the liſts of births, marriages, and deaths in different countries; and theſe data will, in many important points, give us more information reſpecting their internal economy than we could receive from the moſt obſerving traveller.

One of the moſt curious and inſtructive points of view in which we can conſider liſts of this kind, appears to me to be, in the dependence of the marriages on the deaths. It has been juſtly obſerved by Monteſquieu, that wherever there is a place for two perſons to live comfortably, a marriage will certainly enſue [a]: but in moſt of the countries in Europe, in the preſent ſtate of their population, ex-

[a] Eſprit des Loix, liv. xxiii. c. x.

perience will not allow us to expect any ſudden and great increaſe in the means of ſupporting a family. The place, therefore, for the new marriage muſt, in general, be made by the diſſolution of an old one; and we find, in conſequence, that, except after ſome great mortality, from whatever cauſe it may have proceeded, or ſome ſudden change of policy peculiarly favourable to cultivation and trade, the number of annual marriages is regulated principally by the number of annual deaths. They reciprocally influence each other. There are few countries in which the common people have ſo much foreſight, as to defer marriage, till they have a fair proſpect of being able to ſupport properly all their children. Some of the mortality, therefore, in almoſt every country, is forced by the too great frequency of marriage; and in every country, a great mortality, whether ariſing principally from this cauſe, or occaſioned by the number of great towns and manufactories, and the natural unhealthineſs of the ſituation, will neceſſarily produce a great frequency of marriage.

A moſt ſtriking exemplification of this obſervation occurs in the caſe of ſome villages in Holland. Suſmilch has calculated the mean proportion of annual marriages, compared with the number of inhabitants, as between 1 in 107, and 1 in 113, in countries which have not been thinned by plagues or wars, or in which there is no ſudden increaſe in the means of ſubſiſtence [a]. And Crome, a later ſtatiſtical writer, taking a mean between 1 in 92 and 1 in 122, eſtimates the average proportion of marriages to inhabitants as 1 to 108 [b]. But in the regiſters of 22 Dutch villages the accuracy of which, according to Suſmilch, there is no reaſon to doubt, it appears that out of 64 perſons there is 1 annual marriage [c]. This is a moſt extraordinary deviation from the mean proportion. When I firſt ſaw this number mentioned, not having then adverted to the mortality in theſe

[a] Suſmilch, Gottliche Ordnung, vol. i. c. iv. ſect. lvi. p. 126.
[b] Crome, uber die Gröſſe und Bevölkerung der Europ. Staaten, p. 88. Leipſ. 1785.
[c] Suſmilch, Gottliche Ordnung, vol. i. c. iv. ſect. lviii. p. 127.

villages, I was much aſtoniſhed, and very little ſatisfied with Suſmilch's attempt to account for it, by talking of the great number of trades, and the various means of getting a livelihood, in Holland [a], as it is evident, that, the country having been long in the ſame ſtate, there would be no reaſon to expect any great yearly acceſſion of new trades and new means of ſubſiſtence, and the old ones would of courſe all be full. But the difficulty was immediately ſolved, when it appeared that the mortality was between 1 in 22, and 1 in 23 [b], inſtead of being 1 in 36, as is uſual when the marriages are in the proportion of 1 to 108. The births and deaths were nearly equal. The extraordinary number of marriages was not cauſed by the opening of any new ſources of ſubſiſtence, and therefore produced no increaſe of population. It was merely occaſioned by the rapid diſſolution of the old marriages by death, and the conſequent vacancy of ſome employment by which a family might be ſupported.

It might be a queſtion, in this caſe, whether the too great frequency of marriage, that is, the preſſure of the population too hard againſt the limits of ſubſiſtence, contributed moſt to produce the mortality, or the mortality, occaſioned naturally by the employments of the people and unhealthineſs of the country, the frequency of marriage. In the preſent inſtance, I ſhould, without doubt, incline to the latter ſuppoſition, particularly, as it ſeems to be generally agreed, that the common people in Holland are, upon the whole, well off. The great mortality probably ariſes, partly from the natural marſhineſs of the ſoil, and the number of canals; and partly from the very great proportion of the people, which is engaged in ſedentary occupations, and the very ſmall number in the healthy employments of agriculture.

A very curious and ſtriking contraſt to theſe Dutch villages, tending to illuſtrate the preſent ſubject, will be recollected in what was

[a] Suſmilch, Gottliche Ordnung, vol. i. c. iv. ſect. lviii. p. 128.
[b] Id. c. ii. ſect. xxxvi. p. 92.

ſaid

ſaid reſpecting the ſtate of Norway. In Norway, the mortality is 1 in 48, and the marriages 1 in 130. In the Dutch villages, the mortality 1 in 23, and the marriages 1 in 64. The difference both in the marriages and deaths is above double. They maintain their relative proportions in a very exact manner, and ſhew how much the deaths and marriages mutually depend upon each other, and that, except where ſome ſudden ſtart in the agriculture of a country enlarges the means of ſubſiſtence, an increaſe of marriages will only produce an increaſe of mortality, and *vice verſâ*.

In Ruſſia, this ſudden ſtart in agriculture has, in great meaſure, taken place; and conſequently, though the mortality is very ſmall, yet, the proportion of marriages is not ſo. But in the progreſs of the population of Ruſſia, if the proportion of marriages remain the ſame as at preſent, the mortality will inevitably increaſe, or if the mortality remain nearly the ſame, the proportion of marriages will diminiſh.

Suſmilch has produced ſome ſtriking inſtances of this gradual decreaſe in the proportional number of marriages, in the progreſs of a country to a fuller population, and a more complete occupation of all the means of gaining a livelihood.

In the town of Halle, in the year 1700, the number of annual marriages was to the whole population as 1 to 77. During the courſe of the 55 following years, this proportion changed gradually, according to Suſmilch's calculation, to 1 in 167 [a]. This is a moſt extraordinary difference, and, if the calculation were quite accurate, would prove to what a degree the preventive check to population had operated, and how completely it had meaſured itſelf to the means of ſubſiſtence. As, however, the number of people is eſtimated by calculation, and not taken from enumerations, this very great difference in the proportions may not be perfectly correct, or may be occaſioned in part by other cauſes.

[a] Suſmilch, Gottliche Ordnung, vol. i. c. iv. ſect. lxii. p. 132.

In the town of Leipſic, in the year 1620, the annual marriages were to the population as 1 to 82: from the year 1741 to 1756, they were as 1 to 120[a].

In Augſburgh, in 1510, the proportion of marriages to the population was as 1 to 86; in 1750, as 1 to 123[b].

In Dantzic, in the year 1705, the proportion was as 1 to 89; in 1745 as 1 to 118[c].

In the dukedom of Magdeburgh in 1700, the proportion was as 1 to 87; from 1752 to 1755, as 1 to 125.

In the principality of Halberſtadt, in 1690, the proportion was as 1 to 88; in 1756, as 1 to 112.

In the dukedom of Cleves, in 1705, the proportion was 1 to 83; in 1755, 1 to 100.

In the Churmark of Brandenburgh, in 1700, the proportion was 1 to 76; in 1755, 1 to 108[d].

More inſtances of this kind might be produced; but theſe are ſufficient to ſhew that, in countries where, from a ſudden increaſe in the means of ſubſiſtence, ariſing either from a great previous mortality, or from improving cultivation and trade, room has been made for a number of marriages much beyond thoſe diſſolved by death; this additional number will annually decreaſe, in proportion as all the new employments are filled up, and there is no further room for an increaſing population.

But in countries which have long been fully peopled, and in which no new ſources of ſubſiſtence are opening, the marriages being regulated principally by the deaths, will generally bear nearly the ſame proportion to the whole population, at one period as at another. And the ſame conſtancy will take place, even in countries where there is an annual increaſe in the means of ſubſiſtence, provided this increaſe be uniform and permanent. Suppoſing it to be

[a] Suſmilch, Gottliche Ordnung, vol. i. c. iv. ſect. lxiii. p. 134.
[b] Id. ſect. lxiv. p. 134. [c] Id. ſect. lxv. p. 135. [d] Id. ſect. lxxi. p. 140.

ſuch,

ſuch, as for half a century, to allow every year of a fixed number of marriages beyond thoſe diſſolved by death, the population would then be increaſing, and perhaps rapidly; but it is evident, that the proportion of marriages to the whole population, would remain the ſame during the whole period.

This proportion Suſmilch has endeavoured to aſcertain in different countries and different ſituations. In the villages of the Churmark of Brandenburgh, 1 marriage out of 109 perſons takes place annually[a]; and the general proportion for agricultural villages, he thinks, may be taken at between 1 in 108, and 1 in 115[b]. In the ſmall towns of the Churmark where the mortality is greater, the proportion is 1 to 98[c]: in the Dutch villages mentioned before, 1 to 64: in Berlin 1 to 110[d]: in Paris 1 to 137[e]: according to Crome in the *unmarrying* cities of Paris and Rome, the proportion is only 1 to 160[f].

All general proportions, however, of every kind, ſhould be applied with conſiderable caution, as it ſeldom happens that the increaſe of food and of population is uniform; and when the circumſtances of a country are varying, either from this cauſe, or from any change in the habits of the people with reſpect to prudence and cleanlineſs, it is evident, that a proportion which is true at one period, will not be ſo at another.

Nothing is more difficult than to lay down rules on theſe ſubjects that do not admit of exceptions. Generally ſpeaking, it might be taken for granted, that an increaſed facility in the means of gaining a livelihood, either from a great previous mortality, or from improving cultivation and trade, would produce a greater proportion of annual marriages; but this effect might not perhaps follow. Sup-

[a] Suſmilch, Gottliche Ordnung, vol. i. c. iv. ſect. lvi. p. 125.
[b] Id. ſect. lxxv. p. 147. [c] Id. ſect. lx. p. 129. [d] Ibid.
[e] Id. ſect. lxix. p. 137. [f] Crome, uber die Gröſſe und Bevölkerung der Europaiſchen Staaten, p. 89.

poſing

poſing the people to have been before in a very depreſſed ſtate, and much of the mortality to have ariſen from the want of foreſight which uſually accompanies ſuch a ſtate, it is poſſible, that the ſudden improvement of their condition, might give them more of a decent and proper pride; and the conſequence would be, that the proportional number of marriages might remain nearly the ſame, but they would all rear more of their children, and the additional population that was wanted, would be ſupplied by a diminiſhed mortality, inſtead of an increaſed number of births.

In the ſame manner, if the population of any country had been long ſtationary, and would not eaſily admit of an increaſe, it is poſſible that a change in the habits of the people, from improved education, or any other cauſe, might diminiſh the proportional number of marriages; but as fewer children would be loſt in infancy, from the diſeaſes conſequent on poverty, the diminution in the number of marriages would be balanced by the diminiſhed mortality, and the population would be kept up to its proper level by a ſmaller number of births.

Such changes, therefore, in the habits of a people ſhould evidently be taken into conſideration.

The moſt general rule that can be laid down on this ſubject is, perhaps, that any *direct* encouragements to marriage muſt be accompanied by an increaſed mortality. The natural tendency to marriage is, in every country, ſo great, that, without any encouragements whatever, a proper place for a marriage will always be filled up. Such encouragements, therefore, muſt be either perfectly futile, or produce a marriage where there is not a proper place for one, and the conſequence muſt neceſſarily be, increaſed poverty and mortality. Monteſquieu, in his Lettres Perſanes, ſays, that in the paſt wars of France, the fear of being inrolled in the militia, tempted a great number of young men to marry, without the proper means of ſupporting a family, and the effect was, the birth of a crowd of children,

dren, "que l'on cherche encore en France, et que la misère la famine et les maladies en ont fait diſparoître [a]."

After ſo ſtriking an illuſtration of the neceſſary effects, of direct encouragements to marriage, it is perfectly aſtoniſhing, that in his Eſprit des Loix, he ſhould ſay that Europe is ſtill in a ſtate to require laws which favour the propagation of the human ſpecies [b].

Suſmilch adopts the ſame ideas, and though he contemplates the caſe of the number of marriages coming neceſſarily to a ſtand, when the food is not capable of further increaſe, and examines ſome countries, in which, the number of contracted marriages is exactly meaſured by the number diſſolved by death, yet he ſtill thinks that it is one of the principal duties of government to attend the number of marriages. He cites the examples of Auguſtus and Trajan, and thinks that a prince or a ſtateſman would really merit the name of father of his people, if, from the proportion of 1 to 120 or 125, he could increaſe the marriages to the proportion of 1 to 80 or 90 [c]. But as it clearly appears, from the inſtances which he himſelf produces, that in countries which have been long tolerably well peopled, death is the moſt powerful of all the encouragements to marriage, the prince or ſtateſman who ſhould ſucceed in thus greatly increaſing the number of marriages, might, perhaps, deſerve much more juſtly the title of deſtroyer, than father, of his people.

The proportion of yearly births to the whole population, muſt evidently depend principally upon the proportion of the people marrying annually; and, therefore, in countries which will not admit of a great increaſe of population, muſt, like the marriages, depend principally on the deaths. Where an actual decreaſe of population is not taking place, the births will always ſupply the vacancies made by death, and exactly ſo much more, as the increaſing agriculture and trade of the country will admit. In almoſt every part of Europe

[a] Lettre cxxii. [b] Eſprit des Loix, liv. xxiii. c. xxvi.
[c] Suſmilch, Gottliche Ordnung, vol. i. c. iv. ſect. lxxviii. p. 151.

during

during the intervals of the great plagues, epidemicks, or unuſually deſtructive wars, with which it is occaſionally viſited, the births exceed the deaths; but as the mortality varies very much in different countries and ſituations, the births will be found to vary in the ſame manner, though from the exceſs of births above deaths, which moſt countries can admit, not in the ſame degree.

In 39 villages of Holland, where the deaths are about 1 in 23, the births are alſo about 1 in 23[a]. In 15 villages round Paris, the births bear the ſame, or even a greater proportion to the whole population, on account of a ſtill greater mortality. The births are 1 in $22\frac{7}{10}$, and the deaths the ſame[b]. In the ſmall towns of Brandenburgh, which are in an increaſing ſtate, the mortality is 1 in 29, and the births 1 in $24\frac{7}{10}$[c]. In Sweden, where the mortality is about 1 in 35, the births are 1 in 28[d]. In 1056 villages of Brandenburgh, in which the mortality is about 1 in 39 or 40, the births are about 1 in 30[e]. In Norway, where the mortality is 1 in 48, the births are 1 in 34[f]. In all theſe inſtances, the births are evidently meaſured by the deaths, after making a proper allowance for the exceſs of births which the ſtate of each country will admit. In Ruſſia this allowance muſt be great, as, although the mortality may perhaps be taken as only 1 in 48 or 50, the births are as high as 1 in 26, owing to the preſent rapid increaſe of the population.

Statiſtical writers have endeavoured to obtain a general meaſure of mortality for all countries taken together; but, if ſuch a meaſure could be obtained, I do not ſee what good purpoſe it could anſwer. It would be but of little uſe in aſcertaining the population of Europe, or of the world; and it is evident, that, in applying it to particular countries or particular places, we might be led into the groſſeſt errors. When the mortality of the human race, in different countries,

[a] Suſmilch, Gottliche Ordnung, vol. i. c. vi. ſ. cxvi. p. 225.
[b] Ibid. and c. ii. ſ. xxxvii. p. 93. [c] Id. c. ii. ſ. xxviii. p. 80. and c. vi. ſ. cxvi. p. 225. [d] Id. c. vi. ſ. cxvi. p. 225. [e] Ibid.
[f] Thaarup's Statiſtik, vol. ii. p. 4.

tries, and different ſituations, varies ſo much as from 1 in 20, to 1 in 60, no general average could be uſed with ſafety in a particular caſe, without ſuch a knowledge of the circumſtances of the country, with reſpect to the number of towns, the habits of the people, and the healthineſs of the ſituation, as would probably ſuperſede the neceſſity of reſorting to any general proportion, by the knowledge of the particular proportion ſuited to the country.

There is one leading circumſtance, however, affecting the mortality of countries, which may be conſidered as very general, and which is, at the ſame time, completely open to obſervation. This is the number of towns in any ſtate, which has been before alluded to, and the proportion of town to country inhabitants. The unfavourable effects of cloſe habitations and ſedentary employments on the health are univerſal; and therefore, on the number of people living in this manner, compared with the number employed in agriculture, will much depend the general mortality of the ſtate. Upon this principle it has been calculated, that when the proportion of the people in the towns, to thoſe in the country, is as 1 to 3, then the mortality is about 1 in 36, which riſes to 1 in 35, or 1 in 33, when the proportion of townſmen to villagers is 2 to 5, or 3 to 7; and falls below 1 in 36, when this proportion is 2 to 7, or 1 to 4. On theſe grounds the mortality in Pruſſia is 1 in 38; in Pomerania, 1 in $37\frac{1}{2}$; in the Neumark, 1 in 37; in the Churmark, 1 in 35; according to the liſts for 1756[a].

The neareſt average meaſure of mortality for all countries, taking towns and villages together, is, according to Suſmilch, 1 in 36[b]. But Crome thinks that this meaſure, though it might poſſibly have ſuited the time at which Suſmilch wrote, is not correct at preſent, when in moſt of the ſtates of Europe both the number and the ſize of towns have increaſed[c]. He ſeems to be of opinion, indeed, that

[a] Suſmilch, Gottliche Ordnung, vol. iii. p. 69. [b] Vol. i. c. ii. ſ. xxxv. p. 91.
[c] Crome, uber die Gröſſe und Bevölkerung der Europaiſchen Staaten, p. 116.

this mortality was rather below the truth in Suſmilch's time, and that now 1 in 30 would be found to be nearer the average meaſure. It is not improbable that Suſmilch's proportion is too ſmall, as he had a little tendency, with many other ſtatiſtical writers, to throw out of his calculations epidemick years; but Crome has not advanced proofs ſufficient to eſtabliſh a general meaſure of mortality in oppoſition to that propoſed by Suſmilch. He quotes Buſching, who ſtates the mortality of the whole Pruſſian monarchy to be 1 in 30 [a]. But it appears that this inference was drawn from liſts for only three years, a period much too ſhort to determine any general average. This proportion for the Pruſſian monarchy is, indeed, completely contradicted by ſubſequent obſervations mentioned by Crome. According to liſts for five years, ending in 1784, the mortality was only 1 in 37 [b]. During the ſame period the births were to the deaths as 131 to 100. In Sileſia the mortality from 1781 to 1784, was 1 in 30; and the births to deaths as 128 to 100. In Gelderland, the mortality from 1776 to 1781 was 1 in 27, and the births 1 in 26. Theſe are the two provinces of the monarchy in which the mortality is the greateſt. In ſome others it is very ſmall. From 1781 to 1784, the average mortality in Neuffchatel and Ballengin, was only 1 in 44, and the births 1 in 31. In the principality of Halberſtadtz, from 1778 to 1784, the mortality was ſtill leſs, being only 1 in 45 or 46, and the proportion of births to deaths 137 to 100 [c].

The general concluſion that Crome draws, is, that the ſtates of Europe may be divided into three claſſes, to which a different meaſure of mortality ought to be applied. In the richeſt and moſt populous ſtates, where the inhabitants of towns are to the inhabitants of the country, in ſo high a proportion as 1 to 3, the mortality may be taken as 1 in 30. In thoſe countries, which are in a middle ſtate, with regard to population and cultivation, the mortality

[a] Crome, uber die Bevölkerung der Europaiſch. Staat. p. 118.
[b] Id. p. 120. [c] Id. p. 122.

may

may be conſidered as 1 in 32. And in the thinly-peopled northern ſtates, Suſmilch's proportion of 1 in 36 may be applied [a].

Theſe proportions ſeem to make the general mortality rather too great, even after allowing epidemick years to have their full effect in the calculations.

[a] Crome's Europaiſchen Staaten, p. 127.

CHAP. VI.

Effects of Epidemicks on Tables of Mortality.

It appears clearly, from the very valuable tables of mortality which Sufmilch has collected, and which include periods of 50 or 60 years, that all the countries of Europe are subject to periodical sickly seasons, which check their increase; and very few are exempt from those great and wasting plagues, which, once or twice, perhaps, in a century, sweep off the third or fourth part of their inhabitants. The way in which these periods of mortality affect all the general proportions of births, deaths, and marriages, is strikingly illustrated in the tables for Prussia and Lithuania, from the year 1692 to the year 1757 [a].

[a] Sufmilch, Gottliche Ordnung, vol. i. table xxi. p. 83, of the tables.

TABLE

TABLE IV.

Annual average.	Marriages.	Births.	Deaths.	Proportion of births to marriages.	Proportion of deaths to births.
5 yrs to 1697	5747	19715	14862	10 : 34	100 : 132
5 yrs — 1702	6070	24112	14474	10 : 39	100 : 165
6 yrs — 1708	6082	26896	16430	10 : 44	100 : 163
In 1709 and 1710	a plague	number destroyed in 2 years.	247733		
In 1711	12028	32522	10131	10 : 27	100 : 320
In 1712	6267	22970	10445	10 : 36	100 : 220
5 yrs to 1716	4968	21603	11984	10 : 43	100 : 180
5 yrs — 1721	4324	21396	12039	10 : 49	100 : 177
5 yrs — 1726	4719	21452	12863	10 : 45	100 : 166
5 yrs — 1731	4808	29554	12825	10 : 42	100 : 160
4 yrs — 1735	5424	22692	15475	10 : 41	100 : 146
In 1736	5280	21859	26371	Epidemic years.	
In 1737	5765	18930	24480		
5 yrs to 1742	5582	22099	15255	10 : 39	100 : 144
4 yrs — 1746	5469	25275	15117	10 : 46	100 : 167
5 yrs — 1751	6423	28235	17272	10 : 43	100 : 163
5 yrs — 1756	5599	28392	19154	10 : 50	100 : 148
In the 16 yrs before the plague	95585	380516	245763	10 : 39	100 : 154
In 46 yrs after the plague	248777	1083872	690324	10 : 43	100 : 157
In 62 good years	344361	1464388 936087	936087	10 : 43	100 : 156
More born than died		528301			
In the 2 plague yrs	5477	23977	247733		
In all the 64 yrs including the plague	340838	1488365 1183820	1183820	10 : 42	100: 125
More born than died		304745			

The table, from which this is copied, contains the marriages, births, and deaths, for every particular year during the whole period; but to bring it into a ſmaller compaſs, I have retained only the general average drawn from the ſhorter periods of five and four years, except where the numbers for the individual years preſented any fact worthy of particular obſervation. The year 1711, immediately ſucceeding the great plague, is not included by Suſmilch in any general average; but he has given the particular numbers, and if they be accurate, they ſhew the very ſudden and prodigious effect of a great mortality on the number of marriages.

Suſmilch calculates that above one third of the people was deſtroyed by the plague; and yet, notwithſtanding this great diminution of the population, it will appear, by a reference to the table, that the number of marriages in the year 1711, was very nearly double the average of the ſix years preceding the plague[a]. To produce this effect, we muſt ſuppoſe, that almoſt all who were at the age of puberty were induced, from the demand for labour, and the number of vacant employments, immediately to marry. This immenſe number of marriages in the year, could not poſſibly be accompanied by a great proportional number of births, becauſe we cannot ſuppoſe that the new marriages could each yield more than one birth in the year, and the reſt muſt come from the marriages which had continued unbroken through the plague. We cannot, therefore, be ſurpriſed, that the proportion of births to marriages in this year ſhould be only 2 and $\frac{7}{10}$ to 1, or 27 to 10. But though the proportion of births

[a] The number of people before the plague, according to Suſmilch's calculation, (vol. i. ch. ix. ſect. 173.) was 570,000; from which, if we ſubtract 247,733, the number dying in the plague, the remainder 322,267 will be the population after the plague; which, divided by the number of marriages and the number of births for the year 1711, makes the marriages about one twenty-ſixth part of the population, and the births about one tenth part. Such extraordinary proportions could only occur, in any country, in an individual year. If they were to continue, they would double the population in leſs than ten years.

births to marriages could not be great; yet, on account of the extraordinary number of marriages, the abſolute number of births muſt be great; and as the number of deaths would naturally be ſmall, the proportion of births to deaths is prodigious, being 320 to 100; an exceſs of births, as great, perhaps, as has ever been known in America.

In the next year, 1712, the number of marriages muſt of courſe diminiſh exceedingly, becauſe, nearly all who were at the age of puberty having married the year before, the marriages of this year would be ſupplied principally by thoſe who had arrived at this age, ſubſequent to the plague. Still, however, as *all* who were marriageable had not probably married the year before, the number of marriages, in the year 1712, is great in proportion to the population; and, though not much more than half of the number which took place during the preceding year, is greater than the average number in the laſt period before the plague. The proportion of births to marriages in 1712, though greater than in the preceding year, on account of the ſmaller comparative number of marriages, is, with reference to other countries, not great, being, as $3\frac{6}{10}$ to 1, or 36 to 10. But the proportion of births to deaths, though leſs than in the preceding year, when ſo very large a proportion of the people married, is, with reference to other countries, ſtill unuſually great, being as 220 to 100; an exceſs of births which, calculated on a mortality of 1 in 36, would double the population of a country (according to Table II. page 238) in $21\frac{1}{8}$ years.

From this period the number of annual marriages begins to be regulated by the diminiſhed population, and of courſe to ſink conſiderably below the average number of marriages before the plague, depending principally on the number of perſons riſing annually to a marriageable ſtate. In the year 1720, about nine or ten years after the plague, the number of annual marriages, either from accident, or the beginning operation of the preventive check, is the ſmalleſt; and it is at this time, as might be expected, that the

proportion of births to marriages rises very high. In the period from 1717 to 1721 the proportion, as appears by the Table, is 49 to 10; and, in the particular years 1719 and 1720, it is 50 to 10, and 55 to 10.

Susmilch draws the attention of his readers to the fruitfulness of marriages in Prussia after the plague, and mentions the proportion of 50 annual births to 10 annual marriages as a proof of it. There are the best reasons for supposing that the marriages in Prussia at this time, were very fruitful; but certainly this proportion by itself is no proof of it, being evidently caused by the smaller number of marriages taking place in the year, and not by the greater number of births [a]. In the two years immediately succeeding the plague, when the excess of births above the deaths was so astonishing, the births bore a small proportion to the marriages, and, according to the usual mode of calculating, it would have followed, that each marriage yielded only 2 $\frac{7}{10}$, or 3 $\frac{6}{10}$ children. In the last period of the table, from 1752 to 1756, the births are to the marriages as 5 to 1, and in the individual year 1756, as 6 $\frac{1}{10}$ to 1; and yet, during this period, the births are to the deaths only as 148 to 100; which could not have been the case, if the high proportion of births to marriages, had indicated a greater number of births than usual, instead of a smaller number of marriages.

The variations in the proportion of births to deaths in the different periods of the 64 years included in the table, deserve particular attention. If we were to take an average of the four years immediately succeeding the plague, the births would be to the deaths, in the proportion of above 22 to 10, which, supposing the mortality to be 1 in 36, would double the population in less than 21 years. If we take the 20 years from 1711 to 1731, the average proportion of the births to deaths will appear to be about 17 to 10; a proportion which (according to Table II. page 238) would double the population in about 35 years. But if, instead of 20 years, we

[a] Susmilch, Gottliche Odnung, vol. i. c. v. s. lxxxvi. p. 175.

were

were to take the whole period of 64 years, the average proportion of births to deaths turns out to be but a little more than 12 to 10; a proportion which would not double the population in less than 125 years. If we were to include the mortality of the plague, or even of the epidemick years 1736 and 1737, in too short a period, the deaths might exceed the births, and the population would appear to be decreasing.

Susmilch thinks that instead of 1 in 36, the mortality in Prussia after the plague might be 1 in 38; and it may appear perhaps to some of my readers, that the plenty, occasioned by such an event, ought to make a still greater difference. Dr. Short has particularly remarked, that an extraordinary healthiness generally succeeds any very great mortality [a]; and I have no doubt that the observation is just, comparing similar ages together. But under the most favourable circumstances, infants under three years, are more subject to death than at other ages; and the extraordinary proportion of children which usually follows a very great mortality, counterbalances the natural healthiness of the period, and prevents it from making much difference in the general mortality.

If we divide the population of Prussia, after the plague, by the number of deaths in the year 1711, it will appear that the mortality was nearly 1 in 31, and was therefore increased, rather than diminished, owing to the prodigious number of children born in that year. And, in general, we shall observe, that, from this cause, a great previous mortality produces a much more sensible effect on the births than on the deaths. By referring to the table, it will appear that the number of annual deaths regularly increases with the increasing population, and nearly keeps up the same relative proportion all the way through. But the number of annual births is not very different during the whole period, though, in this time, the population had more than doubled itself; and therefore the *proportion* of

[a] History of air, seasons, &c. vol. ii. p. 344.

 births

births to the whole population, at firſt, and at laſt, muſt have changed in an extraordinary degree.

On an average of the 46 years after the plague, the proportion of annual births to annual marriages is as 43 to 10, that is, according to the principles laid down in the fourth chapter of this book, out of 43 children born, 20 of them live to be married. The average proportion of births to deaths during this period is 157 to 100. But to produce ſuch an increaſe, on the ſuppoſition that only 20 children out of 43, or 2 out of 4 $\frac{3}{10}$ live to be married, each marriage, I am perſuaded, for the reaſons given in that chapter, muſt have yielded 8 births.

Crome obſerves, that when the marriages of a country yield leſs than 4 births, the population is in a very precarious ſtate [a]; and, like the other writers on this ſubject, he eſtimates the number of children from each marriage by the proportion of yearly births to yearly marriages. But I ſhould ſay, on the contrary, that the population was in a more precarious ſtate, when the yearly marriages in theſe liſts appeared to give more than four children. If leſs than half of the born live to be married, which would then be the caſe, an extraordinary number of children to each marriage is neceſſary to produce any conſiderable increaſe. In Pruſſia, the marriages were ſo fruitful, as to allow of a conſiderable mortality among the children, without ſtopping the increaſe; but this mortality in itſelf cannot be conſidered as a favourable ſign; and, in other countries in which a rapid increaſe is going on, the proportion of yearly births to yearly marriages is generally not ſo high as 4 to 1, or, according to the common mode of calculating, each marriage yields leſs than 4 children.

In the Churmark of Brandenburgh, for 15 years after 1694, the proportion of births to deaths was nearly 17 to 10, which, if it had continued, would have doubled the population in 35 years; yet the

[a] Uber die Bevölkerung der Europaiſ. Staat. p. 91.

proportion

proportion of yearly births to yearly marriages was only 37 to 10. In the whole period from 1692 to 1756, in which the population had actually more than doubled itſelf, notwithſtanding many epidemick years, this proportion was nearly the ſame, or about $37\frac{1}{2}$ to 10 [a].

In the dutchy of Pomerania from 1694 to 1756, the population had doubled itſelf, and the average proportion of yearly births to yearly marriages was 38 to 10 [b].

In the Newmark of Brandenburgh from 1694 to 1756, there were ſome periods of rapid increaſe, though it was checked more frequently and effectually by epidemicks. In 30 years, to 1726, the average proportion of births to deaths was 148 to 100, and the proportion of annual births to annual marriages 38 to 10. In the whole period, the births were to the deaths as 136 to 100, and the proportion of births to marriages the ſame as in the period of thirty years [c].

In Ruſſia, we know that a very rapid increaſe is going forwards, though the proportion of annual births to annual marriages is only about 36 to 10. And, if we had liſts for America, where the progreſs of population is ſtill more rapid, I ſhould expect to find that the proportion of annual births to annual marriages was leſs than 4 to 1 [d].

On

[a] Suſmilch, Gottliche Ordnung, vol. i. table xxii. p. 88. of the tables.
[b] Id. table xxiii. p. 91. [c] Id. table xxv. p. 99.
[d] From a paper in the Tranſactions of the Society at Philadelphia (vol. iii. N° vii. p. 25.) by Mr. Barton, entitled, *Obſervations on the probability of life in the United States*, which I have ſeen ſince this was written, I am not ſure that I might not be diſappointed in the expectation here expreſſed. If, indeed, Mr. Barton's calculations were to be conſidered as true for the United States in general, it would appear that half of the born die under 13 or 14; and therefore half of the born could not live to marry. But the fact is, that Mr. Barton's calculations, which he applies generally, are merely taken from the town of Philadelphia, and one or two ſmall towns or villages which are certainly not healthy. Our largeſt European towns are, of courſe, not ſo healthy as Philadelphia, where it appears that half of the born die under $12\frac{1}{2}$, but many of our moderate towns are

On the contrary, in Silesia, where the proportion of births to deaths is only 13 to 10, and where consequently the progress of the population is not rapid, the proportion of yearly births to yearly marriages is 4 $\frac{1}{10}$ to 1, or 41 to 10 [a]. And in France, this proportion before the revolution, was 4$\frac{1}{2}$ to 1, though the progress of population was slower than in Silesia. In Corsica, the births are said to be to the marriages as 5 to 1, though the population of Corsica cannot possibly be in a continued state of rapid increase. The proportion of births to deaths in Norway, is greater than in Sweden, though in Norway the annual births are to the annual marriages as 38 to 10, and in Sweden, as 41 to 10.

It cannot therefore be said, that the population of a country is in a precarious state when the proportion of yearly births to yearly marriages is less than 4 to 1. Such a proportion is, on the contrary, favourable to population, and is found to exist in many countries, where the increase of people is very rapid. A proportion greater than 4 to 1 is in itself unfavourable to the progress of population, and though it may occasionally exist in countries which are increasing rapidly, owing to an extraordinary fruitfulness of the marriages, yet it will be found more frequently in countries where the progress of population is slow.

much more healthy. Mr. Barton's calculations of a mortality of 1 in 45, at Philadelphia, and 1 in 47 at Salem, certainly contradict his other estimates, and can therefore only have been taken for short periods, and rejecting epidemick years; indeed, he acknowledges the having made this kind of rejection in one or two instances, and of course his calculations are not to be relied on. He mentions 6$\frac{1}{2}$ births to a marriage, but his numbers give only 4$\frac{1}{2}$: and, supposing this to be the true proportion of children to a marriage, if, at the same time we were to suppose that half of the born die under 14, all increase in the population of America would be impossible. On the whole, though we cannot imagine that the calculations in this paper are applicable to the United States in general, and that half of the born die under 14, instead of living to 25 or 30 and above, as in Europe; yet, if we suppose, that they imply a considerable mortality under puberty, we must believe that each marriage yields full as many as 7 or 8 births, to account for the rapid progress of population which we know for a certainty is going forwards in America. Dr. Franklin supposes 8 births to a marriage in America, and that half of the born live to marry, which probably is not far from the truth. (Miscell. p. 3.)

[a] Susmilch, Gottliche Ordnung, vol. i. table xx. p. 81.

I take every opportunity that occurs of illustrating this subject, because so many respectable writers have fallen into the error of estimating the number of children produced by each marriage in the course of its duration, by the proportion of yearly births to yearly marriages, and I am willing to give ample reasons to the reader for differing from such united authority. All these writers themselves express their surprise at the results that the lists, which they thus make use of, give. Susmilch and Crome particularly remark, that the average of 4 or 4$\frac{1}{2}$ children to a marriage, contradicts the experience we have of the fruitfulness of particular women, many of whom bear above 12 children [a], though a considerable part of them may die in the rearing. And Wargentin takes notice of the smallness of this number, in reference to the reputed fecundity of the Northern women [b].

I feel strongly persuaded, that it has been principally owing to this error in the mode of estimating the fruitfulness of marriages, that Dr. Price, and almost all the writers in political arithmetick, have so totally misapprehended the principle of population. If indeed this mode of calculation were just, the fears of depopulation would really be well founded.

When it appears, from the lists of any country, that the annual births are to the annual marriages in a higher proportion than 4 to 1, that is, according to the principles laid down, when less than half of the born live to be married, it cannot be determined from such a proportion alone, whether this effect arises from a number of persons above the age of puberty dying unmarried, the operation of the preventive check; or from a considerable mortality among children, the operation of the

[a] Gottliche Ordnung, vol. i. c. v. s. lxxxiii. p. 169. Crome, p. 91.
[b] Susmilch, vol. i. c. v. s. lxxxv. p. 173.

positive

poſitive check. But the proportion of deaths and births will generally aſcertain, to which claſs it ought to be referred. In Pruſſia, it is undoubtedly occaſioned principally by the mortality among children; and it does not ſeem improbable, that where ſo many children are born to each marriage, many ſhould periſh for want of ſufficient attention, though there might be no want of food. I think it is generally to be obſerved, that when the women in the lower claſſes of life marry very young, they not only have more children, but loſe a greater proportion of them, than when they marry later, and from having a ſmaller number, are able to take better care of them. It appears, from a table given by Suſmilch, that in Pruſſia, during this period, half of the born died under 24 [a]. And as not much leſs than half of the born lived to be married, the marriages muſt have been early, and the preventive check could not have operated much.

In Sweden, half of the born live to 33 [b], and as about half, or rather leſs, live to be married, the preventive check would operate much more than in Pruſſia, though ſtill not to a great degree. In France, where a ſmaller proportion of the born lives to be married, the operation of the preventive check is probably not very different from what it is in Sweden, though I ſhould think that it was certainly rather leſs. According to Necker [c], the proportion of marriages to the population in France is as 1 to $113\frac{1}{7}$.

The operation of the preventive check is beſt meaſured by the proportion which the whole population bears to the yearly marriages [d]; but though this proportion be obtained by multiplying the number of annual births in proportion to each annual marriage, by the number of inhabitants in proportion to each annual birth; yet it does not follow that it will be ſmall, becauſe leſs than half of the born

[a] Gottliche, Ordnung, vol. iii. tab. xxi. p. 29. [b] Price's Obſerv. on Reverſ. Paym. tab. xliii. p. 132. [c] De l'Adminiſtration des Finances, tom. i. c. ix. p. 255. 12mo. 1785.

[d] Even from this meaſure, the inferences are not entirely to be depended upon, as it is liable to be influenced by the fruitfulneſs of marriages, and the proportion of the population

born live to be married, or be great, becauſe more than half of the born live to be married. In that part of the Pruſſian dominions included in the table that has been given, and during the period there mentioned, leſs than half of the born lived to be married, yet the proportion of annual marriages to the whole population was as high as 1 to 92 [a]. In Norway, where more than half of the born live to be married, the proportion of annual marriages to the whole population is as low as 1 to 130. The reaſon is, that the proportion of the population to annual births, which is the multiplier, is, in the two caſes, extremely different.

In Norway, it is probable, that half of the born live to forty-three, forty-four, or above; and therefore, though rather more than half of the born live to be married, there will neceſſarily be many perſons between the ages of 20 and 44 living unmarried, that is, the preventive check will prevail to a conſiderable degree. In a part of the Pays de Vaud in Switzerland, half of the born live to 45;

population which is under the age of puberty. If all the marriages which take place in a country, be they few or many, take place young, and be conſequently prolifick, it is evident that to produce the ſame proportion of births, a ſmaller proportion of marriages will be neceſſary; or with the ſame proportion of marriages a greater proportion of births will be produced. This latter caſe ſeems to be applicable to France, where both the births and deaths are greater than in Sweden, though the proportion of marriages is nearly the ſame, or rather leſs. And when in two countries compared, one of them has a much greater proportion of its population under the age of puberty, than the other, it is evident, that any general proportion of annual marriages to the whole population, will not imply the ſame operation of the preventive check among thoſe of a marriageable age. It is, in part, the ſmall proportion of the population in towns under the age of puberty, as well as the influx of ſtrangers, which makes it appear in the regiſters, that the preventive check operates leſs in towns than in the country; whereas there can be little doubt, that the number of unmarried perſons of a marriageable age is the greateſt in towns. The converſe of this will of courſe be true, and conſequently, in ſuch a country as America, where above half of the population is under ſixteen, the proportion of yearly marriages to the whole population will not accurately expreſs, how little the preventive check really operates. The ſubject is intricate, and requires ſome attention.

[a] Suſmilch, Gottliche Ordnung, vol. i. c. iv. ſ. lxxi. p. 141.

and therefore if none married before 40, and all married when they reached that age, more than half of the born would live to be married; yet all being unmarried under 40, the preventive check might be said to prevail to a very great degree.

It is evident, therefore, that we cannot infer the absence of the preventive check, because a considerable proportion of the born lives to be married. And it is equally evident, that we cannot infer the contrary.

In Holland, it would appear from the registers, that more than half of the born live to be married [a]; yet, from the proportion of annual marriages, to the whole population in the Dutch villages, mentioned before, it is clear, that the preventive check cannot operate much. In the Churmark of Brandenburgh, from 1694 to 1756, more than half of the born lived to be married. But it appears from a table given by Susmilch, that, in the Churmark, half of the born die under 22 [b]. The marriages, therefore, must have been very early indeed. And, from the proportion of the marriages, for the Churmark, which he has given in one place, it appears that it was greater in comparison of the whole population, than in any other country, which he has mentioned, except Holland [c]. Still, however, if it be true, that half of the born die under 22, it is rather difficult to conceive that more than half should live to be married.

[a] Susmilch, Gottliche Ordnung, vol. i. table xvii. p. 51.

[b] Id. vol. iii. table xxii. p. 35.

[c] Susmilch's proportions and calculations for the same countries, appear now and then a little to contradict each other. This arises from their being formed at different periods. The proportion of marriages to the population for the Churmark of Brandenburgh, from 1700 to 1755, (vol. i. ch. iv. sec. lxxi. p. 141.) appears to be 1 in 90, and up to the year 1722, 1 in 87. But in another calculation, which includes only the period from 1738 to 1748, the proportion for the villages of the Churmark is 1 in 109, and for the small towns, 1 in 98, (sec. lx. p. 129).

The table, which makes half of the born in the Churmark die under 22, was not formed from the period when the increase was so rapid, and when the lists appeared to shew that above half of the born lived to be married.

There

There is one circumstance not yet noticed, which may contribute to smooth this difficulty, and which should be attended to in all cases. This is the number of second and third marriages. In the dukedom of Pomerania, it was observed, during a period of seven years, from 1748 to 1754, that out of 23,324 marriages, that were contracted, 6170 of them were between persons, one of which had been married before, and 1214, between persons, both of which had been married before [a]. The whole of the latter number, therefore, and half of the former, ought to be subtracted, in order to find the number of the born which lived to be married. And, from this cause, all the lists will give the proportion of the born which lives to be married, greater than the truth. In the present instance, probably, full as many as half of the born died unmarried; and this correction, I am persuaded, ought to be applied to the Dutch villages, in particular, where the proportion of marriages is so great, as it is difficult to conceive, that a mortality of 1 in 23, should not destroy more than half of the born before they reach the age of twenty. In addition to this, I have little doubt that many of the marriages in the Dutch villages, are, as in towns, between persons not born in the place. There is a constant influx of strangers into all parts of Holland. It has been called the church-yard of Germany.

For the periodical, though irregular, returns of sickly seasons, I refer the reader to the valuable tables of mortality which Susmilch has collected. The common epidemical years that are interspersed throughout these tables, will not, of course, have the same effects on the marriages and births, as the great plague in the table for Prussia; but in proportion to their magnitude, their operation will in general be found to be similar. From the registers of many other countries, and particularly of towns, it appears, that the visitations of the plague were frequent at the latter end of the 17th, and the beginning of the 18th centuries.

[a] Susmilch, Gottliche Ordnung, vol. i. c. v. s. xc. p. 183.

In contemplating the plagues, and ſickly ſeaſons which occur in theſe tables, after a period of rapid increaſe, it is impoſſible not to be impreſſed with the idea that the number of inhabitants had, in theſe inſtances, exceeded the food and the accomodations neceſſary to preſerve them in health. The maſs of the people would, upon this ſuppoſition, be obliged to live more hardly, and a greater number of them would be crowded together in one houſe; and theſe natural cauſes would evidently contribute to produce ſickneſs, even though the country, abſolutely conſidered, might not be crowded and populous. In a country, even thinly inhabited, if an increaſe of population take place, before more food is raiſed, and more houſes are built, the inhabitants muſt be diſtreſſed for room and ſubſiſtence. If, in the Highlands of Scotland, for the next ten or twelve years, the marriages were to be either more frequent, or more prolifick, and no emigration were to take place, inſtead of five to a cottage, there might be ſeven, and this, added to the neceſſity of worſe living, would evidently have a moſt unfavourable effect on the health of the common people.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Checks to Population in Switzerland.

THE ſituation of Switzerland, is, in many reſpects, ſo different from the other ſtates of Europe; and ſome of the facts that have been collected reſpecting it, are ſo curious, and tend ſo ſtrongly to illuſtrate the general principles of this work, that it ſeems to merit a ſeparate conſideration.

About 35 or 40 years ago, a great and ſudden alarm appears to have prevailed in Switzerland, reſpecting the depopulation of the country; and the tranſactions of the Economical Society of Berne, which had been eſtabliſhed ſome years before, were crowded with papers deploring the decay of induſtry, arts, agriculture, and manufactures, and the imminent danger of a total want of people. The greater part of theſe writers conſidered the depopulation of the country as a fact ſo obvious as not to require proof. They employed themſelves therefore chiefly in propoſing remedies, and among others, the importation of midwives, the eſtabliſhment of foundling hoſpitals, the portioning of young virgins, the prevention of emigration, and the encouragement of foreign ſettlers [a].

A paper, containing very valuable materials, was, however, about this time publiſhed, by a Monſ. Muret, miniſter of Vevey, who, before he proceeded to point out remedies, thought it neceſſary to ſubſtantiate the exiſtence of the evil. He made a very laborious and careful reſearch into the regiſters of different pariſhes up to the time

[a] See the different Memoirs for the year 1766.

of their firſt eſtabliſhment, and compared the number of births which had taken place during three different periods of 70 years each, the firſt ending in 1620, the ſecond in 1690, and the third in 1760[a]. Finding, upon this compariſon, that the number of births was rather leſs in the ſecond than in the firſt period, (and by the help of ſuppoſing ſome omiſſions in the ſecond period, and ſome redundances in the third,) that the number of births in the third was alſo leſs than in the ſecond, he conſidered the evidence for a continued depopulation of the country from the year 1550, as incontrovertible.

Admitting all the premiſes, the concluſion is not perhaps ſo certain as he imagined it to be, and, from other facts which appear in his memoir, I am ſtrongly diſpoſed to believe, that Switzerland, during this period, came under the caſe ſuppoſed in page 246, and that the improving habits of the people, with reſpect to prudence, cleanlineſs, &c. had added gradually to the general healthineſs of the country, and by enabling them to rear up to manhood a greater proportion of their children, had furniſhed the requiſite increaſe of population with a ſmaller number of births. Of courſe, the proportion of annual births to the whole population, in the latter period, would be leſs than in the former.

From accurate calculations of M. Muret, it appears, that, during the laſt period, the mortality was extraordinarily ſmall, and the proportion of children reared from infancy to puberty, extraordinarily great[b]. In the former periods, this could not have been the caſe in the ſame degree. M. Muret himſelf, obſerves, that, "The ancient "depopulation of the country was to be attributed to the frequent "plagues which in former times deſolated it;" and adds, "if it "could ſupport itſelf, notwithſtanding the frequency of ſo dreadful

[a] Memoires, &c. par la Societé Economique de Berne. Année 1766, premiere partie, p. 15. et ſeq. octavo. Berne.

[b] Id. table xiii. p. 120. Année 1766.

"an evil, it is a proof of the goodneſs of the climate, and of the "certain reſources which the country could furniſh, for a prompt "recovery of its population[a]." He neglects to apply this obſervation as he ought, and forgets that ſuch a prompt repeopling could not take place without an unuſual increaſe of births, and that, to enable a country to ſupport itſelf againſt ſuch a ſource of deſtruction, a greater proportion of births to the whole population would be neceſſary than at other times.

In one of his tables, he gives a liſt of all the plagues that had prevailed in Switzerland, from which it appears, that this dreadful ſcourge deſolated the country, at ſhort intervals, during the whole of the firſt period, and extended its occaſional ravages to within 22 years of the termination of the ſecond[b].

It would be contrary to every rule of probability, to ſuppoſe, that, during the frequent prevalence of this diſorder, the country could be particularly healthy, and the general mortality extremely ſmall. Let us ſuppoſe it to have been ſuch, as at preſent takes place in many other countries which are exempt from this calamity, about 1 in 32, inſtead of 1 in 45, as in the laſt period. The births would, of courſe, keep their relative proportion, and inſtead of 1 in 36[c], be about 1 in 26. In eſtimating the population of the country by the births, we ſhould thus have two very different multipliers for the different periods; and though the abſolute number of births might be greater in the firſt period, yet the fact would by no means imply a greater population.

In the preſent inſtance, the ſum of the births in 17 pariſhes during the firſt 70 years, is given as 49,860, which annually would be about 712. This, multiplied by 26, would indicate a population of 18,512. In the laſt period, the ſum of the births is given 43,910[d], which will be about 626 annually. This, multiplied by 36, will

[a] Memoires, &c. par la Societé Econ. de Berne. Année 1766, premiere partie, p. 22.

[b] Id. table iv. p. 22. [c] Id. table i. p. 21. [d] Id. p. 16.

indicate

indicate a population of 22,536: and if the multipliers be juſt, it will thus appear, that, inſtead of the decreaſe which was intended to be proved, there had been a conſiderable increaſe.

That I have not eſtimated the mortality too high, during the firſt period, I have many reaſons for ſuppoſing, particularly, a calculation reſpecting the neighbouring town of Geneva, in which it appears, that in the 16th century, the probability of life, or the age to which half of the born live, was only 4.883, rather leſs than four years and $\frac{9}{10}$ths; and the mean life 18.511, about 18 years and a half. In the 17th century, the probability of life was 11.607, above 11 years and a half; the mean life 23.358. In the 18th century, the probability of life had increaſed to 27.183, 27 years and nearly a fifth, and the mean life to 32 years and a fifth[a].

It is highly probable, that a diminution of mortality, of the ſame kind, though, perhaps, not in the ſame degree, ſhould have taken place in Switzerland; and we know from the regiſters of other countries, which have been already noticed, and moſt particularly from that of Pruſſia, that the period of the greater mortality naturally produces a greater proportion of births.

Of this dependence of the births on the deaths, M. Muret himſelf produces many inſtances; but not being aware of the true principle of population, they only ſerve to aſtoniſh him, and he does not apply them.

Speaking of the want of fruitfulneſs in the Swiſs women, he ſays, that Pruſſia, Brandenburgh, Sweden, France, and indeed every country, the regiſters of which he had ſeen, give a greater proportion of baptiſms to the number of inhabitants, than the Pays de Vaud, where this proportion is only as 1 to 36[b]. He adds, that, from calculations lately made in the Lyonois, it appeared, that in Lyons itſelf, the proportion of baptiſms was 1 in 28; in the ſmall

[a] See a paper in the Bibliotheque Britannique, publiſhed at Geneva. tom. iv. p. 328.
[b] Memoires, &c. par la Societé Econ. de Berne. Année, 1766, premiere partie, p. 47, 48.

towns

towns, 1 in 25; and in the pariſhes, 1 in 23 or 24. What a prodigious difference, he exclaims, between the Lyonois and the Pays de Vaud, where the moſt favourable proportion, and that only in two ſmall pariſhes of extraordinary fecundity, is not above 1 in 26, and in many pariſhes it is conſiderably leſs than 1 in 40[a]. *The ſame difference*, he remarks, takes place in the *mean life*. In the Lyonois, it is a little above 25 years, while in the Pays de Vaud, the loweſt mean life, and that only in a ſingle marſhy and unhealthy pariſh, is 29½ years, and in many places it is above 45 years[b].

"But whence comes it," he ſays, "that the country where chil-"dren eſcape the beſt from the dangers of infancy, and where the "mean life, in whatever way the calculation is made, is higher than "in any other, ſhould be preciſely that, in which the fecundity is the "ſmalleſt? How comes it again, that, of all our pariſhes, the one "which gives the mean life the higheſt, ſhould alſo be the one, where "the tendency to increaſe is the ſmalleſt?

"To reſolve this queſtion, I will hazard a conjecture, which, "however, I give only as ſuch. Is it not, that, in order to maintain "in all places the proper equilibrium of population, God has "wiſely ordered things in ſuch a manner, as that the force "of life, in each country, ſhould be in the inverſe ratio of its "fecundity[c].

"In effect, experience verifies my conjecture. Leyzin (a village in "the Alps) with a population of 400 perſons, produces but a little "above eight children a year. The Pays de Vaud, in general, in pro-"portion to the ſame number of inhabitants, produces 11, and the "Lyonois 16. But if it happen, that at the age of 20 years, the 8, the "11, and the 16, are reduced to the ſame number, it will appear, that "the force of life gives in one place, what fecundity does in another. "And thus the moſt healthy countries, having leſs fecundity, will not

[a] Memoires, &c. par la Societé Econ. de Berne. Année 1766, premiere partie, p. 48.
[b] Ibid. [c] Id. p. 48. et ſeq.

"over-

" overpeople themſelves, and the unhealthy countries, by their ex-
" traordinary fecundity, will be able to ſuſtain their population."

We may judge of the ſurpriſe of M. Muret, at finding from the regiſters, that the moſt healthy people were the leaſt prolifick, by his betaking himſelf to a miracle in order to account for it. But the *nodus* does not ſeem in the preſent inſtance to be worthy of ſuch an interference [a]. The fact may be accounted for, without reſorting to ſo ſtrange a ſuppoſition, as that the fruitfulneſs of women ſhould vary inverſely as their health.

There is certainly a conſiderable difference in the healthineſs of different countries, ariſing partly from the ſoil and ſituation, and partly from the habits and employments of the people. When, from theſe, or any other cauſes whatever, a great mortality takes place, a proportional number of births immediately enſues, owing both to the greater number of yearly marriages, from the increaſed demand for labour, and the greater fecundity of each marriage, from being contracted at an earlier, and naturally a more prolifick, age.

On the contrary, when, from oppoſite cauſes, the healthineſs of any country or pariſh is extraordinarily great; if, from the habits of the people, no vent for an overflowing population be found in emigration, the abſolute neceſſity of the preventive check will be forced ſo ſtrongly on their attention, that they muſt adopt it, or ſtarve; and conſequently, the marriages being very late, the number annually contracted will not only be ſmall, in proportion to the population, but each individual marriage will naturally be leſs prolifick.

In the pariſh of Leyzin, noticed by M. Muret, all theſe circumſtances appear to have been combined in a very high degree. Its ſituation in the Alps, but yet not too high, gave it probably the moſt pure and ſalubrious air; and the employments of the people being all paſtoral, were conſequently of the moſt healthy nature. From the calculations of M. Muret, the accuracy of which there is

[a] Nec deus interſit niſi dignus vindice nodus.

no

no reaſon to doubt, the probability of life in this pariſh, appeared to be ſo extraordinarily high as 61 years [a]. And the average number of the births, being, for a period of 30 years, almoſt accurately equal to the number of deaths [b], clearly proved, that the habits of the people had not led them to emigrate, and that the reſources of the pariſh for the ſupport of population had remained nearly ſtationary. We are warranted, therefore, in concluding, that the paſtures were limited, and could not eaſily be increaſed, either in quantity or quality. The number of cattle which could be kept upon them, would of courſe be limited; and, in the ſame manner, the number of perſons required for the care of theſe cattle.

Under ſuch circumſtances, how would it be poſſible for the young men who had reached the age of puberty, to leave their father's houſes, and marry, till an employment of herdſman, dairy-man, or ſomething of the kind, became vacant by death. And as, from the extreme healthineſs of the people, this muſt happen very ſlowly, it is evident, that the majority of them muſt wait during a great part of their youth, in their bachelor ſtate, or run the moſt obvious riſk of ſtarving themſelves and their families. The caſe is ſtill ſtronger than in Norway, and receives a particular preciſion from the circumſtance of the births and deaths being ſo nearly equal.

If a father had, unfortunately, a larger family than uſual, the tendency of it would be rather to decreaſe, than increaſe, the number of marriages. He might, perhaps, with economy, be juſt able to ſupport them all at home, though he could not probably find adequate employment for them on his ſmall property; but it would evidently be long before they could quit him; and the firſt marriage among the ſons would probably be after the death of the father; whereas, if he had had only two children, one of them might perhaps have married without leaving the parental roof, and the other, on the

[a] Memoires par la Societé Econ. de Berne. Année 1766, table v. p. 64.
[b] Id. table i. p. 15.

death of the father. And, in a general view, it may be ſaid, that the abſence or preſence of four grown up unmarried people, will make the difference of there being room, or not, for the eſtabliſhment of another marriage and a freſh family.

As the marriages in this pariſh would, with few exceptions, be very late, and yet, from the extreme healthineſs of the ſituation, be very ſlowly diſſolved by the death of either of the parties, it is evident, that a very large proportion of the ſubſiſting marriages would be among perſons ſo far advanced in life, that moſt of the women would have ceaſed to bear children; and in conſequence, the whole number of ſubſiſting marriages, was found to be, to the number of annual births, in the very unuſual proportion of 12 to 1. The births were only about a 49th part of the population; and the number of perſons above ſixteen, was to the number below that age, nearly as 3 to 1 [a].

As a contraſt to this pariſh, and a proof how little the number of births can be depended upon, for an eſtimate of population, M. Muret produces the pariſh of St. Cergue in the Jura, in which the ſubſiſting marriages were, to the annual births, only in the proportion of 4 to 1, the births were a 26th part of the population, and the number of perſons above and below ſixteen juſt equal [b].

Judging of the population of theſe pariſhes, from the proportion of their annual births, it would appear, he ſays, that Leyzin did not exceed St. Cergue by above one fifth at moſt; whereas, from actual enumeration, the population of the former turned out to be 405, and of the latter, only 171 [c].

I have choſen, he obſerves, the pariſhes where the contraſt is the moſt ſtriking; but though the difference be not ſo remarkable in the reſt, yet it will always be found true, that, from one place to another,

[a] Memoires, &c. par la Societé Econ. de Berne. Année 1766, p. 11 and 12.
[b] Ibid. [c] Id. p. 11.

another, even at very ſmall diſtances, and in ſituations apparently ſimilar, the proportions will vary conſiderably [a].

It is ſtrange, that, after making theſe obſervations, and others of the ſame tendency, which I have not produced, he ſhould reſt the whole proof of the depopulation of the Pays de Vaud on the proportion of births. There is no good reaſon for ſuppoſing that this proportion ſhould not be different, at different periods, as well as in different ſituations. The extraordinary contraſt in the fecundity of the two pariſhes of Leyzin and St. Cergue, depends upon cauſes within the power of time and circumſtances to alter. From the great proportion of infants which was found to grow up to maturity in St. Cergue, it appeared that its natural healthineſs was not much inferior to that of Leyzin [b]. The proportion of its births to deaths, was 7 to 4 [c]; but as the whole number of its inhabitants did not exceed 171, it is evident, that this great exceſs of births could not have been regularly added to the population during the laſt two centuries. It muſt have ariſen, therefore, either from a ſudden increaſe of late years in the agriculture, or trade, of the pariſh, or from a habit of emigration. The latter ſuppoſition I conceive to be the true one, and it ſeems to be confirmed by the ſmall proportion of adults which has already been noticed. The pariſh is ſituated in the Jura, by the ſide of the high road from Paris to Geneva, a ſituation which would evidently tend to facilitate emigration; and in effect, it ſeems to have acted the part of a breeding pariſh for the towns and flat countries, and the annual drain of a certain portion of the adults, made room for all the reſt to marry, and to rear a numerous offſpring.

A habit of emigration in a particular pariſh, will not only depend on ſituation, but probably often on accident. I have little doubt that three or four very ſucceſsful emigrations have frequently given a ſpirit

[a] Memoires, &c. par la Societé Econ. de Berne. Année 1766, p. 13.
[b] Id. table xiii. p. 120. [c] Id. table i. p. 11.

a ſpirit of enterprize to a whole village; and three or four unſucceſsful ones, a contrary ſpirit. If a habit of emigration were introduced into the village of Leyzin, it is not to be doubted that the proportion of births would be immediately changed; and at the end of twenty years, an examination of its regiſters might give reſults as different from thoſe at the time of M. Muret's calculations, as they were then, from the contraſted pariſh of St. Cergue. It will hence appear, that other cauſes beſides a greater mortality, will concur to make an eſtimate of population, at different periods, from the proportion of births, liable to great uncertainty.

The facts which M. Muret has collected are all valuable, though his inferences cannot always be conſidered in the ſame light. He made ſome calculations at Vevey, of a nature really to aſcertain the queſtion, reſpecting the fecundity of marriages, and to ſhew the fallacy of the uſual mode of eſtimating it, though without this particular object in view at the time. He found that 375 mothers, had yielded 2093 children, all born alive, from which it followed, that each mother had produced $5\frac{143}{375}$, or nearly ſix children [a]. Theſe, however, were all actually mothers, which every wife is not; but allowing for the uſual proportion of barren wives at Vevey, which he had found to be 20 out of 478, it will ſtill appear that the married women, one with another, produced above $5\frac{1}{3}$ children. And yet this was in a town, the inhabitants of which, he ſeems to accuſe of not entering into the marriage ſtate at the period when nature called them, and when married, of not having all the children which they might have [b]. The general proportion of the annual marriages to the annual births in the Pays de Vaud is as 1 to 3.9 [c], and, of courſe, according to the common mode of calculation, the marriages would appear to yield 3.9 children each.

In a diviſion of the Pays de Vaud into eight different diſtricts,

[a] Memoires, &c. par la Societé Econ. de Berne. Année 1766, p. 29. et ſeq.
[b] Id. p. 32. [c] Id. table i. p. 21.

M. Muret

M. Muret found, that, in ſeven towns, the mean life was 36 years; and the probability of life, or the age to which half of the born live, 37. In 36 villages, the mean life was 37, and the probability of life 42. In nine pariſhes of the Alps the mean life was 40, and the probability of life 47. In ſeven pariſhes of the Jura, theſe two proportions were 38 and 42: in 12 corn pariſhes, 37 and 40: in 18 pariſhes among the great vineyards, 34 and 37: in 6 pariſhes of mixed vines and hills, $33\frac{2}{10}$ and 36: and in one marſhy, 29 and 24 [a].

From another table, it appears, that the number of perſons dying under the age of puberty, was leſs than $\frac{1}{3}$ in the extraordinary pariſh of Leyzin; and leſs than $\frac{1}{4}$ in many other pariſhes of the Alps and the Jura. For the whole of the Pays de Vaud it was about $\frac{1}{3}$ [b].

In ſome of the largeſt towns, ſuch as Lauſanne and Vevey, on account of the number of ſtrangers above the age of puberty ſettling in them, the proportion of adults to thoſe under 15, was nearly as great as in the pariſh of Leyzin, and not far from 3 to 1. In the pariſhes from which there were not many emigrations, this proportion was about 2 to 1. And in thoſe which furniſhed inhabitants for other countries, it approached more towards an equality [c].

The whole population of the Pays de Vaud, M. Muret eſtimated at 113 thouſand, of which 76 thouſand were adults. The proportion of adults, therefore, to thoſe under the age of puberty, for the whole country, was 2 to 1. Among theſe 76 thouſand adults, there were 19 thouſand ſubſiſting marriages, and conſequently 38 thouſand married perſons; and the ſame number of perſons unmarried, though of the latter number nine thouſand, according to M. Muret, would probably be widows or widowers [d]. With ſuch an average ſtore of perſons not in the actual ſtate of marriage, amounting to the half of all the adults, there was little ground for apprehenſion, that any probable

[a] Memoires, &c. par la Societé de Berne. Année 1766, table viii. p. 92. et ſeq.
[b] Id. table xiii. p. 120. [c] Id. table xii. [d] Id. p. 27.

emigrations,

emigrations, or military levies, would affect the number of annual marriages, and check the progreſs of population.

The proportion of annual marriages to inhabitants in the Pays de Vaud, according to M. Muret's tables, was only 1 to 140[a], which is even leſs than in Norway.

All theſe calculations of M. Muret, imply the operation of the preventive check to population in a very conſiderable degree, throughout the whole of the diſtrict which he conſidered; and there is reaſon to believe, that the ſame habits prevail in other parts of Switzerland, though varying conſiderably from place to place, according as the ſituation or the employments of the people render them more or leſs healthy, or the reſources of the country make room, or not, for an increaſe.

In the town of Berne, from the year 1583 to 1654, the ſovereign council had admitted into the Bourgeoiſie 487 families, of which 379 became extinct in the ſpace of two centuries, and in 1783 only 108 of them remained. During the hundred years, from 1684 to 1784, 207 Bernoiſe families became extinct. From 1624 to 1712, the Bourgeoiſie was given to 80 families. In 1623, the ſovereign council united the members of 112 different families, of which 58 only remain[b].

The proportion of unmarried perſons in Berne, including widows and widowers, is conſiderably above the half of the adults, and the proportion of thoſe below ſixteen, to thoſe above, is nearly as 1 to 3[c]. Theſe are ſtrong proofs of the powerful operation of the preventive check.

The peaſants in the canton of Berne have always had the reputation of being rich, and, without doubt, it is greatly to be attributed to this cauſe. A law has for ſome time prevailed, which makes it

[a] Mem. Soc. de Berne, Année 1766, tab. i.
[b] Statiſtique de la Suiſſe, Durand, tom. iv. p. 405. 8vo. 4 vols. Lauſanne, 1796.
[c] Beſchreibung von Bern, vol. ii. tab. i. p. 35. 2 vols. 8vo. Bern, 1796.

neceſſary

neceſſary for every peaſant to prove himſelf in poſſeſſion of the arms and accoutrements neceſſary for the militia, before he can obtain permiſſion to marry. This at once excludes the very pooreſt from marriage; and a very favourable turn may be given to the habits of many others, from a knowledge that they cannot accompliſh the object of their wiſhes, without a certain portion of induſtry and economy. A young man, who, with this end in view, had engaged in ſervice, either at home, or in a foreign country, when he had gained the neceſſary ſum, might feel his pride rather raiſed, and not be contented merely with what would obtain him permiſſion to marry, but go on till he could obtain ſomething like a proviſion for a family.

I was much diſappointed, when in Switzerland, at not being able to procure any details reſpecting the ſmaller cantons, but the diſturbed ſtate of the country made it impoſſible. It is to be preſumed, however, that as they are almoſt entirely in paſture, they muſt reſemble in a great meaſure, the alpine pariſhes of the Pays de Vaud, in the extraordinary health of the people, and the abſolute neceſſity of the preventive check; except where theſe circumſtances may have been altered by a more than uſual habit of emigration, or by the introduction of manufactures which has taken place in ſome parts.

The limits to the population of a country ſtrictly paſtoral, are ſtrikingly obvious. There are no grounds leſs ſuſceptible of improvement than mountainous paſtures. They muſt neceſſarily be left chiefly to nature; and when they have been adequately ſtocked with cattle little more can be done. The great difficulty in theſe parts of Switzerland, as in Norway, is to procure a ſufficient quantity of fodder for the winter ſupport of the cattle which have been fed on the mountains in the ſummer. For this purpoſe, every bit of graſs is collected with the greateſt care. In places inacceſſible to cattle, the peaſant ſometimes makes hay with crampons on his feet; graſs is cut not three inches high, in ſome places, three times a

 year;

year; and in the vallies, the fields are ſeen ſhaven as cloſe as a bowling-green, and all the inequalities clipped as with a pair of ſciſſars. In Switzerland, as in Norway, for the ſame reaſons, the art of mowing ſeems to be carried to its higheſt pitch of perfection. As, however, the improvement of the lands in the vallies muſt depend principally upon the manure ariſing from the ſtock; it is evident, that the quantity of hay and the number of cattle, will be mutually limited by each other; and as the population will of courſe be limited by the produce of the ſtock, it does not ſeem poſſible to increaſe it beyond a certain point, and that, at no great diſtance. Though the population, therefore, in the flat parts of Switzerland, has increaſed during the laſt century, there is reaſon to believe that it has been ſtationary, in the mountainous parts. According to M. Muret, it has decreaſed very conſiderably in the Alps of the Pays de Vaud; but his proofs of this fact have been noticed as extremely uncertain. It is not probable that the Alps are leſs ſtocked with cattle than they were formerly: and if the inhabitants be really rather fewer in number, it is probably owing to the ſmaller proportion of children, and to the improvement which has taken place in the mode of living.

In ſome of the ſmaller cantons, manufactures have been introduced, which, by furniſhing a greater quantity of employment, and, at the ſame time, a greater quantity of exports for the purchaſe of corn, have, of courſe, conſiderably increaſed their population. But the Swiſs writers ſeem generally to agree, that the diſtricts where they have been eſtabliſhed, have, upon the whole, ſuffered in point of health, morals, and happineſs.

It is the nature of paſturage to produce food for a much greater number of people than it can employ. In countries, ſtrictly paſtoral, therefore, many perſons will be idle, or at moſt be very inadequately occupied. This ſtate of things naturally diſpoſes to emigration, and has been a chief cauſe that the Swiſs have been ſo much engaged in foreign ſervice. When a father had more than one ſon, it would rarely

rarely happen, that ſome of the reſt did not enrol themſelves as ſoldiers, or emigrate in ſome other way.

It is poſſible, though not probable, that a more than uſual ſpirit of emigration, operating upon a country, in which, as it has appeared, the preventive check prevailed to a very conſiderable degree, might have produced a temporary check to increaſe at the period when there was ſuch a univerſal cry about depopulation. If this were ſo, it without doubt contributed to improve the condition of the lower claſſes of people. All the foreign travellers in Switzerland, ſoon after this time, invariably take notice of the ſtate of the Swiſs peaſantry as ſuperior to that of other countries. In a late excurſion to Switzerland, I was rather diſappointed not to find it ſo ſuperior as I had been taught to expect. The greateſt part of the unfavourable change might juſtly be attributed to the loſſes and ſufferings of the people during the late troubles; but a part, perhaps, to the ill-directed efforts of the different governments to increaſe the population, and to the ultimate conſequences even of efforts well directed, and for a time, calculated to advance the comforts and happineſs of the people.

I was very much ſtruck with an effect of this laſt kind, in an expedition to the *Lac de Joux* in the Jura. The party had ſcarcely arrived at a little inn at the end of the lake, when the miſtreſs of the houſe began to complain of the poverty and miſery of all the pariſhes in the neighbourhood. She ſaid that the country produced little, and yet was full of inhabitants; that boys and girls were marrying who ought ſtill to be at ſchool; and that, while this habit of early marriages continued, they ſhould always be wretched, and diſtreſſed for ſubſiſtence.

The peaſant, who afterwards conducted us to the ſource of the Orbe, entered more fully into the ſubject, and appeared to underſtand the principle of population almoſt as well as any man I ever met with. He ſaid, that the women were prolifick, and the air of the mountains ſo pure and healthy, that very few children died,

except from the conſequences of abſolute want; that the ſoil, being barren, was inadequate to yield employment and food for the numbers that were yearly growing up to manhood; that the wages of labour were conſequently very low, and totally inſufficient for the decent ſupport of a family; but that the miſery and ſtarving condition of the greater part of the ſociety did not operate properly as a warning to others, who ſtill continued to marry and to produce a numerous offspring which they could not ſupport. This habit of early marriages might really, he ſaid, be called *le vice du pays*; and he was ſo ſtrongly impreſſed with the neceſſary and unavoidable wretchedneſs that muſt reſult from it, that he thought a law ought to be made reſtricting men from entering into the marriage ſtate before they were forty years of age, and then allowing it only with "*des vielles filles*," who might bear them two or three children inſtead of ſix or eight.

I could not help being diverted with the earneſtneſs of his oratory on this ſubject, and particularly, with his concluding propoſition, which went far beyond even my ideas reſpecting the neceſſity of the preventive check. He muſt have ſeen and felt the miſery ariſing from redundant population, moſt forcibly, to have propoſed ſo violent a remedy. I found, upon inquiry, that he had himſelf married very young.

The only point in which he failed, as to his philoſophical knowledge of the ſubject, was, in confining his reaſonings too much to barren and mountainous countries, and not extending them into the plains; in fertile ſituations, he thought, perhaps, that the plenty of corn and employment might remove the difficulty, and allow of early marriages. Not having lived much in the plains, it was natural for him to fall into this error; particularly, as in ſuch ſituations, the difficulty is not only more concealed from the extenſiveneſs of the ſubject; but is in reality leſs, from the greater mortality, naturally occaſioned by low grounds, towns, and manufactories.

On inquiring into the principal cauſe of what he had named the *predominant*

predominant vice of his country, he explained it with great philoſophical preciſion. He ſaid, that a manufacture for the poliſhing of ſtones, had been eſtabliſhed ſome years ago, which for a time had been in a very thriving ſtate, and had furniſhed high wages and employment to all the neighbourhood; that the facility of providing for a family, and of finding early employment for children, had encouraged, to a great degree, early marriages; and that the ſame habit had continued, when, from a change of faſhion, accident, and other cauſes, the manufacture was almoſt at an end. Very great emigrations, he ſaid, had of late years taken place, but the breeding ſyſtem went on ſo faſt, that they were not ſufficient to relieve the country of its ſuperabundant mouths, and the effect was ſuch as he had deſcribed to me, and as I had in part ſeen.

In other converſations which I had with the lower claſſes of people in different parts of Switzerland and Savoy, I found many, who, though not ſufficiently ſkilled in the principle of population, to ſee its effects on ſociety, like my friend of the *Lac de Joux*, yet ſaw them clearly enough, as affecting their own individual intereſts, and were perfectly aware of the evils which they ſhould probably bring upon themſelves by marrying before they could have a tolerable proſpect of being able to maintain a family. From the general ideas which I found to prevail on theſe ſubjects, I ſhould by no means ſay that it would be a difficult taſk to make the common people comprehend the principle of population, and its effect in producing low wages and poverty.

Though there is no abſolute proviſion for the poor in Switzerland, yet each pariſh generally poſſeſſes ſome ſeigneural rights, and property in land, for the public uſe, and is expected to maintain its own poor. Theſe funds, however, being limited, will of courſe often be totally inſufficient, and, occaſionally, voluntary collections are made for this purpoſe. But the whole of the ſupply being comparatively ſcanty and uncertain, has not the ſame bad effects as the pariſh rates of England. Of late years much of the common lands belonging to

pariſhes, has been parcelled out to individuals, which has, of courſe, tended to improve the ſoil and increaſe the number of people; but, from the manner in which it has been conducted, it has operated perhaps too much as a ſyſtematic encouragement of marriage; and has contributed to increaſe the number of poor. In the neighbourhood of the richeſt *communes*, I often obſerved the greateſt quantity of beggars.

There is reaſon to believe, however, that the efforts of the Economical Society of Berne to promote agriculture were crowned with ſome ſucceſs, and that the increaſing reſources of the country have made room for an additional population, and furniſhed an adequate ſupport for the greateſt part, if not the whole, of that increaſe which has of late taken place.

In 1764, the population of the whole canton of Berne, including the Pays de Vaud, was eſtimated at 336,689. In 1791, it had increaſed to 414,420. From 1764 to 1777, its increaſe proceeded at the rate of 2000 each year; and, from 1778 to 1791, at the rate of 3109 each year [a].

[a] Beſchreibung von Bern, vol. ii. p. 40.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the Checks to Population in France.

As the tables of mortality in France, before the revolution, were not kept with peculiar care, nor for any great length of time, and as the few, which have been produced, exhibit no very extraordinary reſults, I ſhould not have made this country the ſubject of a diſtinct chapter, but for a circumſtance attending the revolution which has excited conſiderable ſurpriſe. This is, the undiminiſhed ſtate of the population, in ſpite of the loſſes ſuſtained during ſo long and deſtructive a conteſt.

A great national work, founded on the reports of the Prefects in the different departments, is at preſent in ſome ſtate of forwardneſs at Paris, and, when completed, it may reaſonably be expected to form a very valuable acceſſion to the materials of ſtatiſtical ſcience in general. The returns of all the Prefects are not, however, yet complete; but I was poſitively aſſured by the perſon who has the principal ſuperintendence of them, that enough is already known, to be certain, that the population of the old territory of France has rather increaſed than diminiſhed during the revolution.

Such an event, if true, very ſtrongly confirms the general principles of this work; and aſſuming it, for the preſent, as a fact, it may tend to throw ſome light on the ſubject, to trace, a little in detail, the manner in which ſuch an event might happen.

In every country, there is always a conſiderable body of unmarried perſons, formed by the gradual accumulation of the exceſs of the number

number riſing annually to the age of puberty, above the number of perſons annually married. The ſtop to the further accumulation of this body, is when its number is ſuch, that the yearly mortality equals the yearly acceſſions that are made to it. In the Pays de Vaud, as appeared in the laſt chapter, this body, including widows and widowers, perſons who are not actually in the ſtate of marriage, equals the whole number of married perſons. But in a country like France, where both the mortality, and the tendency to marriage, are much greater than in Switzerland, this body does not bear ſo large a proportion to the population.

According to a calculation in an *Eſſai d' une Statitiſque Generale*, publiſhed at Paris in 1800, by M. Peuchet, the number of unmarried males in France between 18 and 50 is eſtimated at 1,451,063, and the number of males, whether married or not, between the ſame ages, at 5,000,000[a]. It does not appear at what period exactly this calculation was made. The number of unmarried perſons ſeems to be too great for any period after ſome years of the revolution had elapſed; and rather too ſmall for the period before the revolution. Let us ſuppoſe, however, that this number of 1,451,063, expreſſes the collective body of unmarried males of a military age at the commencent of the revolution.

The population of France, before the beginning of the war, was eſtimated by the National Aſſembly, at 26,363,074[b]; and there is no reaſon to believe that this calculation was too high. Necker, though he mentions the number 24,800,000, expreſſes his firm belief that the yearly births, at that time, amounted to above a million, and conſequently, according to his multiplier of 25 $\frac{1}{4}$, that the whole population was nearly 26 millions[c]; and this calculation was made ten years previous to the eſtimate of the National Aſſembly.

[a] P. 32. 8vo. 78 pages.
[b] A. Young's Travels in France, vol. i. c. xvii. p. 466. 4to. 1792.
[c] De l'Adminiſtration des Finances, tom. i. c. ix. p. 256. 12mo. 1785.

Taking

Taking then the annual births at rather above a million, and eſtimating that rather above $\frac{2}{7}$ would die under 18, which appears to be the caſe from ſome calculations of M. Peuchet[a], it will follow, that 600,000 perſons will annually arrive at the age of 18.

The annual marriages, according to Necker, are 213,774[b]; but as this number is an average of ten years, taken while the population was increaſing, it is probably too low. If we take 220,000, then 440,000 perſons will be ſuppoſed to marry out of the 600,000 riſing to a marriageable age; and conſequently, the exceſs of thoſe riſing to the age of 18, above the number wanted to complete the uſual proportion of annual marriages, will be 160,000, or 80,000 males. It is evident, therefore, that the accumulated body of 1,451,063, unmarried males, of a military age, and the annual ſupply of 80,000 youths of 18, might be taken for the ſervice of the ſtate, without affecting, in any degree, the number of annual marriages. But we cannot ſuppoſe that the 1,451,063 ſhould be taken all at once, and many ſoldiers are married, and in a ſituation not to be entirely uſeleſs to the population. Let us ſuppoſe 600,000 of the corps of unmarried males to be embodied at once; and this number to be kept up by the annual ſupply of 150,000 perſons, taken partly from the 80,000, riſing annually to the age of 18, and not wanted to complete the number of annual marriages, and partly, from the 851,063 remaining of the body of unmarried males which exiſted at the beginning of the war.

It is evident, that, from theſe two ſources, 150,000 might be ſupplied each year, for ten years, and yet allow of an increaſe in the uſual number of annual marriages of above 10,000. It is true, that, in the courſe of the 10 years, many of the original body of unmarried males will have paſſed the military age; but this will be balanced, and, indeed, much more than balanced, by their utility in the married life. From the beginning, it ſhould be taken into con-

[a] Eſſai, p. 31. [b] De l'Adminiſtration des Finances, tom. i. c. ix. p. 255.

ſideration,

ſideration, that though a man of fifty be generally conſidered as paſt the military age, yet if he marry a fruitful ſubject, he may by no means be uſeleſs to the population; and in fact, the ſupply of 150,000 recruits each year, would be taken principally from the 300,000 males riſing annually to 18, and the annual marriages would be ſupplied, in great meaſure, from the remaining part of the original body of unmarried perſons. Widowers and bachelors of forty and fifty, who, in the common ſtate of things, might have found it difficult to obtain an agreeable partner, would probably ſee theſe difficulties removed in ſuch a ſcarcity of huſbands; and the abſence of 600,000 perſons, would of courſe make room for a very conſiderable addition to the number of annual marriages. This addition in all probability took place. Many, among the remaining part of the original body of bachelors, who might otherwiſe have continued ſingle, would marry under this change of circumſtances; and it is known, that a very conſiderable portion of youths under 18, in order to avoid the military conſcriptions, entered prematurely into the married ſtate. This was ſo much the caſe, and contributed ſo much to diminiſh the number of unmarried perſons, that, in the beginning of the year 1798, it was found neceſſary to repeal the law which had exempted married perſons from the conſcriptions; and thoſe who married ſubſequently to this new regulation, were taken indiſcriminately with the unmarried. And though after this, the levies fell, in part, upon thoſe who were actually engaged in the peopling of the country; yet the number of marriages untouched by theſe levies might ſtill remain greater than the uſual number of marriages before the revolution; and the marriages which were broken by the removal of the huſband to the armies, would not probably have been entirely barren.

Sir Francis D'Ivernois, who had certainly a tendency to exggerate, and probably has exaggerated conſiderably, the loſſes of the French nation, eſtimates the total loſs of the troops of France both by

by land and ſea, up to the year 1799, at a million and a half[a]. The round numbers which I have allowed, for the ſake of illuſtrating the ſubject, exceed Sir Francis D'Ivernois's eſtimate by ſix hundred thouſand. He calculates, however, a loſs of a million of perſons more, from the other cauſes of deſtruction attendant on the revolution; but as this loſs fell indiſcriminately on all ages and both ſexes, it would not affect the population in the ſame degree, and will be much more than covered by the 600,000 men in the full vigour of life, which remain above Sir Francis's calculation. It ſhould be obſerved alſo, that in the latter part of the revolutionary war, the military conſcriptions were probably enforced with ſtill more ſeverity in the newly acquired territories, than in the old ſtate; and, as the population of theſe new acquiſitions is eſtimated at 5 or 6 millions, it would bear a conſiderable proportion of the million and a half ſuppoſed to be deſtroyed in the armies. And, although the law, which facilitated divorces to ſo great a degree, be radically bad, both in a moral and political view, yet, under the circumſtance of a great ſcarcity of men, it would operate a little like the cuſtom of polygamy, and increaſe the number of children in proportion to the number of huſbands. In addition to this, the women without huſbands do not appear all to have been barren, as the proportion of illegitimate births is now raiſed to $\frac{1}{11}$ of the whole number of births, from $\frac{1}{17}$[b], which it was before the revolution; and though this be a melancholy proof of the depravation of morals, yet it would cer-

[a] Tableau des Pertes, &c. c. ii. p. 7. Monſ. Garnier, in the notes to his edition of Adam Smith, calculates, that only about a ſixtieth part of the French population was deſtroyed in the armies. He ſuppoſes only 500,000 embodied at once, and that this number was ſupplied by 400,000 more in the courſe of the war; and allowing for the number which would die naturally, that the additional mortality occaſioned by the war, was only about 45,000 each year. Tom. v. note xxx. p. 284. If the actual loſs were no more than theſe ſtatements make it, a ſmall increaſe of births would have eaſily repaired it; but I ſhould think that theſe eſtimates are probably as much below the truth as Sir F. D'Ivernois's are above.

[b] Eſſai de Peuchet, p. 28.

tainly

tainly contribute to increaſe the number of births; and as the female peaſants in France were enabled to earn more than uſual during the revolution, on account of the ſcarcity of hands, it is probable, that a conſiderable portion of theſe children would ſurvive.

Under all theſe circumſtances, it cannot appear impoſſible, and ſcarcely even improbable, that the population of France ſhould remain undiminiſhed, in ſpite of all the cauſes of deſtruction which have operated upon it during the courſe of the revolution, provided, that the agriculture of the country has been ſuch, as to continue the means of ſubſiſtence unimpaired. And it ſeems now to be generally acknowledged, that, however ſeverely the manufactures of France may have ſuffered, her agriculture has increaſed rather than diminiſhed. At no period of the war, can we ſuppoſe, that the number of embodied troops exceeded the number of men employed before the revolution in manufactures. Thoſe who were thrown out of work by the deſtruction of theſe manufactures, and who did not go to the armies, would of courſe betake themſelves to the labours of agriculture; and it was always the cuſtom in France for the women to work much in the fields, which cuſtom was probably increaſed during the revolution. At the ſame time, the abſence of a large portion of the beſt and moſt vigorous hands, would raiſe the price of labour; and as, from the new land brought into cultivation, and the abſence of a conſiderable part of the greateſt conſumers [a], in foreign countries, the price of proviſions did not riſe in proportion; this advance in the price of labour would not only operate as a powerful encouragement to marriage, but would enable the peaſants to live better, and to rear a greater number of their children.

At all times, the number of ſmall farmers and proprietors in France was great; and though ſuch a ſtate of things be by no means favourable

[a] Suppoſing the increaſed number of children, at any period, to equal the number of men abſent in the armies, yet theſe children being all very young, could not be ſuppoſed to conſume a quantity equal to that which would be conſumed by the ſame number of grown up perſons.

able to the clear ſurplus produce, or diſpoſeable wealth, of a nation; yet, ſometimes, it is not unfavourable to the abſolute produce, and it has always a moſt powerful tendency to encourage population. From the ſale and diviſion of many of the large domains of the nobles and clergy, the number of landed proprietors has conſiderably increaſed during the revolution; and as a part of theſe domains conſiſted of parks and chaces, new territory has been given to the plough. It is true, that the land tax has been not only too heavy, but injudiciouſly impoſed. It is probable, however, that this diſadvantage has been nearly counter-balanced by the removal of the former oppreſſions under which the cultivator laboured, and that the ſale and diviſion of the great domains, may be conſidered as a clear advantage on the ſide of agriculture, or, at any rate, of the groſs produce, which is the principal point with regard to mere population.

Theſe conſiderations make it appear probable, that the means of ſubſiſtence have at leaſt remained unimpaired, if they have not increaſed, during the revolution; and a view of the cultivation of France in its preſent ſtate, certainly rather tends to confirm this ſuppoſition.

We ſhall not, therefore, be inclined to agree with Sir Francis D'Ivernois, in his conjecture, that the annual births in France have diminiſhed by one ſeventh during the revolution [a]. On the contrary, it is much more probable, that they have increaſed by this number. The average proportion of births, to the population in all France, before the revolution, was, according to Necker, as 1 to $25\frac{3}{4}$ [b]. It has appeared in the reports of ſome of the Prefects which have been returned, that the proportion in many country places, was raiſed to 1 to 21, 22, $22\frac{1}{2}$, and 23 [c]; and though theſe proportions might, in ſome degree, be cauſed by the abſence of a part of the population in the armies, yet I have little doubt that they are principally to be

[a] Tableau des Pertes, &c. c. ii. p. 14.

[b] De l'Adminiſtration des Finances, tom. i. c. ix. p. 254. [c] Eſſai de Peuchet, p. 28.

 attributed

attributed to the birth of a greater number of children than uſual. If, when the reports of all the Prefects are put together, it ſhould appear, that the number of births has not increaſed in proportion to the population, and yet, that the population is undiminiſhed; it will follow, either that Necker's multiplier for the births was too ſmall, which is extremely probable, as from this cauſe he appears to have calculated the population too low; or that the mortality among thoſe not expoſed to violent deaths, has been leſs than uſual, which, from the high price of labour, and the deſertion of the towns for the country, is not unlikely.

According to Necker and Moheau, the mortality in France, before the revolution, was 1 in 30 or $30\frac{1}{8}$ [a]. Conſidering that the proportion of the population which lives in the country, is, to that in the towns, as $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 [b], this mortality is extraordinarily great, cauſed, probably, by the miſery ariſing from an exceſs of population; and from the remarks of Arthur Young on the ſtate of the peaſantry in France [c], which are completely ſanctioned by Necker [d], this appears to have been really the caſe. If we ſuppoſe, that from the removal of a part of this redundant population, the mortality ſhould have decreaſed from 1 in 30, to 1 in 35 [e], this favourable change would go a conſiderable way in repairing the breaches made by war on the frontiers.

The probability is, that both the cauſes mentioned have operated in part. The births have increaſed, and the deaths of thoſe remaining in the country have diminiſhed; ſo that, putting the two circumſtances together, it will probably appear, when the reſults of all the

[a] De l'Adminiſtration des Finances, tom. i. c. ix. p. 255. Eſſai de Peuchet, p. 29.

[b] Young's Travels in France, vol. i. c. xvii. p. 466.

[c] See generally, c. xvii. vol. i. and the juſt obſervations on theſe ſubjects, interſperſed in many other parts of his very valuable tour.

[d] De l'Adminiſtration des Finances, tom. i. c. ix. p. 262. et ſeq.

[e] If it ſhould appear that the mortality among thoſe remaining in the country has not diminiſhed, it will be attributable to the greater proportion of infants, a circumſtance noticed in reference to the Pruſſian table, in c. vi. of this book.

reports

reports of the Prefects are known, that, including thoſe who have fallen in the armies, and by violent means, the deaths have not exceeded the births in the courſe of the revolution.

The returns of the Prefects are to be given for the year 9 of the republick, and to be compared with the year 1789; but if the proportion of births to the population be given merely for the individual year 9, it will not ſhew with preciſion the average proportion of births to the population during the courſe of the revolution. In the confuſion occaſioned by this event, it is not probable that any very exact regiſters ſhould have been kept; but, from theory, I ſhould be inclined to expect, that, ſoon after the beginning of the war, and at other periods during the courſe of it, the proportion of births to the whole population would be greater, than in 1800 and 1801. If it ſhould appear by the returns, that the number of annual marriages has not increaſed during the revolution, the circumſtance will be obviouſly accounted for by the extraordinary increaſe in the illegitimate births, mentioned before in this chapter, which amount, at preſent, to one eleventh of all the births, inſtead of one forty-ſeventh, according to the calculation of Necker before the revolution [a].

Sir Francis D'Ivernois obſerves, that "thoſe have yet to learn the "firſt principles of political arithmetick, who imagine that it is "in the field of battle and the hoſpitals, that an account can be "taken of the lives which a revolution or a war has coſt. The "number of men it has killed, is of much leſs importance than the "number of children which it has prevented, and will ſtill prevent, "from coming into the world. This is the deepeſt wound which "the population of France has received."—"Suppoſing," he ſays, "that, of the whole number of men deſtroyed, only two millions

[a] Eſſai de Peuchet, p. 28. It is highly probable that this increaſe of illegitimate births occaſioned a more than uſual number of children to be expoſed in thoſe dreadful receptacles, *Les Hopiteaux des Enfans trouvés*, as noticed by Sir Francis D'Ivernois; but probably this cruel cuſtom was confined to particular diſtricts, and the number expoſed, upon the whole, might bear no great proportion to the ſum of all the births.

had

" had been united to as many females; according to the calculation " of Buffon, theſe two millions of couples ought to bring into the " world twelve millions of children, in order to ſupply, at the age " of thirty-nine, a number equal to that of their parents. This is " a point of view, in which the conſequences of ſuch a deſtruction " of men becomes almoſt incalculable; becauſe they have much " more effect with regard to the twelve millions of children, which " they prevent from coming into exiſtence, than with regard to the " actual loſs of the two millions and a half of men, for whom " France mourns. It is not till a future period, that ſhe will be " able to eſtimate this dreadful breach[a]."

And yet, if the circumſtances on which the foregoing reaſonings are founded, ſhould turn out to be true, it will appear, that France has not loſt a ſingle birth by the revolution. She has the moſt juſt reaſon to mourn the two millions and a half of individuals which ſhe may have loſt, but not their poſterity: becauſe, if theſe individuals had remained in the country, a proportionate number of children, born of other parents, which are now living in France, would not have come into exiſtence. If, in the beſt governed country in Europe, we were to mourn the poſterity which is prevented from coming into being, we ſhould always wear the habit of grief.

It is evident, that the conſtant tendency of the births, in every country, to ſupply the vacancies made by death, cannot, in a moral point of view, afford the ſlighteſt ſhadow of excuſe for the wanton ſacrifice of men. The poſitive evil that is committed, in this caſe, the pain, miſery, and wide-ſpreading deſolation and ſorrow, that are occaſioned to the exiſting inhabitants, can by no means be counterbalanced by the conſideration, that the numerical breach in the population will be rapidly repaired. We can have no other right, moral or political, except that of the moſt urgent neceſſity, to exchange the

[a] Tableau des Pertes, &c. c. ii. p. 13, 14.

lives

lives of beings in the full vigour of their enjoyments, for an equal number of helpleſs infants.

It ſhould alſo be remarked, that though the numerical population of France may not have ſuffered by the revolution; yet, that if her loſſes have been in any degree equal to the conjectures on the ſubject, her military ſtrength cannot be unimpaired. Her population at preſent muſt conſiſt of a much greater proportion than uſual of women and children; and the body of unmarried perſons of a military age, muſt be diminiſhed in a very ſtriking manner. This, indeed, is known to be the caſe, from the returns of the Prefects which have already been received.

It has appeared, that the point at which the drains of men will begin eſſentially to affect the population of a country, is, when the original body of unmarried perſons is exhauſted, and the annual demands are greater than the exceſs of the number of males riſing annually to the age of puberty, above the number wanted to complete the uſual proportion of annual marriages. France was probably at ſome diſtance from this point, at the concluſion of the war; but, in the preſent ſtate of her population, with an increaſed proportion of women and children, and a great diminution of males of a military age, ſhe could not make the ſame gigantic exertions which were made at one period, without trenching on the ſources of her population.

At all times, the number of males of a military age in France, was ſmall in proportion to the population, on account of the tendency to marriage[a], and the great number of children. Necker takes particular notice of this circumſtance. He obſerves, that the effect of the very great miſery of the peaſantry, is, to produce a dreadful mortality of infants under three or four years of age; and the conſequence is, that the number of young children will always be in too

[a] The proportion of marriages to the population in France, according to Necker, is 1 to 113, tom. i. c. ix. p. 255.

great

great a proportion to the number of grown up people. A million of individuals, he juſtly obſerves, will, in this caſe, neither preſent the ſame military force, nor the ſame capacity of labour, as an equal number of individuals in a country where the people are leſs miſerable [a].

Switzerland, before the revolution, could have brought into the field, or have employed in labour appropriate to grown up perſons, one third more in proportion to her population, than France, at the ſame period.

It will be but of little conſequence, if any of the facts or calculations which have been aſſumed in the courſe of this chapter, ſhould turn out to be falſe. The reader will ſee, that the reaſonings are of a general nature, and may be true, though the facts taken to illuſtrate them may prove to be inapplicable [b].

[a] De l'Adminiſtration des Finances, tom. i. c. ix. p. 263.

[b] Since I wrote this chapter I have had an opportunity of ſeeing the *Analyſe des Procès Verbaux des Conſeils Generaux de Departement*, which gives a very particular, and highly curious account of the internal ſtate of France for the year 8. With reſpect to the population, out of 69 departments, the reports from which are given, in 16, the population is ſuppoſed to be increaſed; in 42, diminiſhed; in 9, ſtationary; and in 2, the active population is ſaid to be diminiſhed, but the numerical to remain the ſame. It appears, however, that moſt of theſe reports are not founded on actual enumerations; and without ſuch poſitive data, the prevailing opinions on the ſubject of population, together with the neceſſary and univerſally acknowledged fact, of a very conſiderable diminution in the males of a military age, would naturally diſpoſe people to think that the numbers, upon the whole, muſt be diminiſhed. Judging merely from appearances, the ſubſtitution of a hundred children, for a hundred grown up perſons, would certainly not produce the ſame impreſſion, with regard to population. I ſhould not be ſurpriſed, therefore, if, when the enumerations for the year 9 are completed, it ſhould appear, that the population, upon the whole, has not diminiſhed. In ſome of the reports, *l'aiſance generale repandue ſur le peuple*, and *la diviſion des grands proprietaires*, are mentioned as the cauſes of increaſe; and almoſt univerſally, *les mariages prematurès*, and *les mariages multipliées par la crainte des loix militaires*, are particularly noticed.

With reſpect to the ſtate of agriculture, out of 78 reports, 6 are of opinion that it is improved; 10, that it is deteriorated; 70 demand that it ſhould be encouraged in general; 32 complain *de la multiplicitè des defrichements*; and 12 demand *des encouragements pour les defrichements*.

defrichements. One of the reports mentions, *la quantitè prodigieuſe de terres vagues miſe en culture depuis quelque tems, et les travaux multipliées, au de la de ce peuvent executer les bras employes en agriculture*; and others ſpeak of *les defrichements multipliées qui ont eu lieu depuis pluſieurs annèes*, which appeared to be ſucceſsful at firſt; but it was ſoon perceived, that it would be more profitable to cultivate leſs, and cultivate well. Many of the reports notice the cheapneſs of corn, and the want of ſufficient vent for this commodity; and in the diſcuſſion of the queſtion reſpecting the diviſion of the *biens communaux*, it is obſerved, that "le partage en operant le defrichement de ces biens, a ſans doute produit une augmentation rèelle de denrèes, mais d'un autre cotè, les vaines patures n'exiſtent plus, et les beſtiaux ſont peutètre diminuès." On the whole, therefore, I ſhould be inclined to infer, that though the agriculture of the country does not appear to have been conducted judiciouſly, ſo as to obtain a large *ſurplus* produce, yet that the *abſolute* produce had by no means been diminiſhed during the revolution, and that the attempt to bring ſo much new land under cultivation, had contributed to make the ſcarcity of labourers ſtill more ſenſible. And if it be allowed, that the food of the country did not decreaſe during the revolution, the high price of labour, which is very generally noticed, muſt have operated as a moſt powerful encouragement to population among the labouring part of the ſociety.

The land tax, or *contribution fonciere*, is univerſally complained of; indeed, it appears to be extremely heavy, and to fall very unequally. It was intended to be only a fifth of the net produce; but, from the unimproved ſtate of agriculture in general, the number of ſmall proprietors, and, particularly, the attempt to cultivate too much ſurface in proportion to the capital employed, it often amounts to a fourth, a third, or even a half. The ſtate of agriculture in France has never been ſuch, as to yield a ſurplus produce in proportion to the groſs produce, in any reſpect equal to what it yields in England; and, therefore, a land tax bearing the ſame relation to the groſs produce, would cauſe a very different degree of preſſure in the two countries. And, when property is ſo much divided, that the rent and profit of a farm muſt be combined, in order to ſupport a family upon it, a land tax muſt neceſſarily greatly impede cultivation; though it has little or no effect of this kind, when farms are large, and let out to tenants, as is moſt fequently the caſe in England. Among the impediments to agriculture mentioned in the reports, the two great diviſion of lands from the new laws of ſucceſſion is noticed. The partition of ſome of the great domains would probably contribute to the improvement of agriculture; but ſubdiviſions of the nature here alluded to, would certainly have a contrary effect, and would tend moſt particularly to diminiſh ſurplus produce, and make a land tax both oppreſſive and unproductive. If all the land in England were divided into farms of 20l. a year, we ſhould probably be more populous than we are at preſent; but, as a nation, we ſhould be extremely poor. We ſhould be almoſt without diſpoſeable revenue, and ſhould be under a total inability of maintaining the ſame number of manufactures, or collecting the ſame taxes, as at preſent. All the departments demand a diminution of the *contribution fonciere* as abſolutely neceſſary to the proſperity of agriculture.

Of the ſtate of the hoſpitals, and charitable eſtabliſhments, of the prevalance of beggary,

and the mortality among the expoſed children, a moſt deplorable picture is drawn in almoſt all the reports. From which, we ſhould at firſt be diſpoſed to infer, a greater degree of poverty and miſery among all the lower claſſes of people in general. It appears, however, that the hoſpitals and charitable eſtabliſhments loſt almoſt the whole of their revenues during the revolution; and this ſudden ſubtraction of ſupport from a great number of people who had no other reliance, together with the known failure of manufactures in the towns, and the very great increaſe of illegitimate children, might produce all the diſtreſſing appearances deſcribed in the reports, without impeaching the great fact of the ameliorated condition of agricultural labourers in general, neceſſarily ariſing from the acknowledged high price of labour, and comparative cheapneſs of corn; and it is from this part of the ſociety that the effective population of a country is principally ſupplied. If the poor's rates of England were ſuddenly abolithed, there would undoubtedly be the moſt complicated diſtreſs among thoſe who were before ſupported by them; but I ſhould not expect, that either the condition of the labouring part of the ſociety in general, or the population of the country, would ſuffer from it. As the proportion of illegitimate children in France has riſen ſo extraordinarily, as from $\frac{1}{47}$ of all the births to $\frac{1}{17}$, it is evident that more might be abandoned in hoſpitals, and more out of theſe die than uſual, and yet a more than uſual number be reared at home, and eſcape the mortality of theſe dreadful receptacles. It appears that, from the low ſtate of the funds in the hoſpitals, the proper nurſes could not be paid, and numbers of children died from abſolute famine. Some of the hoſpitals, at laſt, very properly refuſed to receive any more.

The reports, upon the whole, do not preſent a favourable picture of the internal ſtate of France; but ſomething is undoubtedly to be attributed to the nature of theſe reports, which, conſiſting as they do of obſervations explaining the ſtate of the different departments, and of particular demands with a view to obtain aſſiſtance or relief from government, it is to be expected that they ſhould lean rather to the unfavourable ſide. When the queſtion is reſpecting the impoſition of new taxes, or the relief from old ones, people will generally complain of their poverty. On the ſubject of taxes indeed, it would appear as if the French government muſt be a little puzzled. For though it very properly recommended to the *conſeils generaux* not to indulge in vague complaints, but to mention ſpecifick grievances, and propoſe ſpecifick remedies, and particularly not to adviſe the abolition of one tax, without ſuggeſting another; yet all the taxes, appear to me, to be reprobated, and moſt frequently in general terms, without the propoſal of any ſubſtitute. *La contribution fonciere*, *la taxe mobiliare*, *les barrieres*, *les droits de douâne*, all excite bitter complaints, and the only new ſubſtitute that ſtruck me, was a tax upon game, which, being at preſent almoſt extinct in France, cannot be expected to yield a revenue ſufficient to balance all the reſt. The work, upon the whole, is extremely curious, and as ſhewing the wiſh of the government to know the ſtate of each department; and to liſten to every obſervation, and propoſal, for its improvement, is highly creditable to the ruling power. It was publiſhed for a ſhort time, but the circulation of it was ſoon ſtopped, and confined to the miniſters,

miniſters, *les conſeils generaux*, &c. Indeed the documents are evidently more of a private than of a publick nature, and certainly have not the air of being intended for general circulation.

For the ſtate of population in Spain, I refer the reader to the valuable, and entertaining travels of Mr. Townſend, in that country, in which he will often find the principle of population very happily illuſtrated. I ſhould have made it the ſubject of a diſtinct chapter, but was fearful of extending this part of the work too much, and of falling, almoſt unavoidably, into too many repetitions, from the neceſſity of drawing the ſame kind of inference from ſo many different countries. I could expect, beſides, to add very little to what has been ſo well done by Mr. Townſend.

CHAP. IX.

Of the Checks to Population in England.

THE moſt curſory view of ſociety in this country, muſt convince us, that throughout all ranks, the preventive check to population prevails in a conſiderable degree. Thoſe among the higher claſſes, who live principally in towns, often want the inclination to marry, from the facility with which they can indulge themſelves in an illicit intercourſe with the ſex. And others are deterred from marrying, by the idea of the expences that they muſt retrench, and the pleaſures of which they muſt deprive themſelves, on the ſuppoſition of having a family. When the fortune is large, theſe conſiderations are certainly trivial; but a preventive foreſight of this kind, has objects of much greater weight for its contemplation as we go lower.

A man of liberal education, with an income only juſt ſufficient to enable him to aſſociate in the rank of gentlemen, muſt feel abſolutely certain, that if he marry, and have a family, he ſhall be obliged, if he mix in ſociety, to rank himſelf with farmers and tradeſmen. The woman, that a man of education would naturally make the object of his choice, is one brought up in the ſame habits and ſentiments with himſelf, and uſed to the familiar intercourſe of a ſociety totally different from that to which ſhe muſt be reduced by marriage. Can a man eaſily conſent to place the object of his affection in a ſituation ſo diſcordant, probably, to her habits and inclinations. Two or three ſteps of deſcent in ſociety, particularly at this round of the ladder, where education ends and ignorance begins, will not be conſidered by the generality of people as a chimerical, but a real evil.

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If ſociety be deſirable, it ſurely muſt be free, equal, and reciprocal ſociety, where benefits are conferred as well as received, and not ſuch as the dependent finds with his patron, or the poor with the rich.

Theſe conſiderations certainly prevent a great number in this rank of life, from following the bent of their inclinations in an early attachment. Others, influenced either by a ſtronger paſſion, or a weaker judgment, diſregard theſe conſiderations; and it would be hard indeed, if the gratification of ſo delightful a paſſion as virtuous love, did not ſometimes more than counterbalance all its attendant evils. But I fear that it muſt be acknowledged, that the more general conſequences of ſuch marriages are rather calculated to juſtify, than to diſappoint, the forebodings of the prudent.

The ſons of tradeſmen and farmers, are exhorted not to marry, and generally find it neceſſary to comply with this advice, till they are ſettled in ſome buſineſs or farm, which may enable them to ſupport a family. Theſe events may not, perhaps, occur till they are far advanced in life. The ſcarcity of farms is a very general complaint; and the competition in every kind of buſineſs is ſo great, that it is not poſſible that all ſhould be ſucceſsful. Among the clerks in counting houſes, and the competitors for all kinds of mercantile and profeſſional employment, it is probable, that the preventive check to population prevails more than in any other department of ſociety.

The labourer who earns eighteen-pence or two ſhillings a day, and lives at his eaſe as a ſingleman, will heſitate a little, before he divides that pittance among four or five, which ſeems to be not more than ſufficient for one. Harder fare, and harder labour, he would perhaps be willing to ſubmit to, for the ſake of living with the woman that he loves; but he muſt feel conſcious, that, ſhould he have a large family, and any ill fortune whatever, no degree of frugality, no poſſible exertion of his manual ſtrength, would preſerve him from the heart-rending ſenſation of ſeeing his children ſtarve, or of being obliged to the pariſh for their ſupport. The love of independence

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is a ſentiment that ſurely none would wiſh to ſee eradicated; though the pariſh law of England, it muſt be confeſſed, is a ſyſtem of all others the moſt calculated gradually to weaken this ſentiment, and in the end will probably deſtroy it completely.

The ſervants who live in the families of the rich, have reſtraints yet ſtronger to break through in venturing upon marriage. They poſſeſs the neceſſaries, and even the comforts, of life, almoſt in as great plenty as their maſters. Their work is eaſy, and their food luxurious, compared with the work and food of the claſs of labourers; and their ſenſe of dependence is weakened by the conſcious power of changing their maſters, if they feel themſelves offended. Thus comfortably ſituated at preſent, what are their proſpects if they marry. Without knowledge, or capital, either for buſineſs, or farming, and unuſed, and therefore unable, to earn a ſubſiſtence by daily labour, their only refuge ſeems to be a miſerable alehouſe, which certainly offers no very enchanting proſpect of a happy evening to their lives. The greater number of them, therefore, deterred by this uninviting view of their future ſituation, content themſelves with remaining ſingle where they are.

If this ſketch of the ſtate of ſociety in England be near the truth, it will be allowed, that the preventive check to population operates with conſiderable force throughout all the claſſes of the community. And this obſervation is further confirmed by the abſtracts from the regiſters returned in conſequence of the late Population Act. The reſults of theſe abſtracts ſhew, that the annual marriages in England and Wales, are to the whole population as 1 to $123\frac{1}{5}$ [a], a ſmaller proportion of marriages than obtains in any of the countries which have been examined, except Norway and Switzerland.

In

[a] Obſerv. on the Reſults of the Population Act, p. 11. The anſwers to the Population Act, have at length happily reſcued the queſtion of the population of this country from the obſcurity in which it has been ſo long involved, and have afforded ſome very valuable data to the political calculator. At the ſame time, it muſt be confeſſed, that they are not ſo complete, as entirely to exclude reaſonings and conjectures, reſpecting the inferences which

In the earlier part of the laſt century, Dr. Short eſtimated this proportion at about 1 to 115 [a]. It is probable that this calculation was then correct, and the preſent diminution in the proportion of marriages notwithſtanding an increaſe of population more rapid than formerly, owing to the more rapid progreſs of commerce and agriculture, is partly a cauſe, and partly a conſequence, of the diminiſhed mortality that has been obſerved of late years.

The returns of the marriages, purſuant to the late act, are ſuppoſed to be leſs liable to the ſuſpicion of inaccuracy, than any other parts of the regiſters.

Dr. Short in his *New Obſervations on Town and Country Bills of Mortality*, ſays, he will "conclude with the obſervation of an eminent "Judge of this nation, that the growth and increaſe of mankind is more "ſtinted from the cautious difficulty people make to enter on marriage, "from the proſpect of the trouble and expences in providing for a fa"mily, than from any thing in the nature of the ſpecies." And, in conformity to this idea, Dr. Short propoſes to lay heavy taxes and fines, on thoſe who live ſingle, for the ſupport of the married poor [b].

The obſervation of the eminent Judge is, with regard to the numbers which are prevented from being born, perfectly juſt; but the inference that the unmarried ought to be puniſhed, does not appear to be equally ſo. It will not, I believe, be very far from the truth, to ſay, that, in this country, not more than half of the prolifick power of nature is called into action, and yet, that there are more children born than the country can properly ſupport.

If we ſuppoſe that the yearly births were $\frac{1}{20}$ part of the population,

which are to be drawn from them. It is earneſtly to be hoped, that the ſubject may not be ſuffered to drop after the preſent effort. Now that the firſt difficulty is removed, an enumeration, every ten years, might be rendered eaſy and familiar; and the regiſters of births, deaths, and marriages, might be received every year, or at leaſt, every five years. I am perſuaded that more inferences are to be drawn, reſpecting the internal ſtate of a country, from ſuch regiſters, than we have yet been in the habit of ſuppoſing.

[a] New Obſerv. on Bills of Mortality, p. 265. 8vo. 1750. [b] Id. p. 247.

a pro-

a proportion, which, for ſhort periods, obtains frequently on the continent [a], and conſtantly, perhaps, in many parts of America; and allowing one third for the mortality under 20, which is a moderate ſuppoſition, as, according to Dr. Short, this mortality, in ſome places, is only one fifth or one fourth [b]; then if all were to marry at 20, which is by no means ſo early an age as is poſſible, $\frac{1}{10}$th part of the population would, in that caſe, marry annually; that is, there would be one annual marriage out of 60 perſons, inſtead of one marriage out of 123 perſons, as is the caſe at preſent. It may fairly be ſaid, therefore, that not more than one half of the prolifick power of nature is called into action in this country. And yet, when we contemplate the inſufficiency of the price of labour to maintain a large family, and the quantum of mortality which ariſes directly and indirectly from poverty; and add to this, the crowds of children, which are cut off prematurely in our great towns, our manufactories, and our workhouſes, we ſhall be compelled to acknowledge, that if the number born annually, were not greatly thinned by this premature mortality, the funds for the maintenance of labour muſt increaſe with much greater rapidity than they have ever done hitherto in this country, in order to find work and food for the additional numbers that would then grow up to manhood.

Thoſe, therefore, who live ſingle, or marry late, do not, by ſuch conduct, contribute, in any degree, to diminiſh the actual population; but merely to diminiſh the proportion of premature mortality which would otherwiſe be exceſſive; and conſequently in this point of view do not ſeem to deſerve any very ſevere reprobation or puniſhment.

The returns of the births and deaths are ſuppoſed, on good grounds,

[a] On an average of five years, after the plague in Pruſſia, rejecting the firſt extraordinary year, the proportion of births to the whole population was above 1 to 18, (table iv. page 253). In New Jerſey, according to Dr. Price (Obſerv. on Reverſ. Paym. vol. i. p. 283.) it was 1 to 18, and in the back ſettlements probably 1 to 15. [b] New Obſerv. on Bills of Mortality, p. 59.

to

to be deficient, and it will therefore be difficult to eſtimate, with any degree of accuracy, the proportion which they bear to the whole population.

If we divide the exiſting population of England and Wales, by the average of burials for the five years ending in 1800, it would appear, that the mortality was only 1 in 49 [a]; but this is a proportion ſo extraordinarily ſmall, conſidering the number of our great towns and manufactories, that it cannot be conſidered as approaching to the truth.

Whatever may be the exact proportion of the inhabitants of the towns to the inhabitants of the country, the ſouthern part of this iſland certainly ranks in that claſs of ſtates, where this proportion is greater than 1 to 3; indeed, there is ample reaſon to believe, that it is greater than 1 to 2. According to the rule laid down by Crome, the mortality ought, conſequently, to be above 1 in 30 [b]; according to Suſmilch, above 1 in 33 [c]. In the *Obſervations on the Reſults of the Population Act* [d], many probable cauſes of deficiency in the regiſtry of the burials, are pointed out; but no calculation is offered reſpecting the ſum of theſe deficiencies, and I have no data whatever to ſupply ſuch a calculation. I will only obſerve, therefore, that if we ſuppoſe them altogether to amount to ſuch a number, as will make the preſent annual mortality about 1 in 40, this muſt appear to be the loweſt proportion of deaths that can well be ſuppoſed, conſidering the circumſtances of the country; and if true, would indicate a moſt aſtoniſhing ſuperiority over the generality of other ſtates, either in the habits of the people with reſpect to prudence and cleanlineſs, or in natural healthineſs of ſituation [e]. Indeed, it ſeems to be nearly aſcertained, that both theſe cauſes,

[a] The population is taken at 9,168,000, and the annual deaths at 186,000. (Obſ. on the Reſults of Pop. Act. p. 6 & 9.) [b] Uber die Bevölkerung der Europaiſchen Staaten, p. 127. [c] Suſmilch, Gottliche Ordnung, vol. iii. p. 60. [d] P. 6.
[e] It is by no means ſurpriſing that our population ſhould have been under-rated for-

 merly,

cauſes, which tend to diminiſh mortality, operate in this country to a conſiderable degree. The ſmall proportion of annual marriages mentioned before, indicates, that habits of prudence, extremely favourable to happineſs, prevail through a large part of the community, in ſpite of the poor-laws; and it appears from the cleareſt evidence, that the generality of our country pariſhes are very healthy. Dr. Price quotes an account of Dr. Percival, collected from the miniſters of different pariſhes, and taken from poſitive enumerations, according to which, in ſome villages, only a 45th, a 50th, a 60th, a 66th, and even a 75th part, dies annually. In many of theſe pariſhes the births are to the deaths above 2 to 1, and in a ſingle pariſh above 3 to 1 [a]. Theſe, however, are particular inſtances, and cannot be applied to the agricultural part of the country in general. In ſome of the flat ſituations, and particularly thoſe near marſhes, the proportions are found very different, and in a few, the deaths exceed the births. In the 54 country pariſhes, the regiſters of which, Dr. Short collected, chuſing them purpoſely in a great variety of ſituations, the average mortality was as high as 1 in 37 [b]. This is certainly much above the preſent mortality of our agricultural pariſhes, in general. The period which Dr. Short took, included ſome conſiderable epidemicks, which may poſſibly have been

merly, at leaſt by any perſon who attempted to eſtimate it from the proportion of births or deaths. Till the late Population Act, no one would have imagined, that the actual returns of annual deaths, which might naturally have been expected to be as accurate in this country as in others, would turn out to be leſs than a 49th part of the population. If the actual returns for France, even ſo long ago as the ten years ending with 1780, had been multiplied by 49, ſhe would have appeared at that time to have a population of above 40 millions. The average of annual deaths, was 818,491. Necker, de l'Adminiſtration des Finances, tom. i. c. ix. p. 255. 12mo. 1785.

[a] Price's Obſerv. on Reverſ. Paym. vol. ii. note, p. 10. Firſt additional Eſſay. In particular pariſhes, private communications are perhaps more to be depended upon than public returns; becauſe in general thoſe clergymen only are applied to, who are in ſome degree intereſted in the ſubject, and of courſe take more pains to be accurate.

[b] New Obſervations on bills of Mortality, table ix. p. 133.

above

above the uſual proportion. But ſickly ſeaſons ſhould always be included, or we ſhall fall into great errors. In 1056 villages of Brandenburgh, which Suſmilch examined, the mortality for 6 good years, was 1 in 43; for 10 mixed years, about 1 in 38 ½ [a]. In the villages of England, which Sir F. M. Eden mentions, the mortality ſeems to be about 1 in 47 or 48 [b]; and in the late returns purſuant to the Population Act, a ſtill greater degree of healthineſs appears. Combining theſe obſervations together, if we take 1 in 46, or 1 in 48, as the average mortality of the agricultural part of the country including ſickly ſeaſons, this will be the loweſt that can be ſuppoſed with any degree of probability. But this proportion will certainly be raiſed to 1 in 40, when we blend it with the mortality of the towns, and the manufacturing part of the community, in order to obtain the average for the whole kingdom.

The mortality in London, which includes ſo conſiderable a part of the inhabitants of this country, was, according to Dr. Price, at the time he made his calculations, 1 in 20 ½; in Norwich 1 in 24 ½; in Northampton 1 in 26 ½; in Newbury 1 in 27 ½ [c]; in Mancheſter 1 in 28; in Liverpool 1 in 27 ½ [d], &c. He obſerves, that the number dying annually in towns is ſeldom ſo low as 1 in 28, except in conſequence of a rapid increaſe produced by an influx of people at thoſe periods of life when the feweſt die, which is the caſe with Mancheſter and Liverpool [e], and other very flouriſhing manufacturing towns. In general he thinks, that the mortality in great towns may be ſtated at from 1 in 19 [f] to 1 in 22 and 23; in moderate towns, from 1 in 24 to 1 in 28; and, in country villages, from 1 in 40, to 1 in 50 [g].

The tendency of Dr. Price to exaggerate the unhealthineſs of towns may juſtly be objected to theſe ſtatements; but the objection ſeems

[a] Gottliche Ordnung, vol. i. c. ii. ſ. xxi. p. 74. [b] Eſtimate of the number of Inhabitants in G. Britain. [c] Price's Obſerv. on Reverſ. Paym. vol. i. note p. 272. [d] Id. vol. ii. Firſt additional Eſſay, note, p. 4. [e] Ibid.

[f] The Mortality at Stockholm was, according to Wargentin, 1 in 19.

[g] Obſerv. on Reverſ. Paym. vol. ii. Firſt additional Eſſay, p. 4.

to be only of weight with regard to London. The accounts from the other towns which are given, are from documents which his particular opinions could not influence. It ſhould be remarked, however, that there is good reaſon to believe, that not only London, but the other towns in England, and probably alſo country villages, were, at the time of theſe calculations, leſs healthy than at preſent. Dr. William Heberden remarks, that the regiſters of the ten years from 1759 to 1768 [a], from which Dr. Price calculated the probabilities of life in London, indicate a much greater degree of unhealthineſs than the regiſters of late years. And the returns purſuant to the population act, even after allowing for great omiſſions in the burials, exhibit in all our provincial towns, and in the country, a degree of healthineſs much greater than had before been calculated. At the ſame time I cannot but think, that 1 in 31, the proportion of mortality for London, mentioned in the *Obſervations on the Reſults of the Population Act* [b], is ſmaller than the truth. Five thouſand may not, perhaps, be enough to allow for the omiſſions in the burials; or, perhaps, the abſentees in the employments of war and commerce, may not be included in theſe omiſſions. In eſtimating the proportional mortality the reſident population alone ſhould be conſidered.

There certainly ſeems to be ſomething in great towns, and even in moderate towns, peculiarly unfavourable to the very early ſtages of life; and the part of the community on which the mortality principally falls, ſeems to indicate, that it ariſes more from the cloſeneſs and foulneſs of the air, which may be ſuppoſed to be unfavourable to the tender lungs of children, and the greater confinement, which they almoſt neceſſarily experience, than from the ſuperior degree of luxury and debauchery, uſually, and juſtly, attributed to towns. A married pair, with the beſt conſtitutions, who lead the moſt regu-

[a] Increaſe and Decreaſe of Diſeaſes, p. 32. 4to. 1801. [b] P. 13.

lar

lar and quiet life, ſeldom find that their children enjoy the ſame health in towns as in the country.

In London, according to former calculations, one half of the born died under three years of age; in Vienna and Stockholm under two; in Mancheſter, under five; in Norwich, under five; in Northampton, under ten [a]. In country villages, on the contrary, half of the born live till thirty, thirty-five, forty, forty-ſix, and above. In the pariſh of Ackworth, in Yorkſhire, it appears, from a very exact account kept by Dr. Lee of the ages at which all died there for 20 years, that half of the inhabitants live to the age of 46 [b], and there is little doubt, that, if the ſame kind of account had been kept in ſome of thoſe pariſhes before mentioned, in which the mortality is ſo ſmall as 1 in 60, 1 in 66, and even 1 in 75, half of the born would be found to have lived till 50 or 55.

As the calculations reſpecting the ages to which half of the born live in towns, depend more upon the births and deaths which appear in the regiſters, than upon any eſtimates of the number of people, they are on this account leſs liable to uncertainty, than the calculations reſpecting the proportion of the inhabitants of any place which dies annually.

To fill up the void occaſioned by this mortality in towns, and to anſwer all further demands for population, it is evident, that a conſtant ſupply of recruits from the country is neceſſary, and this ſupply appears, in fact, to be always flowing in from the redundant births of the country. Even in thoſe towns, where the births exceed the deaths, this effect is produced by the marriages of perſons not born in the place. At a time when our provincial towns were increaſing much leſs rapidly than at preſent, Dr. Short calculated that $\frac{9}{19}$ of the married were ſtrangers [c]. Of 1618 married men, and 1618

[a] Price's Obſerv. on Reverſ. Paym. vol. i. p. 264—266. [b] Id. vol. i. p. 268.
[c] New Obſervations on bills of Mortality, p. 76.

married

married women, examined at the Weſtminſter Infirmary, only 329 of the men, and 495 of the women, had been born in London[a].

Dr. Price ſuppoſes, that London, with its neighbouring pariſhes, where the deaths exceed the births, requires a ſupply of 10,000 perſons annually. Graunt, in his time, eſtimated this ſupply for London alone at 6000[b]; and he further obſerves, that let the mortality of the city be what it will, ariſing from plague, or any other great cauſe of deſtruction, that it always fully repairs its loſs in two years[c].

As all theſe demands, therefore, are ſupplied from the country, it is evident, that we ſhould fall into a very great error, if we were to eſtimate the proportion of births to deaths for the whole kingdom, by the proportion obſerved in country pariſhes, from which there muſt be ſuch numerous emigrations.

We need not, however, accompany Dr. Price in his apprehenſions, that the country will be depopulated by theſe emigrations, at leaſt, as long as the funds for the maintenance of agricultural labour remain unimpaired. The proportion of births, as well as the proportion of marriages, clearly proves, that in ſpite of our increaſing towns and manufactories, the demand on the country for people is by no means very preſſing.

If we divide the preſent population of England and Wales, by the average number of baptiſms for the laſt five years, it will appear, that the baptiſms are to the population, as 1 to very nearly 36[d]; but it is ſuppoſed, with reaſon, that there are great omiſſions in the baptiſms; and it is conjectured, that theſe omiſſions are greater than in the burials. On this point, however, I ſhould be inclined to think differently, at leaſt, with reſpect to the laſt twenty years,

[a] Price's Obſerv. on Reverſ. Paym. vol. ii. p. 17. [b] Short's New Obſerv. Abſtract from Graunt, p 277. [c] Id. p. 276. [d] Average medium of baptiſms for the laſt five years 255,426. Pop. 9,168,000. (Obſerv. on Reſults, p. 9.)

though

though probably it was the caſe formerly. It would appear, by the preſent proportion of marriages, that the more rapid increaſe of population, ſuppoſed to have taken place ſince the year 1780, has ariſen more from the diminution of deaths, than the increaſe of the births.

Dr. Short eſtimated the proportion of births to the population of England as 1 to 28[a]. In the agricultural report of Suffolk, the proportion of births to the population was calculated at 1 to 30. For the whole of Suffolk, according to the late returns, this proportion is not much leſs than 1 to 33[b]. According to a correct account of thirteen villages from actual enumerations, produced by Sir F. M. Eden, the proportion of births to the population was as 1 to 33; and from another account, on the ſame authority, taken from towns and manufacturing pariſhes, as 1 to 27 $\frac{1}{4}$[c]. If, combining all theſe circumſtances, and adverting, at the ſame time, to the acknowledged deficiency in the regiſtry of births, and the known increaſe of our population of late years, we ſuppoſe the true proportion of the births to the population to be as 1 to 30; then, aſſuming the preſent mortality to be 1 in 40, as before ſuggeſted, we ſhall nearly keep the proportion of baptiſms to burials, which appears in the late returns. The births will be to the deaths as 4 to 3 or 13$\frac{1}{3}$ to 10, a proportion more than ſufficient to account for the increaſe of population which has taken place ſince the American war, after allowing, for thoſe who may be ſuppoſed to have died abroad, and for a greater general mortality, in the earlier part of this period.

In the *Obſervations on the Reſults of the Population Act*, it is remarked, that the average duration of life in England appears to

[a] New Obſerv. p. 267. [b] In private inquiries, diſſenters, and thoſe who do not chriſten their children, will not of courſe be reckoned in the population, and conſequently ſuch inquiries, as far as they extend, will more accurately expreſs the true proportion of births; and we are fairly juſtified in making uſe of them, in order to eſtimate the acknowledged deficiency of births in the public returns.

[c] Eſtimate of the number of Inhabitants in G. Britain, &c. p. 27.

have

have increaſed in the proportion of 117 to 100[a], ſince the year 1780. So great a change, in ſo ſhort a time, if true, would be a moſt ſtriking phenomenon. But I am inclined to ſuſpect, that the whole of this proportional diminution of burials does not ariſe from increaſed healthineſs, but is occaſioned, in part, by the greater number of deaths which muſt neceſſarily have taken place abroad, owing to the very rapid increaſe of our foreign commerce ſince this period; and to the great number of perſons abſent in naval and military employments, during the late war, and the conſtant ſupply of freſh recruits neceſſary to maintain undiminiſhed ſo great a force. A perpetual drain of this kind, would certainly have a tendency to produce the effect obſerved in the returns, and might keep the burials ſtationary, while the births and marriages were increaſing with ſome rapidity. At the ſame time, as the increaſe of population ſince 1780 is incontrovertible, and the preſent mortality extraordinarily ſmall, I ſhould ſtill be diſpoſed to believe, that the greater part of the effect is to be attributed to increaſed healthineſs.

If we ſuppoſe, that the mortality about the year 1780 was 1 in 36, inſtead of 1 in 40, as at preſent, this will be making a great allowance for increaſed healthineſs, though not ſo much as the proportion of 117 to 100; and aſſuming the proportion of births to have been nearly the ſame as at preſent, the births about the year 1780, will appear to have been to the deaths, as 36 to 30, or 12 to 10; a proportion, which, calculated on a mortality of 1 in 36, doubles the population of a country, in 125 years[b]; and is, therefore, as great a proportion, as can be true for the average of the whole century. The higheſt eſtimates of our population do not make it double of what it was at the revolution.

We muſt not ſuppoſe, however, that this proportion of births to deaths, or of births and deaths to the whole population, continued uniform before 1780. It appears from the regiſters of every country

[a] P. 6. [b] See table ii. p 238.

which

which have been kept for any length of time, that conſiderable variations occur at different periods. Dr. Short, about the middle of the century, eſtimated the proportion of births to deaths at 11 to 10[a]; and if the births were at the ſame time a twenty-eighth part of the population, the mortality was then as high as 1 in 30 $\frac{4}{7}$. We now ſuppoſe that the proportion of births to deaths is above 13 to 10; but if we were to aſſume this proportion as a criterion by which to eſtimate the increaſe of population for the next thirty or forty years, we ſhould probably fall into a very groſs error. The effects of the lateſcar cities are ſtrongly marked, in the returns of the *Population Act*, by a decreaſe of births, and an increaſe of burials, and ſhould ſuch ſeaſons frequently recur, they would ſoon deſtroy the great exceſs of births which has been obſerved during the laſt twenty years; and indeed we cannot reaſonably ſuppoſe, that the reſources of this country ſhould increaſe, for any long continuance, with ſuch rapidity, as to allow of a permanent proportion of births to deaths as 13 to 10, unleſs, indeed, this proportion were principally cauſed by great foreign drains.

From all the data that could be collected, the proportion of births, to the whole population of England and Wales, has been aſſumed to be as 1 to 30; but this is a ſmaller proportion of births than has appeared, in the courſe of this review, to take place in any other country, except Norway and Switzerland; and it has been hitherto uſual with political calculators to conſider a great proportion of births, as the ſureſt ſign of a vigorous and flouriſhing ſtate. It is to be hoped, however, that this prejudice will not laſt long. In countries circumſtanced like America or Ruſſia, or in other countries after any great mortality, a large proportion of births may be a favourable ſymptom; but in the average ſtate of a well-peopled territory, there

[a] New Obſerv. tables ii. & iii. p. 22 & 44. Price's Obſerv. on Reverſ. Paym. vol. ii. p. 311.

cannot

cannot well be a worſe ſign than a large proportion of births, nor can there well be a better ſign than a ſmall proportion.

Sir Francis D'Ivernois very juſtly obſerves, that "if the various "ſtates of Europe kept and publiſhed annually an exact account of "their population, noting carefully in a ſecond column the exact "age at which the children die, this ſecond column would ſhew the "relative merit of the governments, and the comparative happineſs "of their ſubjects. A ſimple arithmetical ſtatement would then, "perhaps, be more concluſive, than all the arguments that could "be adduced [a]." In the importance of the inferences to be drawn from ſuch tables, I fully agree with him: and to make theſe inferences, it is evident, that we ſhould attend leſs to the column expreſſing the number of children born, than to the column expreſſing the number which ſurvived the age of infancy and reached manhood; and this number will, almoſt invariably, be the greateſt, where the proportion of the births to the whole population is the leaſt. In this point, we rank next after Norway and Switzerland, which, conſidering the number of our great towns and manufactories, is certainly a very extraordinary fact. As nothing can be more clear, than that all our demands for population are fully ſupplied, if this be done with a ſmall proportion of births, it is a decided proof of a very ſmall mortality, a diſtinction on which we may juſtly pride ourſelves. Should it appear from future inveſtigations, that I have made too great an allowance for omiſſions, both in the births and in the burials, I ſhall be extremely happy to find, that this diſtinction which, other circumſtances being the ſame, I conſider as the ſureſt teſt of happineſs and good government, is even greater than I have ſuppoſed it to be. In deſpotic, miſerable, or naturally unhealthy countries, the proportion of births to the whole population will generally be found very great.

According to one of Sir F. M. Eden's calculations, taken from

[a] Tableau des Pertes, &c. c. ii. p. 16.

towns

towns and manufacturing pariſhes, the annual births are to the annual marriages as 3 to 1 [a]. In 111 agricultural pariſhes for 12 years, ending in 1799, the annual births are to the annual marriages in the proportion of above 4 to 1 [b]. From which it might appear, that, in our towns, more than half of the born live to be married, and in the country leſs. But for the reaſons mentioned in page 234, the contrary is probably true. In our towns, from the mortality that takes place in the early ſtages of life, it is not to be doubted that leſs than half of the born live to be married, and the great proportion of marriages is occaſioned merely by new ſettlers. In the country, on account of the emigrants that marry in other places, more than half of the born live to be married, though, allowing for ſecond and third marriages, probably not much more. But from what was ſaid in page 262, the degree in which the preventive check operates cannot be determined by the proportion of the born which lives to be married; but depends upon the proportion of annual marriages, and the proportion of annual births to the whole population; and till the firſt of theſe proportions riſes from 1 in 123 to 1 in 80, or 1 in 70, and the ſecond from 1 in 30 to 1 in 24, 22 or 20, it cannot be ſaid, that the towns draw hard upon the country for population.

If taking the towns and country together, and rejecting at preſent ſecond and third marriages and illegitimate children, we ſuppoſe, that accurately half of the born live to be married, then, according to table i. page 231, each marriage muſt yield five births, in order to produce a proportion of births to deaths, as $12\frac{1}{2}$ to 10. And if the proportion of our births to deaths be above this, or $13\frac{1}{2}$ to 10, then, including all circumſtances, it does not appear that we can allow leſs than $5\frac{1}{2}$ births to each marriage.

In judging of the proportion of the born which lives to be married, by the proportion of annual births to annual marriages, the number of ſecond and third marriages, and the number of illegiti-

[a] Eſtimate of the Number of Inhabitants in Great Britain, p. 10. [b] Id. p. 79.

mate

mate children, tend to correct each other. The ſecond and third marriages tend to give the proportion which lives to be married too great, and the illegitimate children too ſmall. It muſt depend on the particular circumſtances of the country, which of theſe two cauſes of irregularity preponderates.

According to the late returns, it would appear, that, in this country, conſiderably more than half of the born live to be married; but when the deficiency in the births is aſſumed to be ſuch as is ſuggeſted in this chapter, the reſult is rather on the contrary ſide.

On an average of the five years ending in 1780, the proportion of births to marriages is 350 to 100. In 1760, it was 362 to 100, from which, an inference is drawn, that the regiſters of births, however deficient, were certainly not more deficient formerly, than at preſent [a]. But a change of this nature, in the appearance of the regiſters, might ariſe from a cauſe totally unconnected with deficiencies. If from the acknowledged greater healthineſs of the latter part of the century, compared with the middle of it, a greater number of children ſurvived the age of infancy, a greater proportion of the born would of courſe live to marry; and this circumſtance would produce exactly the effect obſerved in the regiſters. From what has already been ſaid on this ſubject, the reader will be aware, that this change may take place without diminiſhing the operation of the preventive check. If half of the born live to 40 inſtead of 30, it is evident, that a greater proportion might live to marry, and yet the marriages be later.

It has been made a queſtion, whether we have juſt grounds for ſuppoſing, that the regiſtry of births and deaths was in general more deficient in the former part of the century, than in the latter part. It appears to me, that the late returns tend to confirm the ſuſpicion of former inaccuracy, and to ſhew that the regiſters of the earlier part of the century, in every point of view, afford very uncertain data

[a] Obſervations on the Reſults of the Population Act, p. 8.

on which to ground any eſtimates of paſt population. In the years 1710, 1720, and 1730, it appears from the returns, that the deaths exceeded the births; and taking the ſix periods ending in 1750 [a], including the firſt half of the century, if we compare the ſum of the births with the ſum of the deaths, the exceſs of the births is ſo ſmall, as to be perfectly inadequate to account for the increaſe of a million, which, upon a calculation from the births alone, is ſuppoſed to have taken place in that time [b]. Conſequently, either the regiſters are very inaccurate, and the deficiencies in the births greater than in the deaths; or theſe periods, each at the diſtance of ten years, do not expreſs the juſt average. Theſe particular years may have been more unfavourable with reſpect to the proportion of births to deaths than the reſt; indeed one of them, 1710, is known to have been a year of great ſcarcity and diſtreſs. But if this ſuſpicion, which is very probable, be admitted, ſo as to affect the ſix firſt periods, we may juſtly ſuſpect the contrary accident to have happened with regard to the three following periods ending with 1780, in which thirty years, it would ſeem by the ſame mode of calculation, that an increaſe of a million and an half had taken place [c]. At any rate it muſt be allowed that the three ſeparate years, taken in this manner, can by no means be conſidered as ſufficient to eſtabliſh a juſt average; and what rather encourages the ſuſpicion that theſe particular years might be more than uſually favourable with regard to births, is, that the increaſe of births from 1780 to 1785, is unuſually ſmall [d], which would naturally take place, without ſuppoſing a ſlower progreſs than before, if the births in 1780 had been accidentally above the average.

On the whole, therefore, conſidering the probable inaccuracy of the earlier regiſters, and the very great danger of fallacy, in draw-

[a] Population Abſtract Pariſh Regiſters. Final Summary, p. 455.
[b] Obſervations on the Reſults of the Population Act, p. 9.
[c] Ibid. [d] Ibid.

ing general inferences from a few detached years, I do not think that we can depend upon any eſtimates of paſt population, founded on a calculation from the births, till after the year 1780, when every following year is given, and a juſt average of the births may be obtained. As a further confirmation of this remark, I will juſt obſerve, that in the final ſummary of the abſtracts from the regiſters of England and Wales, it appears, that in the year 1790, the total number of births was 248,774, in the year 1795, 247,218, and in 1800, 247,147 [a]. Conſequently, if we had been eſtimating the population from the births, taken at three ſeparate periods of five years, it would have appeared that the population during the laſt ten years, had been regularly decreaſing, though we have very good reaſon to believe, that it has increaſed conſiderably.

In the *Obſervations on the Reſults of the Population Act* [b], a table is given of the population of England and Wales throughout the laſt century calculated from the births; but, for the reaſons given above, little reliance can be placed on it, and for an eſtimate of the population at the revolution, I ſhould be inclined to place more dependance on the old calculations from the number of houſes.

It muſt, indeed, have appeared to the reader, in the courſe of this work, that regiſters of births or deaths, excluding any ſuſpicion of deficiencies, muſt at all times afford very uncertain data for an eſtimate of population. On account of the varying circumſtances of every country, they are both very precarious guides in this reſpect; but of the two, perhaps, the births ſtill more ſo, than the deaths; though from the greater apparent regularity of the former, political calculators have generally adopted them as the ground of their eſtimates, in preference to the latter. Necker, in eſtimating the population of France, obſerves, that an epidemick diſeaſe, or an emigration, may occaſion temporary differences in the deaths, and that

[a] Population Abſtract Pariſh Regiſters, p. 455. [b] P. 9.

therefore

therefore the number of births is the moſt certain criterion [a]. But the very circumſtance of the apparent regularity of the births in the regiſters will now and then lead into the groſſeſt errors. If in any country we can obtain regiſters of burials for two or three years together, a plague or mortal epidemick will always ſhew itſelf, from the very ſudden increaſe of the deaths during its operation, and the ſtill greater diminution of them afterwards. From theſe appearances we ſhould of courſe be directed not to include the whole of a great mortality, in any very ſhort term of years. But there would be nothing of this kind to guide us in the regiſters of births; and, after a country had loſt an eighth part of its population by a plague, an average of the five or ſix ſubſequent years would probably ſhew an increaſe in the number of births, and our calculations would give the population the higheſt at the very time that it was the loweſt. This appears very ſtrikingly, in many of Suſmilch's tables, and moſt particularly in the table for Pruſſia and Lithuania, which I have inſerted in chap. vi. of this book, where, in the year ſubſequent to the loſs of one third of the population, the births were conſiderably increaſed, and in an average of five years, but very little diminiſhed; and this, at a time, when, of courſe, the country could have made but a very ſmall progreſs towards recovering its former population.

We do not know indeed of any extraordinary mortality which has occurred in England ſince 1700; and there are reaſons for ſuppoſing that the proportions of the births and deaths to the population during the laſt century, have not experienced ſuch great variations as in many countries on the continent; at the ſame time it is certain, that the ſickly ſeaſons which are known to have occurred, would, in proportion to the degree of their fatality, produce ſimilar effects; and the change which has been obſerved in the mortality of late

[a] De l'Adminiſtration des Finances, tom. i. c. ix. p. 252. 12mo. 1785.

years, ſhould diſpoſe us to believe that ſimilar changes might formerly have taken place reſpecting the births, and ſhould inſtruct us to be extremely cautious in applying any proportions which are obſerved to be true at preſent, to paſt or future periods.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Of the Checks to Population in Scotland and Ireland.

An examination, in detail, of the ſtatiſtical account of Scotland, would furniſh numerous illuſtrations of the principle of population; but I have already extended this part of the work ſo much, that I am fearful of tiring the patience of my readers; and ſhall therefore confine my remarks in the preſent inſtance to a few circumſtances which have happened to ſtrike me.

On account of the acknowledged omiſſions in the regiſters of births, deaths, and marriages, in moſt of the pariſhes of Scotland, few juſt inferences can be drawn from them. Many give extraordinary reſults. In the pariſh of Croſsmichael [a] in Kircudbright, the mortality appears to be only 1 in 98, and the yearly marriages 1 in 192. Theſe proportions would imply the moſt unheard-of healthineſs, and the moſt extraordinary operation of the preventive check; but there can be little doubt, that they are principally occaſioned by omiſſions in the regiſtry of burials, and the celebration of a part of the marriages in other pariſhes.

In general, however, it appears from regiſters that are ſuppoſed to be accurate, that in the country pariſhes the mortality is ſmall; and that the proportions of 1 in 45, 1 in 50, and 1 in 55, are not uncommon. According to a table of the probabilities of life, calculated from the bills of mortality in the pariſh of Kettle, by Mr. Wilkie;

[a] Statiſtical Account of Scotland, vol. i. p. 167.

the expectation of an infant's life is 46.6[a], which is very high, and the proportion which dies in the firſt year is only $\frac{1}{10}$. Mr. Wilkie further adds, that, from 36 pariſh accounts, publiſhed in the firſt volume, the expectation of an infant's life appears to be 40.3. But in a table, which he has produced in the laſt volume, calculated for the whole of Scotland from Dr. Webſter's ſurvey, the expectation at birth appears to be only 31 years[b]. This, however, he thinks, muſt be too low, as it exceeds but little the calculations for the town of Edinburgh.

The Scotch regiſters appeared to be, in general, ſo incomplete, that the returns of 99 pariſhes only, are publiſhed in the Population Abſtract; and, if any judgment can be formed from theſe, they ſhew a very extraordinary degree of healthineſs, and a very ſmall proportion of births. The ſum of the population of theſe pariſhes in 1801, was 217,873[c]; the average of burials for 5 years ending in 1800, was about 3815; and of births, 4928[d]: from which it would appear that the mortality in theſe pariſhes was only 1 in 56, and the proportion of births 1 in 44. But theſe proportions are ſo extraordinary, that it is difficult to conceive, that they approach near the truth. Combining them with the calculations of Mr. Wilkie, it will not appear probable, that the proportion of deaths and births in Scotland, ſhould be ſmaller than what has been allowed for England and Wales; namely, 1 in 40 for the deaths, and 1 in 30 for the births; and it ſeems to be generally agreed that the proportion of births to deaths is 4 to 3[e].

With reſpect to the marriages, it will be ſtill more difficult to form a conjecture. They are regiſtered ſo irregularly, that no returns of them are given in the Population Abſtract. I ſhould naturally have thought, from the Statiſtical Account, that the tendency

[a] Statiſtical Account of Scotland, vol. ii. p. 407.
[b] Id. vol. xxi. p. 383.
[c] Population Abſtract, Pariſh Regiſters, p. 459.
[d] Id. p. 458.
[e] Statiſtical Account of Scotland, vol. xxi. p. 383.

to marriage in Scotland, was, upon the whole, greater than in England; but if it be true, that the births and deaths bear the ſame proportion to each other, and to the whole population, in both countries, the proportion of marriages cannot be very different. It ſhould be remarked, however, that, ſuppoſing the operation of the preventive check to be exactly the ſame, in both countries, and the climates to be equally ſalubrious, a greater degree of want and poverty would take place in Scotland, before the ſame mortality was produced as in England, owing to the ſmaller proportion of towns and manufactories in the former country than in the latter.

From a general view of the ſtatiſtical accounts, the reſult ſeems clearly to be, that the condition of the lower claſſes of people in Scotland, has been conſiderably improved of late years. The price of proviſions has riſen; but, almoſt, invariably, the price of labour has riſen in a greater proportion; and it is remarked in moſt pariſhes, that more butcher's meat is conſumed among the common people than formerly; that they are both better lodged and better clothed; and that their habits, with reſpect to cleanlineſs, are decidedly improved.

A part of this improvement is probably to be attributed to the increaſe of the preventive check. In ſome pariſhes, a habit of later marriages is noticed, and in many places, where it is not mentioned, it may be fairly inferred, from the proportions of births and marriages, and other circumſtances. The writer of the account of the pariſh of Elgin[a], in enumerating the general cauſes of depopulation in Scotland, ſpeaks of the diſcouragement to marriage from the union of farms, and the conſequent emigration of the flower of their young men of every claſs and deſcription, very few of whom ever return. Another cauſe that he mentions, is, the diſcouragement to marriage from luxury; at leaſt, he obſerves, till people are advanced in years, and then a puny race of children are produced. "Hence, how

[a] Vol. v. p. 1.

" many men of every deſcription remain ſingle, and how many " young women of every rank are never married, who, in the " beginning of this century, or even ſo late as 1745, would have " been the parents of a numerous and healthy progeny."

In thoſe parts of the country where the population has been rather diminiſhed, by the introduction of grazing, or an improved ſyſtem of huſbandry which requires fewer hands, this effect has chiefly taken place; and I have little doubt, that, in eſtimating the decreaſe of their population, ſince the end of the laſt, or the beginning of the preſent century, by the proportion of births at the different periods, they have fallen into the error which has been particularly noticed, with regard to Switzerland, and have, in conſequence, made the difference greater than it really is[a].

The general inference on this ſubject, which I ſhould draw from the different accounts is, that the marriages are rather later than formerly. There are, however, ſome decided exceptions. In thoſe pariſhes where manufactures have been introduced, which afford employment to children as ſoon as they have reached their 6th or 7th year, a habit of marrying early naturally follows; and while the manufacture continues to flouriſh and increaſe, the evil ariſing from it is not very perceptible; though humanity muſt confeſs with a ſigh, that one of the reaſons why it is not ſo perceptible, is, that room is made for freſh families, by the unnatural mortality which takes place among the children ſo employed.

There are other parts of Scotland, however, particularly the Weſtern Iſles, and ſome parts of the Highlands, where population has conſiderably increaſed from the ſubdiviſion of poſſeſſions, and where, perhaps, the marriages may be earlier than they were formerly, though not cauſed by the introduction of manufactures. Here, the

[a] One writer takes notice of this circumſtance, and obſerves, that formerly the births ſeem to have born a greater proportion to the whole population than at preſent. Probably, he ſays, more were born, and there was a greater mortality. Pariſh of Montquitter, vol. vi. p. 121.

poverty

poverty which follows is but too conſpicuous. In the account of Delting in Shetland[a], it is remarked, that the people marry very young, and are encouraged to this by their landlords, who wiſh to have as many men on their grounds as poſſible to proſecute the ling fiſhery; but that they generally involve themſelves in debt and large families. The writer further obſerves, that formerly there were ſome old regulations called country acts, by one of which, it was enacted, that no pair ſhould marry unleſs poſſeſſed of 40l. Scots, of free gear. This regulation is not now enforced. It is ſaid that theſe regulations were approved and confirmed by the parliament of Scotland, in the reign of Queen Mary, or James VI.

In the account of Breſſay Burra and Quarff in Shetland[b], it is obſerved, that the farms are very ſmall, and few have a plough. The object of the proprietors is to have as many fiſhermen on their lands as poſſible—a great obſtacle to improvements in agriculture. They fiſh for their maſters, who either give them a fee totally inadequate, or take their fiſh at a low rate. The writer remarks, that, " in moſt " countries the increaſe of population is reckoned an advantage, and " juſtly. It is, however, the reverſe, in the preſent ſtate of Shetland. " The farms are ſplit. The young men are encouraged to marry " without having any ſtock. The conſequence is poverty and diſtreſs. " It is believed that there is at preſent in theſe iſlands, double the " number of people that they can properly maintain."

The writer of the account of Auchterderran[c], in the county of Fife, ſays, that the meagre food of the labouring man is unequal to oppoſe the effects of inceſſant hard labour upon his conſtitution, and by this means his frame is worn down before the time of nature's appointment, and adds, " That people continue voluntarily to enter " upon ſuch a hard ſituation by marrying, ſhews how far the union " of the ſexes, and the love of independence, are principles of human " nature." In this obſervation, perhaps, the love of independence had better have been changed for the love of a progeny.

[a] Vol. i. p. 385. [b] Vol. x. p. 194. [c] Vol. i. p. 449.

The

The iſland of Jura[a] appears to be abſolutely overflowing with inhabitants in ſpite of conſtant and numerous emigrations. There are ſometimes 50 or 60 on a farm. The writer obſerves, that ſuch a ſwarm of inhabitants, where manufactures and many other branches of induſtry are unknown, are a very great load upon the proprietors, and uſeleſs to the ſtate.

Another writer[b] is aſtoniſhed at the rapid increaſe of population, in ſpite of a conſiderable emigration to America in 1770, and a large drain of young men during the late war. He thinks it difficult to aſſign adequate cauſes for it, and obſerves, that if the population continue to increaſe, in this manner, unleſs ſome employment be found for the people, the country will ſoon be unable to ſupport them. And in the account of the pariſh of Callander[c], the writer ſays, that the villages of this place, and other villages in ſimilar ſituations, are filled with naked and ſtarving crowds of people, who are pouring down for ſhelter or for bread; and then obſerves that whenever the population of a town or village exceeds the induſtry of its inhabitants, from that moment the place muſt decline.

A very extraordinary inſtance of a tendency to rapid increaſe, occurs in the regiſter of the pariſh of Duthil[d], in the county of Elgin; and as errors of exceſs are not ſo probable, as errors of omiſſion, it ſeems to be worthy of attention. The proportion of annual births to the whole population is as 1 to 12; of marriages, as 1 to 55; and of deaths the ſame. The births are to the deaths as 70 to 15, or $4\frac{2}{3}$ to 1. We may ſuppoſe ſome inaccuracy reſpecting the number of deaths, which ſeems to err on the ſide of defect; but the very extraordinary proportion of the annual births, amounting to $\frac{1}{12}$ of the whole population, does not ſeem to be eaſily liable to error; and the other circumſtances reſpecting the pariſh, tend to confirm the ſtatement. Out of a population of 830, there were only 3 bachelors, and

[a] Vol. xii. p. 317. [b] Pariſh of Lochalſh, county of Roſs, vol. xi. p. 422.
[c] Vol. xi. p. 574. [d] Vol. iv. p. 308.

each

each marriage yielded 7 children. Yet with all this, the population is ſuppoſed to have decreaſed conſiderably ſince 1745; and it appears, that this exceſſive tendency to increaſe, had been occaſioned by an exceſſive tendency to emigrate. The writer mentions very great emigrations; and obſerves, that whole tribes who enjoyed the comforts of life in a reaſonable degree, had of late years emigrated from different parts of Scotland, from mere humour, and a fantaſtical idea of becoming their own maſters and freeholders.

Such an extraordinary proportion of births cauſed evidently by habits of emigration, ſhews the extreme difficulty of depopulating a country merely by taking away its people. Take but away its induſtry, and the ſources of its ſubſiſtence, and it is done at once.

It may be obſerved, that in this pariſh, the average number of children to a marriage is ſaid to be 7, though, from the proportion of annual births to annual marriages, it would appear to be only $4\frac{2}{3}$. This difference occurs in many other pariſhes, from which we may conclude, that the writers of theſe accounts very judiciouſly adopted ſome other mode of calculation, than the proportion of annual births and marriages; and probably founded the reſults they give, either on perſonal inquiries, or reſearches into their regiſters, to find the number of children which had been born to each mother in the courſe of her marriage.

The women of Scotland appear to be prolifick. The average of 6 children to a marriage is frequent; and of 7, and even $7\frac{1}{2}$, not very uncommon. One inſtance is very curious, as it appears as if this number was actually living to each marriage, which would of courſe imply, that a much greater number had been, and would be, born. In the pariſh of Nigg[a], in the county of Kincardine, the account ſays, that there are 57 land families, and 405 children; which gives nearly $7\frac{1}{9}$ each; 42 fiſher families, and 314 children; nearly $7\frac{1}{2}$ each. Of the land families, which have had no chil-

[a] Vol. vii. p. 194.

dren,

dren, there were 7; of the fiſhers, none. If this ſtatement be juſt, I ſhould conceive that each marriage muſt have yielded, or would yield, in the courſe of its duration, as many as 9 or 10 births.

When, from any actual ſurvey, it appears, that there is about 3 living children to each marriage, or 5 perſons, or only $4\frac{1}{2}$ to a houſe, which are very common proportions, we muſt not infer that the average number of births to a marriage is not much above 3. We muſt recollect that all the marriages, or eſtabliſhments, of the preſent year, are of courſe without children; all of the year before, have only one; all of the year before that, can hardly be expected to have as many as two, and all of the fourth year preceding will certainly, in the natural courſe of things, have leſs than three. One out of five children is a very unuſually ſmall proportion to loſe in the courſe of ten years; and after ten years, it may be ſuppoſed that the eldeſt begin to leave their parents; ſo that if each marriage be ſuppoſed accurately to yield 5 births in the courſe of its duration, the families which had increaſed to their full complement would only have 4 children, and a very large proportion of thoſe which were in the ſtages of increaſe would have leſs than three [a]; and conſequently, taking into conſideration the number of families where one of the parents may be ſuppoſed to be dead, I much doubt, whether in this caſe, a ſurvey would give $4\frac{1}{2}$ to a family. In the pariſh of Duthil [b], already noticed, the number of children to a marriage is mentioned as 7, and the number of perſons to a houſe, as only 5.

I have taken notice of this circumſtance, to obviate an objection which might perhaps appear to ariſe from the reſult of ſuch ſurveys, to the proofs which have been adduced, that marriages are in general more prolifick than they have been uſually ſuppoſed to be. The accounts of many of the pariſhes in Scotland, which mention 6, 7, and $7\frac{1}{2}$, as the average number of children to a marriage tend very

[a] It has been calculated that, on an average, the difference of age in the children of the ſame family is about two years. [b] Vol. iv. p. 308.

ſtrongly

ſtrongly to confirm this ſuppoſition; and as in theſe ſame pariſhes, the proportion of annual births to annual marriages, is ſeldom above $3\frac{1}{2}$, 4, or $4\frac{1}{2}$, to 1; they prove at the ſame time the fallacy of this mode of eſtimating the fruitfulneſs of marriages. In thoſe pariſhes where the authors have adopted this mode, they generally mention, as might be expected, 3, $3\frac{1}{2}$, 4, and $4\frac{1}{2}$, as the average number of children to a marriage.

The poor of Scotland are in general ſupported by voluntary contributions, diſtributed under the inſpection of the miniſter of the pariſh; and it appears, upon the whole, that they have been conducted with conſiderable judgment. Having no claim of right to relief, and the ſupplies, from the mode of their collection, being neceſſarily uncertain, and never abundant, the poor have conſidered them merely as a laſt reſource in caſes of extreme diſtreſs, and not as a fund on which they might ſafely rely, and an adequate portion of which belonged to them by the laws of their country, in all difficulties.

The conſequence of this is, that the common people make very conſiderable exertions to avoid the neceſſity of applying for ſuch a ſcanty and precarious relief. It is obſerved, in many of the accounts, that they ſeldom fail of making a proviſion for ſickneſs and for age; and in general, the grown-up children and relations of perſons, who are in danger of falling upon the pariſh, ſtep forward, if they be in any way able, to prevent ſuch a degradation, which is univerſally conſidered as a diſgrace to the family.

The writers of the accounts of the different pariſhes, frequently reprobate, in very ſtrong terms, the ſyſtem of Engliſh aſſeſſments for the poor, and give a decided preference to the Scotch mode of relief. In the account of Paiſley [a], though a manufacturing town, and with a numerous poor, the author ſtill reprobates the Engliſh ſyſtem, and makes an obſervation on this ſubject, in which, perhaps, he goes too

[a] Vol. vii. p. 74.

ſar. He ſays, that though there are in no country ſuch large contributions for the poor as in England, yet there is no where ſo great a number of them; and their condition, in compariſon of *the poor of other countries, is truly moſt miſerable.*

In the account of Caerlaverock[a], in anſwer to the queſtion, How ought the poor to be ſupplied? it is moſt judiciouſly remarked, "that diſtreſs and poverty multiply in proportion to the funds "created to relieve them; that the meaſures of charity ought to "remain inviſible, till the moment when it is neceſſary that they "ſhould be diſtributed; that in the country pariſhes of Scotland, "in general, ſmall occaſional voluntary collections are ſufficient; "that the legiſlature has no occaſion to interfere to augment the "ſtream which is already copious enough; in fine, that the eſtabliſh-"ment of a poors rate would not only be unneceſſary, but hurtful, "as it would tend to oppreſs the landholder, without bringing "relief on the poor."

Theſe, upon the whole, appear to be the prevailing opinions of the clergy of Scotland. There are, however, ſome exceptions; and the ſyſtem of aſſeſſments is ſometimes approved, and the eſtabliſhment of it propoſed. But this is not to be wondered at. In many of theſe pariſhes, the experiment had never been made; and without being thoroughly aware of the principle of population, from theory, or having fully ſeen the evils of poor laws, in practice, nothing ſeems, on a firſt view of the ſubject, more natural, than the propoſal of an aſſeſſment, to which the uncharitable, as well as the charitable, ſhould be made to contribute, according to their abilities, and which might be increaſed or diminiſhed, according to the wants of the moment.

The endemick and epidemick diſeaſes in Scotland, fall chiefly, as is uſual, on the poor. The ſcurvy is in ſome places extremely troubleſome and inveterate; and in others it ariſes to a contagious leproſy,

[a] Vol. vi. p. 21.

the

the effects of which are always dreadful, and not unfrequently mortal. One writer calls it the ſcourge and bane of human nature[a]. It is generally attributed to cold and wet ſituations, meagre and unwholeſome food, impure air from damp and crowded houſes, indolent habits, and the want of attention to cleanlineſs.

To the ſame cauſes, in great meaſure, are attributed the rheumatiſms which are general, and the conſumptions which are frequent among the common people. Whenever, in any place, from particular circumſtances, the condition of the poor has been rendered worſe, theſe diſorders, particularly the latter, have been obſerved to prevail with greater force.

Low nervous fevers, and others of a more violent and fatal nature, are frequently epidemick, and ſometimes take off conſiderable numbers; but the moſt fatal epidemick, ſince the extinction of the plague, which formerly viſited Scotland, is the ſmall-pox, the returns of which, are, in many places, at regular intervals; in others, irregular, but ſeldom at a greater diſtance than 7 or 8 years. Its ravages are dreadful, though in ſome pariſhes not ſo fatal as they were ſome time ago. The prejudices againſt inoculation are ſtill great; and as the mode of treatment muſt almoſt neceſſarily be bad, in ſmall and crowded houſes, and the cuſtom of viſiting each other during the diſorder ſtill ſubſiſts in many places, it may be imagined that the mortality muſt be conſiderable, and the children of the poor the principal ſufferers. In ſome pariſhes of the Weſtern Iſles, and the Highlands, the number of perſons to a houſe has increaſed from $4\frac{1}{2}$, and 5, to $6\frac{1}{2}$, and 7. It is evident, that if ſuch a conſiderable increaſe, without the proper accommodations for it, do not abſolutely generate the diſeaſe, it muſt give to its devaſtations tenfold force when it arrives.

Scotland has at all times been ſubject to years of ſcarcity, and occaſionally even to dreadful famines. The years 1635, 1680, 1688,

[a] Pariſhes of Forbes and Kearn, County of Aberdeen, vol. xi. p. 189.

the concluding years of the laſt century, the years 1740, 1756, 1766, 1778, 1782, and 1783, are all mentioned in different places, as years of very great ſufferings from want. In the year 1680, ſo many families periſhed from this cauſe, that, for ſix miles, in a well-inhabited extent, there was not a ſmoke remaining[a]. The ſeven years at the end of the laſt century were called the ill years. The writer of the account of the pariſh of Montquhitter[b], ſays, that of 16 families on a farm in that neighbourhood, 13 were extinguiſhed; and on another, out of 169 individuals, only 3 families, the proprietors included, ſurvived. Extenſive farms, now containing a hundred ſouls, being entirely deſolated, were converted into a ſheep walk. The inhabitants of the pariſh in general were diminiſhed by death to one half, or as ſome affirm to one fourth, of the preceding number. Until 1709 many farms were waſte. In 1740, another ſeaſon of ſcarcity occurred, and the utmoſt miſery was felt by the poor, though it fell ſhort of death. Many offered in vain to ſerve for their bread. Stout men accepted thankfully twopence a day in full for their work. Great diſtreſs was alſo ſuffered in 1782 and 1783, but none died. "If, at "this critical period," the author ſays, "the American war had not "ceaſed; if the copious magazines, particularly of peaſe, provided "for the navy, had not been brought to ſale, what a ſcene of deſo-"lation and horror would have been exhibited in this country!"

Many ſimilar deſcriptions occur in different parts of the Statiſtical Account; but theſe will be ſufficient to ſhew the nature and intenſity of the diſtreſs which has been occaſionally felt from want.

The year 1783 depopulated ſome parts of the Highlands, and is mentioned as the reaſon why in theſe places the number of people was found to have diminiſhed ſince Dr. Webſter's ſurvey. Moſt of the ſmall farmers in general, as might be expected, were abſolutely ruined by the ſcarcity; and thoſe of this deſcription, in the Highlands, were obliged to emigrate to the Lowlands as common

[a] Pariſh of Duthil, vol. iv. p. 308. [b] Vol. vi. p. 121.

labourers,

labourers[a], in ſearch of a precarious ſupport. In ſome pariſhes at the time of the laſt ſurvey, the effect of the ruin of the farmers during this bad year, was ſtill viſible in their depreſſed condition, and the increaſed poverty and miſery of the common people which is a neceſſary conſequence of it.

In the account of the pariſh of Grange[b], in the county of Banff, it is obſerved, that the year 1783 put a ſtop to all improvements by green crops, and made the farmers think of nothing but raiſing grain. Tenants were moſt of them ruined. Before this period, conſumptions were not near ſo frequent as they have been ſince. This may be juſtly attributed to the effects of the ſcarcity and bad victual in the year 1783, to the long inclement harveſts in 1782 and 1787, in both which ſeaſons, the labourers were expoſed to much cold and wet during the three months that the harveſts continued; but principally to the change that has of late taken place in the manner of living among the lower ranks. Formerly every houſeholder could command a draught of ſmall beer, and killed a ſheep now and then, out of his own little flock; but now the caſe is different. The frequent want of the neceſſaries of life among the poor, their damp and ſtinking houſes, and dejection of mind among the middling claſſes, appear to be the principal cauſes of the prevailing diſtempers, and mortality of this pariſh. Young people are cut off by conſumptions, and the more advanced by dropſies and nervous fevers.

The ſtate of this pariſh, which, though there are others like it, may be conſidered as an exception to the average ſtate of Scotland, was, without doubt, occaſioned by the ruin of the tenants; and the effect is not to be wondered at, as no greater evil can eaſily happen to a country, than the loſs of agricultural ſtock and capital.

We may obſerve, that the diſeaſes of this pariſh are ſaid to have increaſed, in conſequence of the ſcarcity and bad victual of 1783. The ſame circumſtance is noticed in many other pariſhes, and it is

[a] Pariſh of Kincardine, County of Roſs, vol. iii. p. 505. [b] Vol. ix. p. 550.

remarked,

remarked, that though few people died of abſolute famine, yet that mortal diſeaſes almoſt univerſally followed.

It is remarked, alſo, in ſome pariſhes, that the number of births and marriages are affected by years of ſcarcity and plenty.

Of the pariſh of Dingwall [a], in the county of Roſs, it is obſerved, that, after the ſcarcity of 1783, the births were 16 below the average, and 14 below the loweſt number of late years. The year 1787 was a year of plenty, and the following year the births increaſed in a ſimilar proportion, and were 17 above the average, and 11 above the higheſt of the other years.

In the account of Dunroſſneſs [b], in Orkney, the writer ſays, that the annual number of marriages depends much on the ſeaſons. In good years they may amount to thirty or upwards; but when crops fail, will hardly come up to the half of that number.

The whole increaſe of Scotland ſince the time of Dr. Webſter's ſurvey in 1755, is about 260,000 [c], for which a proportionate proviſion has been made in the improved ſtate of agriculture and manufactures, and in the increaſed cultivation of potatoes, which in ſome places form two-thirds of the diet of the common people. It has been calculated that the half of the ſurplus of births in Scotland is drawn off in emigrations; and it cannot be doubted that this drain tends greatly to relieve the country, and to improve the condition of thoſe which remain. Scotland is certainly ſtill overpeopled, but not ſo much as it was a century or half a century ago, when it contained fewer inhabitants.

The details of the population of Ireland are but little known. I ſhall only obſerve, therefore, that the extended uſe of potatoes, has allowed of a very rapid increaſe of it during the laſt century. But the cheapneſs of this nouriſhing root, and the ſmall piece of ground,

[a] Vol. iii. p. 1. [b] Vol. vii. p. 391.

[c] According to the returns in the late eſtimate, the whole population of Scotland is above 1,590,000, and therefore the increaſe up to the preſent time is above 320,000.

which, under this kind of cultivation, will, in average years, produce the food for a family, joined to the ignorance and barbariſm of the people, which have prompted them to follow their inclinations with no other proſpect than an immediate bare ſubſiſtence, have encouraged marriage to ſuch a degree, that the population is puſhed much beyond the induſtry and preſent reſources of the country; and the conſequence naturally is, that the lower claſſes of people are in the moſt depreſſed and miſerable ſtate. The checks to the population are of courſe chiefly of the poſitive kind, and ariſe from the diſeaſes occaſioned by ſqualid poverty, by damp and wretched cabins, by bad and inſufficient clothing, by the filth of their perſons, and occaſional want. To theſe poſitive checks, have, of late years, been added the vice and miſery of inteſtine commotion, of civil war, and of martial law.

All the checks to population which have been obſerved to prevail in ſociety, in the courſe of this review of it, are clearly reſolvable into moral reſtraint, vice, and miſery.

CHAP. XI.

General deductions from the preceding view of Society.

THAT the checks, which have been mentioned, are the true cauſes of the ſlow increaſe of population, and that theſe checks reſult principally from an inſufficiency of ſubſiſtence, will be evident from the comparatively rapid increaſe, which has invariably taken place, whenever, by ſome ſudden enlargement in the means of ſubſiſtence, theſe checks have been in any conſiderable degree removed.

It has been univerſally remarked, that all new colonies, ſettled in healthy countries, where room and food were abundant, have conſtantly made a rapid progreſs in population. Many of the colonies from antient Greece, in the courſe of one or two centuries, appear to have rivalled, and even ſurpaſſed, their mother cities. Syracuſe and Agrigentum in Sicily; Tarentum and Locri in Italy; Epheſus and Miletus in Leſſer Aſia; were, by all accounts, at leaſt equal to any of the cities of antient Greece [a]. All theſe colonies had eſtabliſhed themſelves in countries inhabited by ſavage and barbarous nations, which eaſily gave place to the new ſettlers, who had of courſe plenty of good land. It is calculated that the Iſraelites, though they increaſed very ſlowly, while they were wandering in the land of Canaan, on ſettling in a fertile diſtrict of Egypt, doubled their numbers every fifteen years during the whole period of their ſtay [b]. But not to dwell on remote inſtances, the European ſettlements in America,

[a] Smith's Wealth of Nations, vol. ii. p. 360.
[b] Short's New Obſerv. on Bills of Mortality, p. 259, 8vo. 1750.

bear

bear ample teſtimony to the truth of a remark, that has never, I believe, been doubted. Plenty of rich land, to be had for little or nothing, is ſo powerful a cauſe of population, as generally to overcome all obſtacles.

No ſettlements could eaſily have been worſe managed than thoſe of Spain, in Mexico, Peru, and Quito. The tyranny, ſuperſtition, and vices, of the mother country, were introduced in ample quantities among her children. Exorbitant taxes were exacted by the crown; the moſt arbitrary reſtrictions were impoſed on their trade; and the governors were not behind hand, in rapacity and extortion for themſelves as well as their maſter. Yet under all theſe difficulties, the colonies made a quick progreſs in population. The city of Quito, which was but a hamlet of Indians, is repreſented by Ulloa as containing fifty or ſixty thouſand inhabitants above fifty years ago [a]. Lima, which was founded ſince the conqueſt, is mentioned by the ſame author, as equally or more populous, before the fatal earthquake in 1746. Mexico is ſaid to contain a hundred thouſand inhabitants, which, notwithſtanding the exaggerations of the Spaniſh writers, is ſuppoſed to be five times greater than what it contained in the time of Montezuma [b].

In the Portugueſe colony of Brazil, governed with almoſt equal tyranny, there were ſuppoſed to be, above thirty years ago, ſix hundred thouſand inhabitants of European extraction [c].

The Dutch and French colonies, though under the government of excluſive companies of merchants, which, as Dr. Smith juſtly obſerves, is the worſt of all poſſible governments, ſtill perſiſted in thriving under every diſadvantage [d].

But the Engliſh North American colonies, now the powerful people of the United States of America, far outſtripped all the others, in the progreſs of their population. To the quantity of rich land,

[a] Voy. d'Ulloa, tom. i. liv. v. ch. v. p. 229. 4to. 1752. [b] Smith's Wealth of Nations, vol. ii. b. iv. ch. vii. p. 363. [c] Id. p. 365. [d] Id. p. 368, 369.

 which

which they poſſeſſed in common with the Spaniſh and Portugueſe colonies, they added a greater degree of liberty and equality. Though not without ſome reſtrictions on their foreign commerce, they were allowed the liberty of managing their own internal affairs. The political inſtitutions which prevailed, were favourable to the alienation and diviſion of property. Lands, which were not cultivated by the proprietor within a limited time, were declared grantable to any other perſon. In Penſylvania, there was no right of primogeniture; and, in the provinces of New England, the eldeſt ſon had only a double ſhare. There were no tythes in any of the States, and ſcarcely any taxes. And an account of the extreme cheapneſs of good land, a capital could not be more advantageouſly employed than in agriculture, which, at the ſame time that it affords the greateſt quantity of healthy work, ſupplies the moſt valuable produce to the ſociety.

The conſequence of theſe favourable circumſtances united, was, a rapidity of increaſe almoſt without parallel in hiſtory. Throughout all the northern provinces the population was found to double itſelf in 25 years. The original number of perſons which had ſettled in the four provinces of New England in 1643 was 21,200. Afterwards, it was calculated, that more left them than went to them. In the year 1760, they were increaſed to half a million. They had, therefore, all along, doubled their number in 25 years. In New Jerſey, the period of doubling appeared to be 22 years; and in Rhode Iſland ſtill leſs. In the back ſettlements, where the inhabitants applied themſelves ſolely to agriculture, and luxury was not known, they were ſuppoſed to double their number in fifteen years. Along the ſea-coaſt, which would naturally be firſt inhabited, the period of doubling was about 35 years, and in ſome of the maritime towns the population was abſolutely at a ſtand[a]. From the late cenſus made

[a] Price's Obſerv. on Reverſ. Paym. vol. i. p. 282, 283, and vol. ii. p. 260. I have lately had an opportunity of ſeeing ſome extracts from the ſermon of Dr. Styles, from

made in America, it appears, that, taking all the States together, they have ſtill continued to double their numbers every 25 years; and, as the whole population is now ſo great, as not to be materially affected by the emigrations from Europe; and as it is known, that in ſome of the towns, and diſtricts near the ſea-coaſt, the progreſs of population has been comparatively ſlow; it is evident, that in the interior of the country, in general, the period of doubling from procreation only, muſt have been conſiderably leſs than 25 years.

The population of the United States of America, according to the late cenſus, is 5,172,312[a]. We have no reaſon to believe that Great Britain is leſs populous, at preſent, for the emigration of the ſmall

from which Dr. Price has taken theſe facts. Speaking of Rhode Iſland, Dr. Styles ſays, that though the period of doubling for the whole colony is 25 years, yet that it is different in different parts, and within land is 20 and 15 years. The five towns of Glouceſter, Situate, Coventry, Weſtgreenwich, and Exeter, were 5033, A.D. 1748, and 6986 A.D. 1755; which implies a period of doubling of 15 years only. He mentions afterwards that the county of Kent doubles in 20 years; and the county of Providence in 18 years.

I have alſo lately ſeen a paper of *Facts and calculations reſpecting the population of the United States*, which makes the period of doubling for the whole of the States, ſince their firſt ſettlement, only 20 years. I know not of what authority this paper is; but, far as it goes upon publick facts and enumerations, I ſhould think, that it muſt be to be depended on. One period is very ſtriking. From a return to Congreſs in 1782, the population appeared to be 2,389,300, and in the cenſus of 1790, 4,000,000: increaſe in 9 years, 1,610,700: from which deduct ten thouſand per annum for European ſettlers, which will be 90,000; and allow for their increaſe at 5 per cent. for 4½ years, which will be 20,250: the remaining increaſe during theſe 9 years, from procreation only, will be 1,500,450, which is very nearly 7 per cent.; and conſequently the period of doubling at this rate would be leſs than 16 years.

If this calculation for the whole population of the States be in any degree near the truth, it cannot be doubted, that, in particular diſtricts, the period of doubling from procreation only, has often been leſs theſe 15 years. The period immediately ſucceeding the war was likely to be a period of very rapid increaſe.

[a] One ſmall State is mentioned as being omitted in the cenſus; and I underſtand that the population is generally conſidered at above this number. It is ſaid to approach towards 6,000,000. But ſuch vague opinions cannot of coúrſe be much relied on.

parent ſtock which produced theſe numbers. On the contrary, a certain degree of emigration is known to be favourable to the population of the mother country. It has been particularly remarked that the two Spaniſh provinces from which the greateſt number of people emigrated to America, became in conſequence more populous.

Whatever was the original number of Britiſh emigrants which increaſed ſo faſt in North America; let us aſk, Why does not an equal number produce an equal increaſe in the ſame time in Great Britain? The obvious reaſon to be aſſigned is, the want of food; and that this want is the moſt efficient cauſe of the three great checks to population, which have been obſerved to prevail in all ſocieties, is evident, from the rapidity with which even old ſtates recover the deſolations of war, peſtilence, famine, and the convulſions of nature. They are then, for a ſhort time, placed a little in the ſituation of new colonies, and the effect is always anſwerable to what might be expected. If the induſtry of the inhabitants be not deſtroyed, ſubſiſtence will ſoon increaſe beyond the wants of the reduced numbers; and the invariable conſequence will be, that population, which before, perhaps, was nearly ſtationary, will begin immediately to increaſe, and will continue its progreſs till the former population is recovered.

The fertile province of Flanders, which has been ſo often the ſeat of the moſt deſtructive wars, after a reſpite of a few years, has always appeared as rich and as populous as ever. The undiminiſhed population of France, which has before been noticed, is an inſtance very ſtrongly in point. The tables of Suſmilch afford continual proofs of a very rapid increaſe, after great mortalities; and the table for Pruſſia and Lithuania, which I have inſerted [a], is particularly ſtriking in this reſpect. The effects of the dreadful plague in London, in 1666, were not perceptible 15 or 20 years afterwards.

[a] See p. 253.

It

It may even be doubted, whether Turkey and Egypt are, upon an average, much leſs populous for the plagues which periodically lay them waſte. If the number of people which they contain be conſiderably leſs now, than formerly, it is rather to be attributed to the tyranny and oppreſſion of the governments under which they groan, and the conſequent diſcouragements to agriculture, than to the loſſes which they ſuſtain by the plague. The traces of the moſt deſtructive famines in China, Indoſtan, Egypt, and other countries, are by all accounts very ſoon obliterated; and the moſt tremendous convulſions of nature, ſuch as volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, if they do not happen ſo frequently as to drive away the inhabitants, or deſtroy their ſpirit of induſtry, have been found to produce but a trifling effect on the average population of any ſtate.

It has appeared from the regiſters of different countries which have already been produced, that the progreſs of their population is checked by the periodical, though irregular, returns of plagues and ſickly ſeaſons. Dr. Short, in his curious reſearches into bills of mortality, often uſes the expreſſion of "terrible correctives of the redundance of mankind [a];" and in a table of all the plagues, peſtilences, and famines, of which he could collect accounts, ſhews the conſtancy and univerſality of their operation.

The epidemical years in his table, or the years in which the plague or ſome great and waſting epidemick prevailed, for ſmaller ſickly ſeaſons, ſeem not to be included, are 431 [b], of which 32 were before the Chriſtian æra [c]. If we divide, therefore, the years of the preſent æra by 399, it will appear, that the periodical returns of ſuch epidemicks, to ſome country that we are acquainted with, have been on an average only at the interval of about 4½ years.

Of the 254 great famines and dearths, enumerated in the table, 15 were before the Chriſtian æra [d], beginning with that which occurred in Paleſtine, in the time of Abraham. If, ſubtracting theſe

[a] New Obſerv. on Bills of Mortality, p. 96.
[b] Hiſt. of Air, Seaſons, &c. vol. ii. p. 366.
[c] Id. vol. ii. p. 202.
[d] Id. vol. ii. p. 206.

15, we

15, we divide the years of the preſent æra by the remainder, it will appear that the average interval between the viſits of this dreadful ſcourge has been only about 7 ½ years.

How far theſe "terrible correctives to the redundance of man-"kind," have been occaſioned by the too rapid increaſe of population, is a point which it would be very difficult to determine with any degree of preciſion. The cauſes of moſt of our diſeaſes appear to us to be ſo myſterious, and probably are really ſo various, that it would be raſhneſs to lay too much ſtreſs on any ſingle one: but it will not, perhaps, be too much to ſay, that, *among* theſe cauſes, we ought certainly to rank crowded houſes, and inſufficient or unwholeſome food, which are the natural conſequences of an increaſe of population, faſter, than the accommodations of a country, with reſpect to habitations and food, will allow.

Almoſt all the hiſtories of epidemicks which we have, tend to confirm this ſuppoſition, by deſcribing them in general as making their principal ravages among the lower claſſes of people. In Dr. Short's tables, this circumſtance is frequently mentioned[a]; and it further appears, that a very conſiderable proportion of the epidemick years, either followed, or were accompanied by ſeaſons of dearth and bad food[b]. In other places he alſo mentions great plagues as diminiſhing particularly the numbers of the lower or ſervile ſort of people[c]; and, in ſpeaking of different diſeaſes, he obſerves, that thoſe which are occaſioned by bad and unwholeſome food, generally laſt the longeſt[d].

We know, from conſtant experience, that fevers are generated in our jails, our manufactories, our crowded workhouſes, and in the narrow and cloſe ſtreets of our large towns; all which ſituations appear to be ſimilar in their effects to ſqualid poverty: and we cannot doubt that cauſes of this kind, aggravated in degree, contributed to the production and prevalence of thoſe great and waſting plagues

[a] Hiſt. of Air, Seaſons, &c. vol. ii. p. 206. et ſeq. [b] Ibid. and p. 366.
[c] New Obſerv. p. 125. [d] Id. p. 108.

formerly

formerly ſo common in Europe, but which now, from the mitigation of theſe cauſes, are every where conſiderably abated, and in many places appear to be completely extirpated.

Of the other great ſcourge of mankind, famine, it may be obſerved, that it is not in the nature of things, that the increaſe of population ſhould abſolutely produce one. This increaſe, though rapid, is neceſſarily gradual; and as the human frame cannot be ſupported, even for a very ſhort time, without food, it is evident, that no more human beings can grow up, than there is proviſion to maintain. But though the principle of population cannot abſolutely produce a famine, it prepares the way for one in the moſt complete manner; and, by obliging all the lower claſſes of people to ſubſiſt nearly on the ſmalleſt quantity of food that will ſupport life, turns even a ſlight deficiency from the failure of the ſeaſons into a ſevere dearth; and may be fairly ſaid, therefore, to be one of the principal cauſes of famine. Among the ſigns of an approaching dearth, Dr. Short mentions one or more years of luxuriant crops together[a]; and this obſervation is probably juſt, as we know that the general effect of years of cheapneſs and abundance is to diſpoſe a greater number of perſons to marry, and under ſuch circumſtances, the return to a year, merely of an average crop, might produce a ſcarcity.

The ſmall-pox, which at preſent may be conſidered as the moſt prevalent and fatal epidemick in Europe, is of all others, perhaps, the moſt difficult to account for, though the periods of its return are in many places regular[b]. Dr. Short obſerves, that from the hiſtories of this diſorder, it ſeems to have very little dependence upon the paſt or preſent conſtitution of the weather or ſeaſons, and that it appears epidemically at all times, and in all ſtates of the air, though not ſo frequently in a hard froſt. We know of no inſtances, I believe, of its being clearly generated under any circumſtances of ſituation. I do not mean, therefore, to inſinuate, that poverty and crowded houſes

[a] Hiſt. of Air, Seaſon, &c. vol. ii. p. 367. [b] Id. vol. ii. p. 411.

ever

ever abſolutely produced it; but I may be allowed to remark, that in thoſe places where its returns are regular, and its ravages among children, particularly among thoſe of the lower claſs, are conſiderable, it neceſſarily follows, that theſe circumſtances, in a greater degree than uſual, muſt always precede and accompany its appearance; that is, from the time of its laſt viſit, the average number of children will be increaſing, the people will, in conſequence, be growing poorer, and the houſes will be more crowded, till another viſit removes this ſuperabundant population.

In all theſe caſes, how little ſoever force we may be diſpoſed to attribute to the effects of the principle of population in the actual production of diſorders, we cannot avoid allowing their force as prediſpoſing cauſes to the reception of contagion, and as giving very great additional force to the extenſiveneſs and fatality of its ravages.

It is obſerved by Dr. Short, that a ſevere mortal epidemick is generally ſucceeded by an uncommon healthineſs, from the late diſtemper having carried off moſt of the declining worn-out conſtitutions [a]. It is probable, alſo, that another cauſe of it, may be, the greater plenty of room and food, and the conſequently ameliorated condition of the lower claſſes of the people. Sometimes, according to Dr. Short, a very fruitful year is followed by a very mortal and ſickly one, and mortal ones often ſucceeded by very fruitful, as though Nature ſought either to prevent or quickly repair the loſs by death. In general the next year after ſickly and mortal ones is prolifick in proportion to the breeders left [b].

This laſt effect we have ſeen moſt ſtrikingly exemplified in the table for Pruſſia and Lithuania [c]. And from this and other tables of Suſmilch, it alſo appears, that when the increaſing produce of a country and the increaſing demand for labour, ſo far ameliorate the condition of the labourer, as greatly to encourage marriage, the cuſtom of early marriages is generally continued, till the population has gone beyond the increaſed produce, and ſickly ſeaſons appear to be

[a] Hiſt. of Air, Weather, &c. vol. ii. p. 344. [b] New Obſerv. p. 191. [c] p. 253.

the natural and neceſſary conſequence. The continental regiſters exhibit many inſtances of rapid increaſe, interrupted in this manner by mortal diſeaſes, and the inference ſeems to be, that thoſe countries where ſubſiſtence is increaſing ſufficiently to encourage population, but not to anſwer all its demands, will be more ſubject to periodical epidemicks, than thoſe where the increaſe of population is more nearly accommodated to the average produce.

The converſe of this will of courſe be true. In thoſe countries which are ſubject to periodical ſickneſſes, the increaſe of population, or the exceſs of births above the deaths, will be greater, in the intervals of theſe periods, than is uſual in countries not ſo much ſubject to theſe diſeaſes. If Turkey and Egypt have been nearly ſtationary in their average population for the laſt century, in the intervals of their periodical plagues, the births muſt have exceeded the deaths in a much greater proportion than in ſuch countries as France and England.

It is for theſe reaſons, that no eſtimates of future population or depopulation, formed from any exiſting rate of increaſe or decreaſe, can be depended upon. Sir William Petty calculated that, in the year 1800, the city of London would contain 5,359,000 [a] inhabitants, inſtead of which, it does not now contain a fifth part of that number. And Mr. Eton has lately propheſied the extinction of the population of the Turkiſh empire in another century [b]; an event which will, as certainly, fail of taking place. If America were to continue increaſing at the ſame rate as at preſent, for the next 150 years, her population would exceed the population of China; but though prophecies are dangerous, I will venture to ſay, that ſuch an increaſe will not take place in that time, though it may perhaps in five or ſix hundred years.

Europe was, without doubt, formerly more ſubject to plagues and waſting epidemicks than at preſent, and this will account, in great

[a] Political Arithmetick, p. 17. [b] Survey of the Turkiſh Empire, c. vii. p. 281.

measure, for the greater proportion of births to deaths in former times, mentioned by many authors, as it has always been a common practice, to estimate these proportions from too short periods, and generally to reject the years of plague as accidental.

The highest average proportion of births to deaths in England may be considered as about 12 to 10, or 120 to 100. The proportion in France for ten years, ending in 1780, was about 115 to 100[a]. Though these proportions have undoubtedly varied, at different periods, during the last century, yet we have reason to think that they have not varied in any very considerable degree; and it will appear, therefore, that the population of France and England has accommodated itself more nearly to the average produce of each country than many other states. The operation of the preventive check, vicious manners, wars, the silent, though certain, destruction of life in large towns and manufactories, and the close habitations and insufficient food of many of the poor, prevent population from outrunning the means of subsistence; and if I may use an expression, which certainly at first appears strange, supersede the necessity of great and ravaging epidemicks to destroy what is redundant. If a wasting plague were to sweep off two millions in England, and six millions in France, it cannot be doubted, that after the inhabitants had recovered from the dreadful shock, the proportion of births to deaths would rise much above the usual average in either country during the last century[b].

In New Jersey the proportion of births to deaths, on an average of 7 years, ending 1743, was 300 to 100. In France and England, the highest average proportion cannot be reckoned at more than 120 to 100. Great and astonishing as this difference is, we ought not to be so wonder-struck at it, as to attribute it to the miraculous interposition of heaven. The causes of it are not remote, latent, and

[a] Necker de l'Administration des Finances, tom. i. c. ix. p. 255.

[b] This remark has been, to a certain degree, verified of late in France, by the increase of births which has taken place since the revolution.

mysterious,

mysterious, but near us, round about us, and open to the investigation of every inquiring mind. It accords with the most liberal spirit of philosophy to believe, that not a stone can fall, or plant rise, without the immediate agency of divine power. But we know, from experience, that these operations of what we call nature, have been conducted almost invariably according to fixed laws. And since the world began, the causes of population and depopulation have been probably as constant as any of the laws of nature with which we are acquainted.

The passion between the sexes has appeared in every age to be so nearly the same, that it may always be considered, in algebraic language, as a given quantity. The great law of necessity, which prevents population from increasing in any country beyond the food which it can either produce or acquire, is a law, so open to our view, so obvious and evident to our understandings, that we cannot for a moment doubt it. The different modes which nature takes to repress a redundant population, do not appear indeed to us so certain and regular; but though we cannot always predict the mode, we may with certainty predict the fact. If the proportion of the births to the deaths for a few years, indicate an increase of numbers much beyond the proportional increased or acquired food of the country, we may be perfectly certain, that unless an emigration take place, the deaths will shortly exceed the births, and that the increase that had been observed for a few years, cannot be the real average increase of the population of the country. If there were no other depopulating causes, and if the preventive check did not operate very strongly, every country would, without doubt, be subject to periodical plagues or famines.

The only true criterion of a real and permanent increase in the population of any country, is the increase of the means of subsistence. But even this criterion is subject to some slight variations, which however are completely open to our observation. In some countries population seems to have been forced; that is, the people have been

habituated, by degrees, to live almoſt upon the ſmalleſt poſſible quantity of food. There muſt have been periods in ſuch countries when population increaſed permanently without an increaſe in the means of ſubſiſtence. China, India, and the countries poſſeſſed by the Bedoween Arabs, as we have ſeen in the former part of this work, appear to anſwer to this deſcription. The average produce of theſe countries ſeems to be but barely ſufficient to ſupport the lives of the inhabitants, and of courſe any deficiency from the badneſs of the ſeaſons muſt be fatal. Nations in this ſtate muſt neceſſarily be ſubject to famines.

In America, where the reward of labour is at preſent ſo liberal, the lower claſſes might retrench very conſiderably in a year of ſcarcity, without materially diſtreſſing themſelves. A famine, therefore, ſeems to be almoſt impoſſible. It may be expected, that in the progreſs of the population of America, the labourers will in time be much leſs liberally rewarded. The numbers will in this caſe permanently increaſe without a proportional increaſe in the means of ſubſiſtence.

In the different countries of Europe, there muſt be ſome variations in the proportion of the number of inhabitants, and the quantity of food conſumed, ariſing from the different habits of living which prevail in each ſtate. The labourers of the South of England are ſo accuſtomed to eat fine wheaten bread, that they will ſuffer themſelves to be half-ſtarved, before they will ſubmit to live like the Scotch peaſants. They might, perhaps, in time, by the conſtant operation of the hard law of neceſſity, be reduced to live, even like the lower claſſes of the Chineſe, and the country would then, with the ſame quantity of food, ſupport a greater population. But to effect this, muſt always be a difficult, and every friend to humanity will hope, an abortive attempt.

I have mentioned ſome caſes where population may permanently increaſe, without a proportional increaſe in the means of ſubſiſtence. But it is evident, that the variation in different ſtates, between the food, and the numbers ſupported by it, is reſtricted to a limit

beyond which it cannot paſs. In every country, the population of which is not abſolutely decreaſing, the food muſt be neceſſarily ſufficient to ſupport and to continue the race of labourers.

Other circumſtances being the ſame, it may be affirmed, that countries are populous according to the quantity of human food which they produce, or can acquire; and happy, according to the liberality with which this food is divided, or the quantity which a day's labour will purchaſe. Corn countries are more populous than paſture countries; and rice countries more populous than corn countries. But their happineſs does not depend either upon their being thinly or fully inhabited, upon their poverty or their riches, their youth or their age; but on the proportion which the population and the food bear to each other. This proportion is generally the moſt favourable in new colonies, where the knowledge and induſtry of an old ſtate, operate on the fertile unappropriated land of a new one. In other caſes the youth, or the age, of a ſtate is not, in this reſpect, of great importance. It is probable that the food of Great Britain is divided in more liberal ſhares to her inhabitants at the preſent period, than it was, two thouſand, three thouſand, or four thouſand years ago. And it has appeared that the poor and thinly-inhabited tracts of the Scotch Highlands are more diſtreſſed by a redundant population, than the moſt populous parts of Europe.

If a country were never to be over-run by a people more advanced in arts, but left to its own natural progreſs in civilization; from the time that its produce might be conſidered as an unit, to the time that it might be conſidered as a million, during the lapſe of many thouſand years, there would not be a ſingle period, when the maſs of the people could be ſaid to be free from diſtreſs, either directly or indirectly, for want of food. In every ſtate in Europe, ſince we have firſt had accounts of it, millions and millions of human exiſtences have been repreſſed from this ſimple cauſe, though perhaps, in ſome of theſe ſtates, an abſolute famine may never have been known.

Famine ſeems to be the laſt, the moſt dreadful reſource of nature. The power of population is ſo ſuperior to the power in the earth to produce ſubſiſtence for man, that, unleſs arreſted by the preventive check, premature death muſt in ſome ſhape or other viſit the human race. The vices of mankind are active and able miniſters of depopulation. They are the precurſors in the great army of deſtruction, and often finiſh the dreadful work themſelves. But ſhould they fail in this war of extermination, ſickly ſeaſons, epidemicks, peſtilence, and plague, advance in terrifick array, and ſweep off their thouſands and ten thouſands. Should ſucceſs be ſtill incomplete, gigantick inevitable famine ſtalks in the rear, and, with one mighty blow, levels the population with the food of the world.

Muſt it not then be acknowledged, by an attentive examiner of the hiſtories of mankind, that, in every age, and in every ſtate, in which man has exiſted, or does now exiſt,

The increaſe of population is neceſſarily limited by the means of ſubſiſtence.

Population invariably increaſes when the means of ſubſiſtence increaſe, unleſs prevented by powerful and obvious checks.

Theſe checks, and the checks which keep the population down to the level of the means of ſubſiſtence, are, moral reſtraint, vice, and miſery.

In comparing the ſtate of ſociety which has been conſidered in this ſecond book with that which formed the ſubject of the firſt, I think it appears, that in modern Europe the poſitive checks to population prevail leſs, and the preventive checks more, than in paſt times, and in the more uncivilized parts of the world.

War, the predominant check to the population of ſavage nations, has certainly abated, even including the late unhappy revolutionary conteſts: and ſince the prevalence of a greater degree of perſonal cleanlineſs, of better modes of clearing and building towns, and of a more equable diſtribution of the products of the ſoil from improving knowledge in political economy, plagues, violent diſeaſes,

and famines, have been certainly mitigated, and have become leſs frequent.

With regard to the preventive checks to population, though it muſt be acknowledged, that moral reſtraint does not at preſent prevail much among the male part of ſociety; yet I am ſtrongly diſpoſed to believe that it prevails more than in thoſe ſtates which were firſt conſidered; and it can ſcarcely be doubted, that in modern Europe, a much larger proportion of women paſs a conſiderable part of their lives in the exerciſe of this virtue, than in paſt times and among uncivilized nations. But however this may be, taking the preventive check in its general acceptation, as implying an infrequency of the marriage union from the fear of a family, without reference to its producing vice, it may be conſidered, in this light, as the moſt powerful of the checks, which in modern Europe keep down the population to the level of the means of ſubſiſtence.

ESSAY, &c.

BOOK III.

OF THE DIFFERENT SYSTEMS OR EXPEDIENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN PROPOSED OR HAVE PREVAILED IN SOCIETY, AS THEY AFFECT THE EVILS ARISING FROM THE PRINCIPLE OF POPULATION.

CHAP. I.

Of Syſtems of Equality. Wallace. Condorcet.

To a perſon who views the paſt and preſent ſtates of mankind in the light in which they have appeared in the two preceding books, it cannot but be a matter of aſtoniſhment, that all the writers on the perfectibility of man and of ſociety, who have noticed the argument of the principle of population, treat it always very ſlightly, and invariably repreſent the difficulties ariſing from it, as at a great, and almoſt immeaſurable diſtance. Even Mr. Wallace, who thought the argument itſelf of ſo much weight, as to deſtroy his whole ſyſtem of equality, did not ſeem to be aware that any difficulty would ariſe from this cauſe, till the whole earth had been cultivated like a garden, and was incapable of any further increaſe of produce. Were this really the caſe, and were a beautiful ſyſtem of equality in other reſpects practicable, I cannot think that our ardour in the purſuit of ſuch a ſcheme ought to be damped by the contemplation

of ſo remote a difficulty. An event at ſuch a diſtance might fairly be left to providence. But the truth is, that if the view of the argument given in this eſſay be juſt, the difficulty, ſo far from being remote, would be imminent and immediate. At every period during the progreſs of cultivation, from the preſent moment to the time when the whole earth was become like a garden, the diſtreſs for want of food would be conſtantly preſſing on all mankind, if they were equal. Though the produce of the earth would be increaſing every year, population would be increaſing much faſter, and the redundancy muſt neceſſarily be checked by the periodical, or conſtant action, of moral reſtraint, vice, or miſery.

M. Condorcet's *Eſquiſſe d'un tableau hiſtorique des progrès de l'eſprit humain*, was written, it is ſaid, under the preſſure of that cruel proſcription which terminated in his death. If he had no hopes of its being ſeen during his life, and of its intereſting France in his favour, it is a ſingular inſtance of the attachment of a man to principles, which every day's experience was, ſo fatally for himſelf, contradicting. To ſee the human mind, in one of the moſt enlightened nations of the world, debaſed by ſuch a fermentation of diſguſting paſſions, of fear, cruelty, malice, revenge, ambition, madneſs, and folly, as would have diſgraced the moſt ſavage nations in the moſt barbarous age, muſt have been ſuch a tremendous ſhock to his ideas of the neceſſary and inevitable progreſs of the human mind, that nothing but the firmeſt conviction of the truth of his principles, in ſpite of all appearances, could have withſtood.

This poſthumous publication is only a ſketch of a much larger work which he propoſed ſhould be executed. It neceſſarily wants, therefore, that detail and application, which can alone prove the truth of any theory. A few obſervations will be ſufficient to ſhew how completely this theory is contradicted, when it is applied to the real and not to an imaginary ſtate of things.

In the laſt diviſion of the work, which treats of the future progreſs of man towards perfection, M. Condorcet ſays, that, comparing in

in the different civilized nations of Europe, the actual population with the extent of territory; and obſerving their cultivation, their induſtry, their diviſions of labour, and their means of ſubſiſtence, we ſhall ſee, that it would be impoſſible to preſerve the ſame means of ſubſiſtence, and conſequently the ſame population, without a number of individuals who have no other means of ſupplying their wants than their induſtry.

Having allowed the neceſſity of ſuch a claſs of men, and adverting afterwards to the precarious revenue of thoſe families that would depend ſo entirely on the life and health of their chief[a], he ſays very juſtly, "There exiſts then a neceſſary cauſe of inequality, of dependence, and even of miſery, which menaces, without ceaſing, the moſt numerous and active claſs of our ſocieties." The difficulty is juſt, and well ſtated; but his mode of removing it, will, I fear, be found totally inefficacious.

By the application of calculations to the probabilities of life, and the intereſt of money, he propoſes that a fund ſhould be eſtabliſhed, which ſhould aſſure to the old an aſſiſtance, produced in part by their own former ſavings, and in part by the ſavings of individuals, who, in making the ſame ſacrifice, die before they ~~they~~ reap the benefit of it. The ſame, or a ſimilar fund, ſhould give aſſiſtance to women and children, who loſe their huſbands or fathers; and afford a capital to thoſe who were of an age to found a new family, ſufficient for the development of their induſtry. Theſe eſtabliſhments, he obſerves, might be made in the name, and under the protection, of the ſociety. Going ſtill further, he ſays, that by the juſt application of calculations, means might be found of more completely preſerving a ſtate of equality, by preventing credit from being the excluſive privilege of great fortunes, and yet giving it a baſis equally ſolid, and by

[a] To ſave time and long quotations, I ſhall here give the ſubſtance of ſome of M. Condorcet's ſentiments, and I hope that I ſhall not miſrepreſent them; but I refer the reader to the work itſelf, which will amuſe if it do not convince him.

rendering the progreſs of induſtry and the activity of commerce, leſs dependent on great capitaliſts.

Such eſtabliſhments and calculations may appear very promiſing upon paper; but when applied to real life, they will be found to be abſolutely nugatory. M. Condorcet allows, that a claſs of people which maintains itſelf entirely by induſtry is neceſſary to every ſtate. Why does he allow this? No other reaſon can well be aſſigned, than becauſe he conceives, that the labour neceſſary to procure ſubſiſtence for an extended population, will not be performed without the goad of neceſſity. If by eſtabliſhments, upon the plans that have been mentioned, this ſpur to induſtry be removed; if the idle and negligent be placed upon the ſame footing with regard to their credit, and the future ſupport of their wives and families, as the active and induſtrious, can we expect to ſee men exert that animated activity in bettering their condition, which now forms the maſter-ſpring of publick proſperity. If an inquiſition were to be eſtabliſhed to examine the claims of each individual, and to determine whether he had, or had not, exerted himſelf to the utmoſt, and to grant or refuſe aſſiſtance accordingly, this would be little elſe than a repetition upon a larger ſcale, of the Engliſh poor laws, and would be completely deſtructive of the true principles of liberty and equality.

But independently of this great objection to theſe eſtabliſhments, and ſuppoſing, for a moment, that they would give no check to production, the greateſt difficulty remains yet behind.

Were every man ſure of a comfortable proviſion for a family, almoſt every man would have one; and were the riſing generation free from the "killing froſt" of miſery, population muſt increaſe with unuſual rapidity. Of this, M. Condorcet ſeems to be fully aware himſelf; and, after having deſcribed further improvements, he ſays,

"But in this progreſs of induſtry and happineſs, each generation "will be called to more extended enjoyments, and, in conſequence, "by the phyſical conſtitution of the human frame, to an increaſe in "the

"the number of individuals. Muſt not there arrive a period then, "when theſe laws, equally neceſſary, ſhall counteract each other? "when the increaſe of the number of men ſurpaſſing their means of "ſubſiſtence, the neceſſary reſult muſt be, either a continual dimi"nution of happineſs, and population—a movement truly retro"grade; or, at leaſt, a kind of oſcillation between good and evil? "In ſocieties arrived at this term, will not this oſcillation be a con"ſtantly ſubſiſting cauſe of periodical miſery? Will it not mark the "limit when all further amelioration will become impoſſible, and "point out that term to the perfectibility of the human race, which "it may reach in the courſe of ages, but can never paſs?" He then adds,

"There is no perſon who does not ſee how very diſtant ſuch a "period is from us. But ſhall we ever arrive at it? It is equally "impoſſible to pronounce for, or againſt, the future realization of "an event, which cannot take place but at an æra, when the "human race will have attained improvements of which we can, at "preſent, ſcarcely form a conception."

M. Condorcet's picture of what may be expected to happen, when the number of men ſhall ſurpaſs their means of ſubſiſtence, is juſtly drawn. The oſcillation which he deſcribes will certainly take place, and will, without doubt, be a conſtantly ſubſiſting cauſe of periodical miſery. The only point in which I differ from M. Condorcet in this deſcription, is, with regard to the period when it may be applied to the human race. M. Condorcet thinks that it cannot poſſibly be applicable, but at an æra extremely diſtant. If the proportion between the natural increaſe of population and food, which was ſtated in the beginning of this eſſay, and which has received conſiderable confirmation from the poverty that has been found to prevail in every ſtage and department of human ſociety, be in any degree near the truth, it will appear, on the contrary, that the period when the number of men ſurpaſs their means of ſubſiſtence, has long ſince arrived; and that this neceſſary oſcillation, this conſtantly ſubſiſting cauſe of periodical miſery, has exiſted ever ſince we have had any hiſtories

hiſtories of mankind, does exiſt at preſent, and will for ever continue to exiſt, unleſs ſome decided change take place in the phyſical conſtitution of our nature.

M. Condorcet, however, goes on to ſay, that ſhould the period which he conceives to be ſo diſtant ever arrive, the human race, and the advocates of the perfectibility of man, need not be alarmed at it. He then proceeds to remove the difficulty in a manner which I profeſs not to underſtand. Having obſerved, that the ridiculous prejudices of ſuperſtition would by that time have ceaſed to throw over morals a corrupt and degrading auſterity, he alludes either to a promiſcuous concubinage, which would prevent breeding, or to ſomething elſe as unnatural. To remove the difficulty in this way, will ſurely, in the opinion of moſt men, be, to deſtroy that virtue and purity of manners, which the advocates of equality, and of the perfectibility of man, profeſs to be the end and object of their views.

The laſt queſtion which M. Condorcet propoſes for examination, is, the organic perfectibility of man. He obſerves, that if the proofs which have been already given, and which, in their development, will receive greater force in the work itſelf, are ſufficient to eſtabliſh the indefinite perfectibility of man, upon the ſuppoſition, of the ſame natural faculties, and the ſame organization which he has at preſent; what will be the certainty, what the extent of our hopes, if this organization, theſe natural faculties themſelves, be ſuſceptible of amelioration?

From the improvement of medicine; from the uſe of more wholeſome food, and habitations; from a manner of living, which will improve the ſtrength of the body by exerciſe, without impairing it by exceſs; from the deſtruction of the two great cauſes of the degration of man, miſery, and too great riches; from the gradual removal of tranſmiſſible and contagious diſorders, by the improvement of phyſical knowledge, rendered more efficacious, by the progreſs of reaſon and of ſocial order; he infers, that though man will not abſolutely become immortal, yet that the duration between his birth, and

and natural death, will increaſe without ceaſing, will have no aſſignable term, and may properly be expreſſed by the word indefinite. He then defines this word to mean, either a conſtant approach to an unlimited extent, without ever reaching it; or, an increaſe in the immenſity of ages to an extent greater than any aſſignable quantity.

But ſurely the application of this term in either of theſe ſenſes, to the duration of human life, is in the higheſt degree unphiloſophical, and totally unwarranted by any appearances in the laws of nature. Variations from different cauſes are eſſentially diſtinct from a regular and unretrograde increaſe. The average duration of human life will, to a certain degree, vary, from healthy or unhealthy climates, from wholeſome or unwholeſome food, from virtuous or vicious manners, and other cauſes; but it may be fairly doubted, whether there has been really the ſmalleſt perceptible advance in the natural duration of human life, ſince firſt we had any authentic hiſtory of man. The prejudices of all ages have, indeed, been directly contrary to this ſuppoſition; and though I would not lay much ſtreſs upon theſe prejudices, they will in ſome meaſure tend to prove, that there has been no marked advance in an oppoſite direction.

It may perhaps be ſaid, that the world is yet ſo young, ſo completely in its infancy, that it ought not to be expected that any difference ſhould appear ſo ſoon.

If this be the caſe, there is at once an end of all human ſcience. The whole train of reaſonings from effects to cauſes will be deſtroyed. We may ſhut our eyes to the book of nature, as it will no longer be of any uſe to read it. The wildeſt and moſt improbable conjectures may be advanced with as much certainty as the moſt juſt and ſublime theories, founded on careful and reiterated experiments. We may return again to the old mode of philoſophiſing, and make facts bend to ſyſtems, inſtead of eſtabliſhing ſyſtems upon facts. The grand and conſiſtent theory of Newton, will be placed upon the ſame footing as the wild and eccentric hypotheſes of Deſcartes. In ſhort, if the laws of nature be thus fickle and inconſtant; if it

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can be affirmed, and be believed, that they will change, when for ages and ages they have appeared immutable, the human mind will no longer have any incitements to inquiry, but muſt remain fixed in inactive torpor, or amuſe itſelf only in bewildering dreams, and extravagant fancies.

The conſtancy of the laws of nature, and of effects and cauſes, is the foundation of all human knowledge; and, if without any previous obſervable ſymptoms or indications of a change, we can infer that a change will take place, we may as well make any aſſertion whatever, and think it as unreaſonable to be contradicted, in affirming that the moon will come in contact with the earth to-morrow, as in ſaying, that the ſun will riſe at its appointed time.

With regard to the duration of human life, there does not appear to have exiſted, from the earlieſt ages of the world, to the preſent moment, the ſmalleſt permanent ſymptom, or indication, of increaſing prolongation. The obſervable effects of climate, habit, diet, and other cauſes, on length of life, have furniſhed the pretext for aſſerting its indefinite extenſion; and the ſandy foundation on which the argument reſts, is, that becauſe the limit of human life is undefined; becauſe you cannot mark its preciſe term, and ſay ſo far exactly ſhall it go, and no further; that therefore its extent may increaſe for ever, and be properly termed, indefinite or unlimited. But the fallacy and abſurdity of this argument will ſufficiently appear from a ſlight examination of what M. Condorcet calls the organic perfectibility, or degeneration, of the race of plants and animals, which, he ſays, may be regarded as one of the general laws of nature.

I am told, that it is a maxim among the improvers of cattle, that you may breed to any degree of nicety you pleaſe; and they found this maxim upon another, which is, that ſome of the offſpring will poſſeſs the deſirable qualities of the parents in a greater degree. In the famous Leiceſterſhire breed of ſheep, the object is to procure them with ſmall heads and ſmall legs. Proceeding upon theſe breeding

ing maxims, it is evident, that we might go on till the heads and legs were evaneſcent quantities; but this is ſo palpable an abſurdity, that we may be quite ſure that the premiſes are not juſt, and that there really is a limit, though we cannot ſee it, or ſay exactly where it is. In this caſe, the point of the greateſt degree of improvement, or the ſmalleſt ſize of the head and legs, may be ſaid to be undefined; but this is very different from unlimited, or from indefinite, in M. Condorcet's acceptation of the term. Though I may not be able, in the preſent inſtance, to mark the limit, at which further improvement will ſtop, I can very eaſily mention a point at which it will not arrive. I ſhould not ſcruple to aſſert, that were the breeding to continue for ever, the heads and legs of theſe ſheep would never be ſo ſmall as the head and legs of a rat.

It cannot be true, therefore, that among animals, ſome of the offſpring will poſſeſs the deſirable qualities of the parents in a greater degree; or that animals are indefinitely perfectible.

The progreſs of a wild plant, to a beautiful garden flower, is perhaps more marked and ſtriking, than any thing that takes place among animals; yet even here, it would be the height of abſurdity to aſſert, that the progreſs was unlimited or indefinite. One of the moſt obvious features of the improvement is the increaſe of ſize. The flower has grown gradually larger by cultivation. If the progreſs were really unlimited, it might be increaſed ad infinitum; but this is ſo groſs an abſurdity, that we may be quite ſure, that among plants, as well as among animals, there is a limit to improvement, though we do not exactly know where it is. It is probable that the gardeners who contend for flower prizes have often applied ſtronger dreſſing without ſucceſs. At the ſame time, it would be highly preſumptuous in any man to ſay, that he had ſeen the fineſt carnation or anemone that could ever be made to grow. He might however aſſert without the ſmalleſt chance of being contradicted by a future fact, that no carnation or anemone could ever by cultivation be increaſed to the ſize of a large cabbage; and yet there are aſſignable

quantities greater than a cabbage. No man can ſay that he has ſeen the largeſt ear of wheat, or the largeſt oak that could ever grow; but he might eaſily, and with perfect certainty, name a point of magnitude, at which they would not arrive. In all theſe caſes, therefore, a careful diſtinction ſhould be made, between an unlimited progreſs, and a progreſs where the limit is merely undefined.

It will be ſaid, perhaps, that the reaſon why plants and animals cannot increaſe indefinitely in ſize, is, that they would fall by their own weight. I anſwer, how do we know this but from experience? from experience of the degree of ſtrength with which theſe bodies are formed. I know that a carnation, long before it reached the ſize of a cabbage, would not be ſupported by its ſtalk; but I only know this from my experience of the weakneſs, and want of tenacity, in the materials of a carnation ſtalk. There are many ſubſtances in nature, of the ſame ſize, that would ſupport as large a head as a cabbage.

The reaſons of the mortality of plants are at preſent perfectly unknown to us. No man can ſay why ſuch a plant is annual, another biennial, and another endures for ages. The whole affair in all theſe caſes, in plants, animals, and in the human race, is an affair of experience; and I only conclude that man is mortal, becauſe the invariable experience of all ages has proved the mortality of thoſe materials of which his viſible body is made.

"What can we reaſon but from what we know."

Sound philoſophy will not authorize me to alter this opinion of the mortality of man on earth, till it can be clearly proved, that the human race has made, and is making, a decided progreſs towards an illimitable extent of life. And the chief reaſon why I adduced the two particular inſtances from animals and plants, was, to expoſe, and illuſtrate, if I could, the fallacy of that argument, which infers an unlimited progreſs, merely becauſe ſome partial improvement has taken

taken place, and that the limit of this improvement cannot be preciſely aſcertained.

The capacity of improvement in plants and animals, to a certain degree, no perſon can poſſibly doubt. A clear and decided progreſs has already been made; and yet, I think it appears, that it would be highly abſurd to ſay, that this progreſs has no limits. In human life, though there are great variations from different cauſes, it may be doubted, whether, ſince the world began, any organic improvement whatever of the human frame can be clearly aſcertained. The foundations, therefore, on which the arguments for the organic perfectibility of man reſt, are unuſually weak, and can only be conſidered as mere conjectures. It does not, however, by any means, ſeem impoſſible, that by an attention to breed, a certain degree of improvement, ſimilar to that among animals, might take place among men. Whether intellect could be communicated may be a matter of doubt: but ſize, ſtrength, beauty, complexion, and perhaps even longevity, are in a degree tranſmiſſible. The error does not ſeem to lie, in ſuppoſing a ſmall degree of improvement poſſible, but in not diſcriminating between a ſmall improvement, the limit of which is undefined, and an improvement really unlimited. As the human race, however, could not be improved in this way, without condemning all the bad ſpecimens to celibacy, it is not probable, that an attention to breed ſhould ever become general; indeed, I know of no well-directed attempts of the kind, except in the ancient family of the Bickerſtaffs, who are ſaid to have been very ſucceſsful in whitening the ſkins, and increaſing the height of their race by prudent marriages, particularly by that very judicious croſs with Maud the milk-maid, by which ſome capital defects in the conſtitutions of the family were corrected.

It will not be neceſſary, I think, in order more completely to ſhew the improbability of any approach in man towards immortality on earth, to urge the very great additional weight that an increaſe in the duration of life would give to the argument of population.

M. Condorcet's book may be conſidered, not only as a ſketch of the opinions of a celebrated individual, but of many of the literary men in France, at the beginning of the revolution. As ſuch, though merely a ſketch, it ſeems worthy of attention.

Many, I doubt not, will think that the attempting gravely to controvert ſo abſurd a paradox, as the immortality of man on earth, or indeed, even the perfectibility of man and ſociety, is a waſte of time and words; and that ſuch unfounded conjectures are beſt anſwered by neglect. I profeſs, however, to be of a different opinion. When paradoxes of this kind are advanced by ingenious and able men, neglect has no tendency to convince them of their miſtakes. Priding themſelves on what they conceive to be a mark of the reach and ſize of their own underſtandings, of the extent and comprehenſiveneſs of their views; they will look upon this neglect merely as an indication of poverty, and narrowneſs, in the mental exertions of their contemporaries; and only think, that the world is not yet prepared to receive their ſublime truths.

On the contrary, a candid inveſtigation of theſe ſubjects, accompanied with a perfect readineſs to adopt any theory, warranted by ſound philoſophy, may have a tendency to convince them, that, in forming improbable and unfounded hypotheſes, ſo far from enlarging the bounds of human ſcience, they are contracting it; ſo far from promoting the improvement of the human mind, they are obſtructing it: they are throwing us back again almoſt into the infancy of knowledge; and weakening the foundations of that mode of philoſophiſing, under the auſpices of which, ſcience has of late made ſuch rapid advances. The late rage for wide and unreſtrained ſpeculation, ſeems to have been a kind of mental intoxication, ariſing, perhaps, from the great and unexpected diſcoveries which had been made in various branches of ſcience. To men, elate and giddy with ſuch ſucceſſes, every thing appeared to be within the graſp of human powers; and, under this illuſion, they confounded ſubjects where

no real progreſs could be proved, with thoſe, where the progreſs had been marked, certain, and acknowledged. Could they be perſuaded to ſober themſelves with a little ſevere and chaſtized thinking, they would ſee, that the cauſe of truth, and of ſound philoſophy, cannot but ſuffer, by ſubſtituting wild flights and unſupported aſſertions, for patient inveſtigation, and well authenticated proofs.

CHAP. II.

Of Syſtems of Equality. Godwin.

In reading Mr. Godwin's ingenious work on political juſtice, it is impoſſible not to be ſtruck with the ſpirit and energy of his ſtyle, the force and preciſion of ſome of his reaſonings, the ardent tone of his thoughts, and particularly with that impreſſive earneſtneſs of manner, which gives an air of truth to the whole. At the ſame time it muſt be confeſſed, that he has not proceeded in his inquiries with the caution that ſound philoſophy requires. His concluſions are often unwarranted by his premiſes. He fails ſometimes in removing objections which he himſelf brings forward. He relies too much on general and abſtract propoſitions which will not admit of application. And his conjectures certainly far outſtrip the modeſty of nature.

The ſyſtem of equality which Mr. Godwin propoſes, is, on a firſt view, the moſt beautiful and engaging of any that has yet appeared. An amelioration of ſociety to be produced merely by reaſon and conviction, gives more promiſe of permanence, than any change effected, and maintained by force. The unlimited exerciſe of private judgement, is a doctrine grand and captivating, and has a vaſt ſuperiority over thoſe ſyſtems, where every individual is in a manner the ſlave of the publick. The ſubſtitution of benevolence, as the maſterſpring and moving principle of ſociety, inſtead of ſelf-love, appears, at firſt ſight, to be a conſummation devoutly to be wiſhed. In ſhort, it is impoſſible to contemplate the whole of this fair picture without emotions of delight and admiration, accompanied with an ardent longing

longing for the period of its accompliſhment. But alas! that moment can never arrive. The whole is little better than a dream—a phantom of the imagination. Theſe "gorgeous palaces" of happineſs and immortality, theſe "ſolemn temples" of truth and virtue, will diſſolve, "like the baſeleſs fabric of a viſion," when we awaken to real life, and contemplate the genuine ſituation of man on earth.

Mr. Godwin, at the concluſion of the third chapter of his eighth book, ſpeaking of population, ſays, "There is a principle in human "ſociety, by which population is perpetually kept down to the level "of the means of ſubſiſtence. Thus, among the wandering tribes "of America and Aſia, we never find, through the lapſe of ages, that "population has ſo increaſed as to render neceſſary the cultivation "of the earth [a]." This principle, which Mr. Godwin thus mentions as ſome myſterious and occult cauſe, and which he does not attempt to inveſtigate, has appeared to be the grinding law of neceſſity—miſery, and the fear of miſery.

The great error under which Mr. Godwin labours, throughout his whole work, is, the attributing of almoſt all the vices and miſery that prevail in civil ſociety to human inſtitutions. Political regulations, and the eſtabliſhed adminiſtration of property, are, with him, the fruitful ſources of all evil, the hotbeds of all the crimes that degrade mankind. Were this really a true ſtate of the caſe, it would not ſeem an abſolutely hopeleſs taſk, to remove evil completely from the world; and reaſon ſeems to be the proper and adequate inſtrument, for effecting ſo great a purpoſe. But the truth is, that, though human inſtitutions appear to be the obvious and obtruſive cauſes of much miſchief to mankind, they are, in reality, light and ſuperficial, in compariſon with thoſe deeper-ſeated cauſes of evil which reſult from the laws of nature.

In a chapter on the benefits attendant upon a ſyſtem of equality, Mr. Godwin ſays, "The ſpirit of oppreſſion, the ſpirit of ſervility,

[a] p. 460. 8vo. 2d edit.

"and

" and the ſpirit of fraud, theſe are the immediate growth of the " eſtabliſhed adminiſtration of property. They are alike hoſtile to " intellectual improvement. The other vices of envy, malice, and " revenge, are their inſuperable companions. In a ſtate of ſociety " where men lived in the midſt of plenty, and where all ſhared " alike the bounties of nature, theſe ſentiments would inevitably " expire. The narrow principle of ſelfiſhneſs would vaniſh. No " man being obliged to guard his little ſtore, or provide with anxiety " and pain for his reſtleſs wants, each would loſe his individual " exiſtence in the thought of the general good. No man would be " an enemy to his neighbours, for they would have no ſubject of " contention; and of conſequence philanthropy would reſume the " empire which reaſon aſſigns her. Mind would be delivered from " her perpetual anxiety about corporal ſupport, and free to expa- " tiate in the field of thought which is congenial to her. Each " would aſſiſt the inquiries of all [a]."

This would indeed be a happy ſtate. But that it is merely an imaginary picture, with ſcarcely a feature near the truth, the reader, I am afraid, is already too well convinced.

Man cannot live in the midſt of plenty. All cannot ſhare alike the bounties of nature. Were there no eſtabliſhed adminiſtration of property, every man would be obliged to guard with force his little ſtore. Selfiſhneſs would be triumphant. The ſubjects of contention would be perpetual. Every individual would be under a conſtant anxiety about corporal ſupport, and not a ſingle intellect would be left free to expatiate in the field of thought.

How little Mr. Godwin has turned his attention to the real ſtate of human ſociety, will ſufficiently appear from the manner in which he endeavours to remove the difficulty of an overcharged population. He ſays, " The obvious anſwer to this objection is, that to reaſon " thus, is to foreſee difficulties at a great diſtance. Three-fourths of

[a] Political Juſtice, b. viii. c. iii. p. 458.

" the

" the habitable globe is now uncultivated. The parts already culti- " vated are capable of immeaſurable improvement. Myriads of cen- " turies of ſtill increaſing population may paſs away, and the earth " be ſtill found ſufficient for the ſubſiſtence of its inhabitants [a]."

I have already pointed out the error of ſuppoſing that no diſtreſs or difficulty would ariſe from a redundant population, before the earth abſolutely refuſed to produce any more. But let us imagine, for a moment, Mr. Godwin's ſyſtem of equality realized in its utmoſt extent, and ſee how ſoon this difficulty might be expected to preſs, under ſo perfect a form of ſociety. A theory that will not admit of application cannot poſſibly be juſt.

Let us ſuppoſe all the cauſes of vice and miſery in this iſland removed. War and contention ceaſe. Unwholeſome trades and manufactories do not exiſt. Crowds no longer collect together in great and peſtilent cities, for purpoſes of court intrigue, of commerce, and vicious gratification. Simple, healthy, and rational amuſements, take place of drinking, gaming, and debauchery. There are no towns ſufficiently large, to have any prejudicial effects on the human conſtitution. The greater part of the happy inhabitants of this terreſtrial paradiſe live in hamlets and farm houſes, ſcattered over the face of the country. All men are equal. The labours of luxury are at an end; and the neceſſary labours of agriculture are ſhared amicably among all. The number of perſons and the produce of the iſland we ſuppoſe to be the ſame as at preſent. The ſpirit of benevolence guided by impartial juſtice, will divide this produce among all the members of ſociety according to their wants. Though it would be impoſſible that they ſhould all have animal food every day, yet vegetable food, with meat occaſionally, would ſatisfy the deſires of a frugal people, and would be ſufficient to preſerve them in health, ſtrength, and ſpirits.

Mr. Godwin conſiders marriage as a fraud, and a monopoly [b]. Let

[a] Polit. Juſtice, b. viii. c. ix. p. 510. [b] Id. b. viii. c. viii. p. 498. et ſeq.

us ſuppoſe the commerce of the ſexes eſtabliſhed upon principles of the moſt perfect freedom. Mr. Godwin does not think himſelf, that this freedom would lead to a promiſcuous intercourſe; and in this, I perfectly agree with him. The love of variety is a vicious, corrupt, and unnatural taſte, and could not prevail, in any great degree, in a ſimple and virtuous ſtate of ſociety. Each man would probably ſelect for himſelf a partner, to whom he would adhere, as long as that adherence continued to be the choice of both parties. It would be of little conſequence, according to Mr. Godwin, how many children a woman had, or to whom they belonged. Proviſions and aſſiſtance would ſpontaneouſly flow from the quarter in which they abounded, to the quarter in which they were deficient[a]. And every man, according to his capacity, would be ready to furniſh inſtruction to the riſing generation.

I cannot conceive a form of ſociety ſo favourable, upon the whole, to population. The irremediableneſs of marriage, as it is at preſent conſtituted, undoubtedly deters many from entering into this ſtate. An unſhackled intercourſe, on the contrary, would be a moſt powerful incitement to early attachments: and as we are ſuppoſing no anxiety about the future ſupport of children to exiſt, I do not conceive that there would be one woman in a hundred, of twenty-three years of age, without a family.

With theſe extraordinary encouragements to population, and every cauſe of depopulation, as we have ſuppoſed, removed, the numbers would neceſſarily increaſe faſter than in any ſociety that has ever yet been known. I have before mentioned, that the inhabitants of the back ſettlements of America appear to double their numbers in fifteen years. England is certainly a more healthy country than the back ſettlements of America; and as we have ſuppoſed every houſe in the iſland to be airy and wholeſome, and the encouragements to have a family, greater even than in America, no probable

[a] Political Juſtice, b. viii. c. viii. p. 504.

bable reaſon can be aſſigned, why the population ſhould not double itſelf, in leſs, if poſſible, than fifteen years. But to be quite ſure that we do not go beyond the truth, we will only ſuppoſe the period of doubling to be twenty-five years; a ratio of increaſe which is well known to have taken place throughout all the northern ſtates of America.

There can be little doubt, that the equalization of property which we have ſuppoſed, added to the circumſtance of the labour of the whole community being directed chiefly to agriculture, would tend greatly to augment the produce of the country. But to anſwer the demands of a population increaſing ſo rapidly, Mr. Godwin's calculation of half an hour a day would certainly not be ſufficient. It is probable, that the half of every man's time muſt be employed for this purpoſe. Yet with ſuch, or much greater exertions, a perſon who is acquainted with the nature of the ſoil in this country, and who reflects on the fertility of the lands already in cultivation, and the barrenneſs of thoſe that are not cultivated, will be very much diſpoſed to doubt, whether the whole average produce could poſſibly be doubled in twenty-five years from the preſent period. The only chance of ſucceſs would be from the ploughing up moſt of the grazing countries, and putting an end almoſt entirely to animal food. Yet this ſcheme would probably defeat itſelf. The ſoil of England will not produce much without dreſſing; and cattle ſeem to be neceſſary to make that ſpecies of manure which beſt ſuits the land.

Difficult, however, as it might be, to double the average produce of the iſland in twenty-five years, let us ſuppoſe it effected. At the expiration of the firſt period, therefore, the food, though almoſt entirely vegetable, would be ſufficient to ſupport in health the doubled population of 22 millions.

During the next period, where will the food be found to ſatisfy the importunate demands of the increaſing numbers? Where is the freſh land to turn up? Where is the dreſſing neceſſary to improve that which is already in cultivation? There is no perſon with the

ſmalleſt knowledge of land, but would ſay, that it was impoſſible that the average produce of the country could be increaſed during the ſecond twenty-five years, by a quantity equal to what it at preſent yields. Yet we will ſuppoſe this increaſe, however improbable, to take place. The exuberant ſtrength of the argument allows of almoſt any conceſſion. Even with this conceſſion, however, there would be eleven millions at the expiration of the ſecond term unprovided for. A quantity equal to the frugal ſupport of 33 millions would be to be divided among 44 millions.

Alas! what becomes of the picture, where men lived in the midſt of plenty, where no man was obliged to provide with anxiety and pain for his reſtleſs wants; where the narrow principle of ſelfiſhneſs did not exiſt; where the mind was delivered from her perpetual anxiety about corporeal ſupport, and free to expatiate in the field of thought which is congenial to her. This beautiful fabrick of the imagination vaniſhes at the ſevere touch of truth. The ſpirit of benevolence, cheriſhed and invigorated by plenty, is repreſſed by the chilling breath of want. The hateful paſſions that had vaniſhed reappear. The mighty law of ſelf-preſervation expels all the ſofter, and more exalted emotions of the ſoul. The temptations to evil are too ſtrong for human nature to reſiſt. The corn is plucked before it is ripe, or ſecreted in unfair proportions; and the whole black train of vices that belong to falſehood are immediately generated. Proviſions no longer flow in for the ſupport of a mother with a large family. The children are ſickly from inſufficient food. The roſy fluſh of health gives place to the pallid check, and hollow eye of miſery. Benevolence, yet lingering in a few boſoms, makes ſome faint expiring ſtruggles, till at length ſelf-love reſumes his wonted empire, and lords it triumphant over the world.

No human inſtitutions here exiſted, to the perverſeneſs of which Mr. Godwin aſcribes the original ſin of the worſt men [a]. No oppoſition

[a] Polit. Juſtice, b. viii. c. iii. p. 340.

poſition had been produced by them between publick and private good. No monopoly had been created of thoſe advantages which reaſon directs to be left in common. No man had been goaded to the breach of order by unjuſt laws. Benevolence had eſtabliſhed her reign in all hearts. And yet in ſo ſhort a period as fifty years, violence, oppreſſion, falſehood, miſery, every hateful vice, and every form of diſtreſs, which degrade and ſadden the preſent ſtate of ſociety, ſeem to have been generated by the moſt imperious circumſtances, by laws inherent in the nature of man, and abſolutely independent of all human regulations.

If we be not yet too well convinced of the reality of this melancholy picture, let us but look for a moment into the next period of twenty-five years, and we ſhall ſee 44 millions of human beings without the means of ſupport: and at the concluſion of the firſt century, the population would be 176 millions, and the food only ſufficient for 55 millions, leaving 121 millions unprovided for. In theſe ages, want, indeed, would be triumphant, and rapine and murder muſt reign at large: and yet all this time we are ſuppoſing the produce of the earth abſolutely unlimited, and the yearly increaſe greater than the boldeſt ſpeculator can imagine.

This is undoubtedly a very different view of the difficulty ariſing from the principle of population, from that which Mr. Godwin gives, when he ſays, "Myriads of centuries of ſtill increaſing "population may paſs away, and the earth be ſtill found ſufficient "for the ſubſiſtence of its inhabitants."

I am ſufficiently aware, that the redundant millions, which I have mentioned, could never have exiſted. It is a perfectly juſt obſervation of Mr. Godwin, that, "there is a principle in human "ſociety by which population is perpetually kept down to the "level of the means of ſubſiſtence." The ſole queſtion is, what is this principle? Is it ſome obſcure and occult cauſe? Is it ſome myſterious interference of heaven, which at a certain period ſtrikes the men with impotence, and the women with barrenneſs? Or is it a cauſe,

cauſe, open to our reſearches, within our view; a cauſe, which has conſtantly been obſerved to operate, though with varied force, in every ſtate in which man has been placed. Is it not miſery, and the fear of miſery, the neceſſary and inevitable reſults of the laws of nature, which human inſtitutions, ſo far from aggravating, have tended conſiderably to mitigate, though they can never remove.

It may be curious to obſerve, in the caſe that we have been ſuppoſing, how ſome of the principal laws which at preſent govern civilized ſociety, would be ſucceſſively dictated by the moſt imperious neceſſity. As man, according to Mr. Godwin, is the creature of the impreſſions to which he is ſubject, the goadings of want could not continue long, before ſome violations of publick or private ſtock would neceſſarily take place. As theſe violations increaſed in number and extent, the more active and comprehenſive intellects of the ſociety would ſoon perceive, that, while population was faſt increaſing, the yearly produce of the country would ſhortly begin to diminiſh. The urgency of the caſe would ſuggeſt the neceſſity of ſome immediate meaſures being taken for the general ſafety. Some kind of convention would then be called, and the dangerous ſituation of the country ſtated in the ſtrongeſt terms. It would be obſerved, that while they lived in the midſt of plenty, it was of little conſequence who laboured the leaſt, or who poſſeſſed the leaſt, as every man was perfectly willing and ready to ſupply the wants of his neighbour. But, that the queſtion was no longer, whether one man ſhould give to another, that which he did not uſe himſelf; but whether he ſhould give to his neighbour the food which was abſolutely neceſſary to his own exiſtence. It would be repreſented, that the number of thoſe which were in want, very greatly exceeded the number and means of thoſe who ſhould ſupply them; that theſe preſſing wants, which, from the ſtate of the produce of the country, could not all be gratified, had occaſioned ſome flagrant violations of juſtice; that theſe violations had already checked the increaſe of food, and would, if they were not by ſome means or other prevented, throw the whole community into confuſion; that imperious neceſſity ſeemed to dictate,

dictate, that a yearly increaſe of produce ſhould, if poſſible, be obtained at all events; that, in order to effect this firſt great and indiſpenſable purpoſe, it would be adviſeable to make a more complete diviſion of land, and to ſecure every man's property againſt violation, by the moſt powerful ſanctions.

It might be urged, perhaps, by ſome objectors, that, as the fertility of the land increaſed, and various accidents occurred, the ſhares of ſome men might be much more than ſufficient for their ſupport; and that, when the reign of ſelf-love was once eſtabliſhed, they would not diſtribute their ſurplus produce without ſome compenſation in return. It would be obſerved, in anſwer, that this was an inconvenience greatly to be lamented; but that it was an evil, which would bear no compariſon to the black train of diſtreſſes which would inevitably be occaſioned by the inſecurity of property; that the quantity of food which one man could conſume, was neceſſarily limited by the narrow capacity of the human ſtomach; that it was not certainly probable that he ſhould throw away the reſt; and if he exchanged his ſurplus produce for the labour of others, this would be better than that theſe others ſhould abſolutely ſtarve.

It ſeems highly probable, therefore, that an adminiſtration of property, not very different from that which prevails in civilized ſtates at preſent, would be eſtabliſhed, as the beſt, though inadequate, remedy, for the evils which were preſſing on the ſociety.

The next ſubject which would come under diſcuſſion, intimately connected with the preceding, is, the commerce of the ſexes. It would be urged by thoſe who had turned their attention to the true cauſe of the difficulties under which the community laboured, that while every man felt ſecure that all his children would be well provided for by general benevolence, the powers of the earth would be abſolutely inadequate to produce food for the population, which would inevitably enſue; that, even if the whole attention and labour of the ſociety were directed to this ſole point, and if, by the moſt perfect ſecurity of property, and every other encouragement

that could be thought of, the greateſt poſſible increaſe of produce were yearly obtained; yet ſtill, the increaſe of food would by no means keep pace with the much more rapid increaſe of population; that ſome check to population, therefore, was imperiouſly called for; that the moſt natural and obvious check ſeemed to be, to make every man provide for his own children; that this would operate in ſome reſpect as a meaſure and a guide in the increaſe of population, as it might be expected that no man would bring beings into the world, for whom he could not find the means of ſupport; that, where this, notwithſtanding, was the caſe, it ſeemed neceſſary, for the example of others, that the diſgrace and inconvenience attending ſuch a conduct, ſhould fall upon that individual, who had thus inconſiderately plunged himſelf and his innocent children into want and miſery.

The inſtitution of marriage, or at leaſt of ſome expreſs or implied obligation on every man to ſupport his own children, ſeems to be the natural reſult of theſe reaſonings, in a community under the difficulties that we have ſuppoſed.

The view of theſe difficulties, preſents us with a very natural reaſon why the diſgrace which attends a breach of chaſtity, ſhould be greater in a woman than in a man. It could not be expected that women ſhould have reſources ſufficient to ſupport their own children. When, therefore, a woman had lived with a man, who had entered into no compact to maintain her children; and aware of the inconveniences that he might bring upon himſelf, had deſerted her, theſe children muſt neceſſarily fall upon the ſociety for ſupport, or ſtarve. And to prevent the frequent recurrence of ſuch an inconvenience, as it would be highly unjuſt to puniſh ſo natural a fault by perſonal reſtraint or infliction, the men might agree to puniſh it with diſgrace. The offence is, beſides, more obvious and conſpicuous in the woman, and leſs liable to any miſtake. The father of a child may not always be known; but the ſame uncertainty cannot eaſily exiſt with regard to the mother. Where the evidence of the offence

offence was moſt complete, and the inconvenience to the ſociety, at the ſame time, the greateſt; there, it was agreed, that the largeſt ſhare of blame ſhould fall. The obligation on every man to ſupport his children, the ſociety would enforce by poſitive laws; and the greater degree of inconvenience or labour to which a family would neceſſarily ſubject him, added to ſome portion of diſgrace, which every human being muſt incur, who leads another into unhappineſs, might be conſidered as a ſufficient puniſhment for the man.

That a woman ſhould, at preſent, be almoſt driven from ſociety, for an offence which men commit nearly with impunity, ſeems to be, undoubtedly, a breach of natural juſtice. But the origin of the cuſtom, as the moſt obvious and effectual method of preventing the frequent recurrence of a ſerious inconvenience to a community, appears to be natural, though not perhaps, perfectly juſtifiable. This origin, however, is now loſt in the new train of ideas, that the cuſtom has ſince generated. What at firſt might be dictated by ſtate neceſſity, is now ſupported by female delicacy; and operates with the greateſt force on that part of the ſociety, where, if the original intention of the cuſtom were preſerved, there is the leaſt real occaſion for it.

When theſe two fundamental laws of ſociety, the ſecurity of property, and the inſtitution of marriage, were once eſtabliſhed, inequality of conditions muſt neceſſarily follow. Thoſe who were born, after the diviſion of property, would come into a world already poſſeſſed. If their parents, from having too large a family, were unable to give them ſufficient for their ſupport, what could they do in a world where every thing was appropriated. We have ſeen the fatal effects that would reſult to ſociety, if every man had a valid claim to an equal ſhare of the produce of the earth. The members of a family which was grown too large for the original diviſion of land appropriated to it, could not then demand a part of the ſurplus produce of others as a debt of juſtice. It has appeared, that, from the inevitable laws of human nature, ſome human beings will be

expoſed to want. Theſe are the unhappy perſons who in the great lottery of life have drawn a blank. The number of theſe perſons would ſoon exceed the ability of the ſurplus produce to ſupply. Moral merit is a very difficult criterion, except in extreme caſes. The owners of ſurplus produce would, in general, ſeek ſome more obvious mark of diſtinction; and it ſeems to be both natural and juſt, that, except upon particular occaſions, their choice ſhould fall upon thoſe, who were able, and profeſſed themſelves willing, to exert their ſtrength in procuring a further ſurplus produce, which would at once benefit the community, and enable the proprietors to afford aſſiſtance to greater numbers. All who were in want of food, would be urged by imperious neceſſity to offer their labour in exchange for this article, ſo abſolutely neceſſary to exiſtence. The fund appropriated to the maintenance of labour, would be the aggregate quantity of food poſſeſſed by the owners of land beyond their own conſumption. When the demands upon this fund were great and numerous, it would naturally be divided into very ſmall ſhares. Labour would be ill paid. Men would offer to work for a bare ſubſiſtence; and the rearing of families would be checked by ſickneſs and miſery. On the contrary, when this fund was increaſing faſt; when it was great in proportion to the number of claimants, it would be divided in much larger ſhares. No man would exchange his labour without receiving an ample quantity of food in return. Labourers would live in eaſe and comfort, and would conſequently be able to rear a numerous and vigorous offſpring.

On the ſtate of this fund, the happineſs, or the degree of miſery, prevailing among the lower claſſes of people, in every known ſtate, at preſent chiefly depends; and on this happineſs, or degree of miſery, depends principally the increaſe, ſtationarineſs, or decreaſe, of population.

And thus, it appears, that a ſociety conſtituted according to the moſt beautiful form that imagination can conceive, with benevolence for

for its moving principle, inſtead of ſelf-love, and with every evil diſpoſition in all its members corrected by reaſon, not force, would, from the inevitable laws of nature, and not from any original depravity of man, or of human inſtitutions, degenerate, in a very ſhort period, into a ſociety, conſtructed upon a plan, not eſſentially different from that which prevails in every known ſtate at preſent; a ſociety, divided into a claſs of proprietors and a claſs of labourers, and with ſelf-love for the mainſpring of the great machine.

In the ſuppoſition which I have made, I have undoubtedly taken the increaſe of population ſmaller, and the increaſe of produce greater, than they really would be. No reaſon can be aſſigned why, under the circumſtances ſuppoſed, population ſhould not increaſe faſter than in any known inſtance. If, then, we were to take the period of doubling at fifteen years, inſtead of twenty-five years, and reflect upon the labour neceſſary to double the produce in ſo ſhort a time, even if we allow it poſſible; we may venture to pronounce with certainty, that, if Mr. Godwin's ſyſtem of ſociety were eſtabliſhed in its utmoſt perfection, inſtead of myriads of of centuries, not thirty years could elapſe, before its utter deſtruction from the ſimple principle of population.

I have taken no notice of emigration in this place, for obvious reaſons. If ſuch ſocieties were inſtituted in other parts of Europe, theſe countries would be under the ſame difficulties, with regard to population, and could admit no freſh members into their boſoms. If this beautiful ſociety were confined to this iſland, it muſt have degenerated ſtrangely from its original purity, and adminiſter but a very ſmall portion of the happineſs it propoſed, before any of its members would voluntarily conſent to leave it, and live under ſuch governments as at preſent exiſt in Europe, or ſubmit to the extreme hardſhips of firſt ſettlers in new regions.

CHAP. III.

Observations on the Reply of Mr. Godwin.

Mr. Godwin, in a late publication, has replied to those parts of the Essay on the Principle of Population, which he thinks bear the hardest on his system. A few remarks on this reply will be sufficient.

In a note to an early part of his pamphlet, he observes, that the main attack of the essay, is not directed against the principles of his work, but its conclusion[a]. It may be true, indeed, that, as Mr. Godwin had dedicated one particular chapter towards the conclusion of his work, to the consideration of the objections to his system, from the principle of population, this particular chapter is most frequently alluded to: but certainly, if the great principle of the essay be admitted, it affects his whole work, and essentially alters the foundations of political justice. A great part of Mr. Godwin's book consists of an abuse of human institutions, as productive of all, or most of, the evils which afflict society. The acknowledgment of a new and totally unconsidered cause of misery, would evidently alter the state of these arguments, and make it absolutely necessary that they should be either newly modified, or entirely rejected.

In the first book of Political Justice, chap. iii. entitled, "The "Spirit of Political Institutions," Mr. Godwin observes, that "Two "of the greatest abuses relative to the interior policy of nations

[a] Reply to the attacks of Dr. Parr, Mr. Mackintosh, the author of an Essay on Population, and others, p. 10.

"which

"which at this time prevail in the world, consist in the irregular "transfer of property, either first, by violence, or secondly, by fraud." And he goes on to say, that if there existed no desire in individuals to possess themselves of the substance of others, and if every man could, with perfect facility, obtain the necessaries of life, civil society might become what poetry has feigned of the golden age. Let us inquire, he says, into the principles to which these evils are indebted for existence. After acknowledging the truth of the principal argument in the essay on population, I do not think that he could stop in this inquiry at mere human institutions. Many other parts of his work would be affected by this consideration in a similar manner.

As Mr. Godwin seems disposed to understand, and candidly to admit the truth of, the principal argument in the essay, I feel the more mortified, that he should think it a fair inference from my positions, that the political superintendents of a community are bound to exercise a paternal vigilance and care over the two great means of advantage and safety to mankind, misery and vice; and that no evil is more to be dreaded than that we should have too little of them in the world, to confine the principle of population within its proper sphere[a]. I am at a loss to conceive what class of evils Mr. Godwin imagines is yet behind, which these salutary checks are to prevent. For my own part, I know of no stronger or more general terms than vice and misery; and the sole question is, respecting a greater or less degree of them. The only reason why I object to Mr. Godwin's system, is, my full conviction that an attempt to execute it, would very greatly increase the quantity of vice and misery in society. If Mr. Godwin will undo this conviction, and prove to me, though it be only in theory, provided that theory be consistent, and founded on a knowledge of human nature, that his system will

[a] Reply, &c. p. 60.

really

really tend to drive vice and misery from the earth, he may depend upon having me one of its steadiest and warmest advocates.

Mr. Godwin observes, that he should naturally be disposed to pronounce that man strangely indifferent to schemes of extraordinary improvement in society, who made it a conclusive argument against them, that, when they were realized, they might peradventure be of no permanence and duration. And yet, what is morality, individual or political, according to Mr. Godwin's own definition of it, but a calculation of consequences? Is the physician the patron of pain, who advises his patient to bear a present evil, rather than betake himself to a remedy, which, though it might give momentary relief, would afterwards greatly aggravate all the symptoms? Is the moralist to be called an enemy to pleasure, because he recommends to a young man just entering into life, not to ruin his health and patrimony in a few years, by an excess of present gratifications, but to economize his enjoyments, that he may spread them over a longer period? Of Mr. Godwin's system, according to the present arguments by which it is supported, it is not enough to say, *peradventure* it will be of no permanence; but we can pronounce with *certainty* that it will be of no permanence: and under such circumstances an attempt to execute it would unquestionably be a great political immorality.

Mr. Godwin observes, that after recovering from the first impression made by the Essay on Population, the first thing that is apt to strike every reflecting mind, is, that the excess of power in the principle of population over the principle of subsistence, has never, in any past instance, in any quarter, or age, of the world, produced those great and astonishing effects, that total breaking-up of all the structures and maxims of society, which the essay lead us to expect from it in certain cases in future [a]. This is undoubtedly true; and the reason is, that, in no past instance, nor in any quarter, or age, of

[a] Reply, p. 70.

the

the world, has an attempt been made to establish such a system as Mr. Godwin's, and without an attempt of this nature, none of these great effects will follow. The convulsions of the social system, described in the last chapter, appeared by a kind of irresistible necessity, to terminate in the establishment of the laws of property and marriage; but in countries, where these laws are already established, as they are in all the common constitutions of society, with which we are acquainted, the operation of the principle of population will always be silent and gradual, and not different to what we daily see in our own country. Other persons, besides Mr. Godwin, have imagined, that I looked to certain periods in future, when population would exceed the means of subsistence in a much greater degree than at present, and that the evils arising from the principle of population were rather in contemplation, than in existence; but this is a total misconception of the argument [a]. Poverty, and not absolute famine, is the specifick effect of the principle of population, as I have before endeavoured to shew. Many countries are now suffering all the evils that can ever be expected to flow from this principle, and even, if we were arrived at the absolute limit to all further increase of produce, a point, which we shall certainly never reach, I should by no means expect that these evils would be in any marked manner aggravated. The increase of produce in most European countries is so very slow, compared with what would be required to support an unrestricted increase of people, that the checks which are constantly in action to repress the population to the level of a produce increasing so slowly, would have very little more to do in wearing it down to a produce absolutely stationary.

But Mr. Godwin says, that if he looks into the past history of the world, he does not see that increasing population has been controlled and confined by vice and misery alone. In this observation I cannot agree with him. I will thank Mr. Godwin to name to me any check,

[a] In other parts of his Reply, Mr. Godwin does not fall into this error.

which

which in paſt ages has contributed to keep down the population to the level of the means of ſubſiſtence, that does not fairly come under ſome form of vice or miſery; except indeed the check of moral reſtraint, which I have mentioned in the courſe of this work; and which, to ſay the truth, whatever hopes we may entertain of its prevalence in future, has undoubtedly in paſt ages operated with very inconſiderable force.

I do not think that I ſhould find it difficult to juſtify myſelf in the eyes of my readers from the imputation of being the patron of vice and miſery; but I am not clear, that Mr. Godwin would find ſuch a juſtification ſo eaſy. For though he has poſitively declared that he does not "regard them with complacency;" and "hopes that it "may not be conſidered as a taſte abſolutely ſingular in him that he "ſhould entertain no vehement partialities for vice and miſery [a];" yet he has certainly expoſed himſelf to the ſuſpicion of having this ſingular taſte, by ſuggeſting the organization of a very large portion of them for the benefit of ſociety in general. On this ſubject I need only obſerve, that I have always ranked the two checks [b] which he firſt mentions, among the worſt forms of vice and miſery.

[a] Reply, p. 76.

[b] Mr. Godwin does not acknowledge the juſtice of Hume's obſervation reſpecting infanticide; and yet the extreme population and poverty in China, where this cuſtom prevails, tends ſtrongly to confirm the obſervation. It is ſtill, however, true, as Mr. Godwin obſerves, that the expedient is, in its own nature, adequate to the end for which it was cited, (p. 66.); but, to make it ſo in fact, it muſt be done by the magiſtrate, and not left to the parents. The almoſt invariable tendency of this cuſtom to increaſe population, when it depends entirely on the parents, ſhews the extreme pain which they muſt feel, in making ſuch a ſacrifice, even when the diſtreſs ariſing from exceſſive poverty may be ſuppoſed to have deadened in great meaſure their ſenſibility. What muſt this pain be then, upon the ſuppoſition of the interference of a magiſtrate or of a poſitive law, to make parents deſtroy a child, which they feel the deſire, and think they poſſeſs the power, of ſupporting? The permiſſion of infanticide is bad enough, and cannot but have a bad effect on the moral ſenſibility of a nation; but, I cannot conceive any thing much more deteſtable, or ſhocking to the feelings, than any direct regulation of this kind, although ſanctioned by the names of Plato and Ariſtotle.

In one part of his Reply, Mr. Godwin makes a ſuppoſition reſpecting the number of children that might be allowed to each prolifick marriage; but as he has not entered into the detail of the mode by which a greater number might be prevented, I ſhall not notice it further, than merely to obſerve, that although he profeſſes to acknowledge the geometrical and arithmetical ratios of population and food, yet in this place he appears to think that, practically applied, theſe different ratios of increaſe, are not of a nature to make the evil reſulting from them urgent, or alarmingly to confine the natural progreſs of population [a]. This obſervation ſeems to contradict his former acknowledgment.

The laſt check which Mr. Godwin mentions, and which, I am perſuaded, is the only one which he would ſeriouſly recommend, is, "that ſentiment, whether virtue, prudence, or pride, which con-"tinually reſtrains the univerſality and frequent repetition of the "marriage contract [b]." On this ſentiment, which I have already noticed under the name of moral reſtraint, and of the more comprehenſive title, the preventive check, it will appear, that in the ſequel of this work I ſhall lay conſiderable ſtreſs. Of this check therefore itſelf, I entirely approve; but I do not think that Mr. Godwin's ſyſtem of political juſtice is by any means favourable to its prevalence. The tendency to early marriages is ſo ſtrong that we want every poſſible help that we can get to counteract it; and a ſyſtem which in any way whatever tends to weaken the foundation of private property, and to leſſen in any degree the full advantage and ſuperiority which each individual may derive from his prudence, muſt remove the only counteracting weight to the paſſion of love, that can be depended upon for any eſſential effect. Mr. Godwin acknowledges that in his ſyſtem, "the ill conſequences of a "numerous family will not come ſo coarſely home to each man's "individual intereſt as they do at preſent [c]." But I am ſorry to

[a] Reply, p. 70. [b] Id. p. 72. [c] Id. p. 74.

ſay that, from what we know hitherto of the human character, we can have no rational hopes of ſucceſs, without this coarſe application to individual intereſt, which Mr. Godwin rejects. If the whole effect were to depend merely on a ſenſe of duty, conſidering the powerful antagoniſt that is to be contended with, in the preſent caſe, I confeſs that I ſhould abſolutely deſpair. At the ſame time, I am ſtrongly of opinion that a ſenſe of duty, ſuperadded to a ſenſe of intereſt, would by no means be without its effect. There are many noble and diſintereſted ſpirits, who, though aware of the inconveniences which they may bring upon themſelves by the indulgence of an early and virtuous paſſion, feel a kind of repugnance to liſten to the dictates of mere worldly prudence, and a pride in rejecting theſe low conſiderations. There is a kind of romantick gallantry in ſacrificing all for love, naturally faſcinating to a young mind; and, to ſay the truth, if all is to be ſacrificed, I do not know, in what better cauſe it can be done. But if a ſtrong ſenſe of duty could, in theſe inſtances, be added to prudential ſuggeſtions, the whole queſtion might wear a different colour. In delaying the gratification of paſſion, from a ſenſe of duty, the moſt diſintereſted ſpirit, the moſt delicate honour, might be ſatisfied. The romantick pride might take a different direction, and the dictates of worldly prudence might be followed with the cheerful conſciouſneſs of making a virtuous ſacrifice.

If we were to remove or weaken the motive of intereſt, which would be the caſe in Mr. Godwin's ſyſtem, I fear we ſhould have but a weak ſubſtitute in a ſenſe of duty. But if to the preſent beneficial effects, known to reſult from a ſenſe of intereſt, we could ſuperadd a ſenſe of duty, which is the object of the latter part of this work, it does not ſeem abſolutely hopeleſs that ſome partial improvement in ſociety ſhould reſult from it.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of Emigration.

ALTHOUGH the reſource of emigration ſeems to be excluded from ſuch a ſociety as Mr. Godwin has imagined; yet in that partial degree of improvement which alone can rationally be expected, it may fairly enter into our conſideration. And as it is not probable, that human induſtry ſhould begin to receive its beſt direction, throughout all the nations of the earth at the ſame time, it may be ſaid, that in the caſe of a redundant population in the more cultivated parts of the world, the natural and obvious remedy that preſents itſelf, is, emigration to thoſe parts that are uncultivated. As theſe parts are of great extent, and very thinly peopled, this reſource might appear, on a firſt view of the ſubject, an adequate remedy, or at leaſt of a nature to remove the evil to a diſtant period: but, when we advert to experience, and to the actual ſtate of the uncivilized parts of the globe, inſtead of any thing like an adequate remedy, it will appear but a very weak palliative.

In the accounts which we have of the peopling of new countries, the dangers, difficulties, and hardſhips, that the firſt ſettlers have had to ſtruggle with, appear to be even greater, than we can well imagine that they could be expoſed to, in their parent ſtate. The endeavour to avoid that degree of unhappineſs ariſing from the difficulty of ſupporting a family, might long have left the new world of America unpeopled by Europeans, if thoſe more powerful paſſions, the thirſt of gain, the ſpirit of adventure, and religious enthuſiaſm, had

not directed and animated the enterprize. Theſe paſſions enabled the firſt adventurers to triumph over every obſtacle; but in many inſtances in a way to make humanity ſhudder, and to defeat the true end of emigration. Whatever may be the character of the Spaniſh inhabitants of Mexico and Peru at the preſent moment, we cannot read the accounts of the firſt conqueſts of theſe countries, without feeling ſtrongly, that the race deſtroyed, was, in moral worth, as well as members, highly ſuperior to the race of their deſtroyers.

The parts of America ſettled by the Engliſh, from being thinly peopled, were better adapted to the eſtabliſhment of new colonies; yet even here, the moſt formidable difficulties preſented themſelves. In the ſettlement of Virginia, begun by Sir Walter Raleigh, and eſtabliſhed by Lord Delaware, three attempts completely failed. Nearly half of the firſt colony was deſtroyed by the ſavages, and the reſt conſumed and worn down by fatigue and famine, deſerted the country, and returned home in deſpair. The ſecond colony was cut off to a man, in a manner unknown; but they were ſuppoſed to be deſtroyed by the Indians. The third experienced the ſame diſmal fate; and the remains of the fourth, after it had been reduced by famine and diſeaſe, in the courſe of ſix months from 500 to 60 perſons, were returning in a famiſhing and deſperate condition to England, when they were met in the mouth of the Cheſapeak bay, by Lord Delaware, with a ſquadron loaded with proviſions, and every thing for their relief and defence[a].

The firſt puritan ſettlers in New England were few in number. They landed in a bad ſeaſon, and they were only ſupported by their private funds. The winter was premature, and terribly cold; the country was covered with wood, and afforded very little for the refreſhment of perſons, ſickly with ſuch a voyage, or for the ſuſtenance of an infant people. Nearly half of them periſhed by the ſcurvy, by want, and the ſeverity of the climate; but they who ſurvived

[a] Burke's America, vol. ii. p. 219. Robertſon, b. ix. p. 83. 86.

vived were not diſpirited by their hardſhips; but, ſupported by their energy of character, and the ſatisfaction of finding themſelves out of the reach of the ſpiritual arm, reduced this ſavage country, by degrees, to yield them a comfortable ſubſiſtence[a].

Even the plantation of Barbadoes, which increaſed afterwards with ſuch extraordinary rapidity, had at firſt to contend with a country utterly deſolate, an extreme want of proviſions, a difficulty in clearing the ground unuſually great, from the uncommon ſize and hardneſs of the trees, a moſt diſheartening ſcantineſs and poverty in their firſt crops, and a ſlow and precarious ſupply of proviſions from England[b].

The attempt of the French, in 1663, to form at once a powerful colony in Guiana, was attended with the moſt diſaſtrous conſequences. Twelve thouſand men were landed in the rainy ſeaſon, and placed under tents and miſerable ſheds. In this ſituation, inactive, weary of exiſtence, and in want of all neceſſaries, expoſed to contagious diſtempers, which are always occaſioned by bad proviſions, and to all the irregularities which idleneſs produces among the lower claſſes of ſociety, almoſt the whole of them ended their lives in all the horrors of deſpair. The attempt was completely abortive. Two thouſand men, whoſe robuſt conſtitutions had enabled them to reſiſt the inclemency of the climate, and the miſeries to which they had been expoſed, were brought back to France; and the 25,000,000 of livres which had been expended in the expedition were totally loſt[c].

In the laſt ſettlement at Port Jackſon, in New Holland, a melancholy and affecting picture is drawn by Collins, of the extreme hardſhips which, for ſome years, the infant colony had to ſtruggle with, before the produce was equal to its ſupport. Theſe diſtreſſes were undoubtedly aggravated by the character of the ſettlers; but thoſe which were cauſed by the unhealthineſs of a newly-cleared country, the failure of firſt crops, and the uncertainty of ſupplies from ſo diſtant

[a] Burke's America, vol. ii. p. 144. [b] Id. p. 85.
[c] Raynal, Hiſt. des Indes, tom. vii. liv. xiii. p. 43. 10 vols 8vo. 1795.

diſtant a mother country, were of themſelves ſufficiently diſheartening, to place in a ſtrong point of view, the neceſſity of great reſources, as well as unconquerable perſeverance, in the colonization of ſavage countries.

The eſtabliſhment of colonies, in the more thinly peopled regions of Europe and Aſia would evidently require ſtill greater reſources. From the power, and warlike character, of the inhabitants of theſe countries, a conſiderable military force would be neceſſary to prevent their utter and immediate deſtruction. Even the frontier provinces of the moſt powerful ſtates, are defended with conſiderable difficulty from ſuch reſtleſs neighbours; and the peaceful labours of the cultivator, are continually interrupted by their predatory incurſions. The late Empreſs Catharine of Ruſſia found it neceſſary to protect, by regular fortreſſes, the colonies which ſhe had eſtabliſhed in the diſtricts near the Wolga; and the calamities which her ſubjects ſuffered by the incurſions of the Crim Tartars furniſhed a pretext, and perhaps a juſt one, for taking poſſeſſion of the whole of the Crimea, and expelling the greateſt part of theſe turbulent neighbours, and reducing the reſt to a more tranquil mode of life.

The difficulties attending a firſt eſtabliſhment, from ſoil, climate, and the want of proper conveniences, are of courſe nearly the ſame in theſe regions as in America. Mr. Eton, in his account of the Turkiſh Empire, ſays, that 75,000 Chriſtians were obliged by Ruſſia to emigrate from the Crimea, and ſent to inhabit the country abandoned by the Nogai Tartars; but the winter coming on before the houſes built for them were ready, a great part of them had no other ſhelter from the cold, than what was afforded them by holes dug in the ground, covered with what they could procure, and the greateſt part of them periſhed. Only ſeven thouſand remained a few years afterwards Another colony from Italy to the banks of the Boryſthenes, had, he ſays, no better fate, owing to the bad management of thoſe who were commiſſioned to provide for them.

It is needleſs to add to theſe inſtances, as the accounts given of the

difficulties experienced in new ſettlements are all nearly ſimilar. It has been juſtly obſerved, by a correſpondent of Dr. Franklin, that one of the reaſons why we have ſeen ſo many fruitleſs attempts to ſettle colonies at an immenſe publick and private expence, by ſeveral of the powers of Europe, is, that the moral and mechanical habits adapted to the mother country are frequently not ſo, to the new-ſettled one, and to external events, many of which are unforeſeen; and that it is to be remarked, that none of the Engliſh colonies became any way conſiderable, till the neceſſary manners were born and grew up in the country. Pallas particularly notices the want of proper habits in the colonies, eſtabliſhed by Ruſſia, as one of the cauſes why they did not increaſe ſo faſt as might have been expected.

In addition to this, it may be obſerved, that the firſt eſtabliſhment of a new colony, generally preſents an inſtance of a country, peopled conſiderably beyond its actual produce; and the natural conſequence ſeems to be, that this population, if not amply ſupplied by the mother country, ſhould, at the beginning, be diminiſhed to the level of the firſt ſcanty productions, and not begin permanently to increaſe till the remaining numbers had ſo far cultivated the ſoil, as to make it yield a quantity of food, more than ſufficient for their own ſupport; and which conſequently they could divide with a family. The frequent failures in the eſtabliſhment of new colonies tend ſtrongly to ſhow the order of precedence between food and population.

It muſt be acknowledged then, that the claſs of people on whom the diſtreſs ariſing from a too rapidly increaſing population would principally fall, could not poſſibly begin a new colony in a diſtant country. From the nature of their ſituation, they muſt neceſſarily be deficient in thoſe reſources, which alone could enſure ſucceſs: and unleſs they could find leaders among the higher claſſes, urged by the ſpirit of avarice or enterprize; or of religious or political diſcontent; or were furniſhed with means and ſupport by government; whatever degree of miſery they might ſuffer in their own country, from the ſcarcity of ſubſiſtence, they would be abſolutely unable to

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take poſſeſſion of any of thoſe uncultivated regions, of which there is yet ſuch an extent on the earth.

When new colonies have been once ſecurely eſtabliſhed, the difficulty of emigration is, indeed, very conſiderably diminiſhed; yet, even then, ſome reſources are neceſſary to provide veſſels for the voyage, and ſupport and aſſiſtance till the emigrants can ſettle themſelves, and find employment in their adopted country. How far it is incumbent upon a government to furniſh theſe reſources, may be a queſtion; but whatever be its duty in this particular, perhaps it is too much to expect, that except where any particular colonial advantages are propoſed, emigration ſhould be actively aſſiſted.

The neceſſary reſources for tranſport and maintenance, are, however, frequently furniſhed by individuals, or private companies. For many years before the American war, and for ſome few ſince, the facilities of emigration to this new world, and the probable advantages in view, were unuſually great; and it muſt be conſidered undoubtedly as a very happy circumſtance for any country, to have ſo comfortable an aſylum for its redundant population. But I would aſk, whether, even during theſe periods, the diſtreſs among the common people in this country was little or nothing, and whether every man felt ſecure before he ventured on marriage, that however large his family might be, he ſhould find no difficulty in ſupporting it without pariſh aſſiſtance? The anſwer, I fear, could not be in the affirmative.

It will be ſaid, that when an opportunity of advantageous emigration is offered, it is the fault of the people themſelves, if, inſtead of accepting it, they prefer a life of celibacy, or extreme poverty in their own country. Is it then a fault for a man to feel an attachment to his native ſoil, to love the parents that nurtured him, his kindred, his friends, and the companions of his early years? or is it no evil that he ſuffers, becauſe he conſents to bear it, rather than ſnap theſe cords which nature has wound in cloſe and intricate folds round the human heart? The great plan of providence ſeems to require, indeed, that

that theſe ties ſhould ſometimes be broken; but the ſeparation does not, on that account, give leſs pain; and, though the general good may be promoted by it, it does not ceaſe to be an individual evil. Beſides, doubts and uncertainty muſt ever attend all diſtant emigrations, particularly in the apprehenſions of the lower claſſes of people. They cannot feel quite ſecure, that the repreſentations made to them of the high price of labour, or the cheapneſs of land, are accurately true. They are placing themſelves in the power of the perſons who are to furniſh them with the means of tranſport and maintenance, who may perhaps have an intereſt in deceiving them; and the ſea which they are to paſs, appears to them like the ſeparation of death from all their former connexions, and in a manner to preclude the poſſibility of return in caſe of failure, as they cannot expect the offer of the ſame means to bring them back. We cannot be ſurpriſed then, that, except where a ſpirit of enterpriſe is added to the uneaſineſs of poverty, the conſideration of theſe circumſtances, ſhould frequently,

> "Make them rather bear the ills they ſuffer,
> "Than fly to others which they know not of."

If a tract of rich land as large as this iſland were ſuddenly annexed to it, and ſold in ſmall lots, or let out in ſmall farms, the caſe would be very different, and the amelioration of the ſtate of the common people would be ſudden and ſtriking; though the rich would be continually complaining of the high price of labour, the pride of the lower claſſes, and the difficulty of getting work done. Theſe, I underſtand, are not unfrequent complaints among the men of property in America.

Every reſource, however, from emigration, if uſed effectually, as this would be, muſt be of ſhort duration. There is ſcarcely a ſtate in Europe, except perhaps Ruſſia, the inhabitants of which do not often endeavour to better their condition by removing to other countries. As theſe ſtates therefore have nearly all rather a redun-

dant, than deficient population, in proportion to their produce, they cannot be ſuppoſed to afford any effectual reſources of emigration to each other. Let us ſuppoſe, for a moment, that in this more enlightened part of the globe, the internal economy of each ſtate were ſo admirably regulated, that no checks exiſted to population, and the different governments provided every facility for emigration. Taking the population of Europe, excluding Ruſſia, at a hundred millions, and allowing a greater increaſe of produce than is probable, or even poſſible, in the mother countries, the redundancy of parent ſtock in a ſingle century, would be eleven hundred millions, which, added to the natural increaſe of the colonies, during the ſame time, would be more than double what has been ſuppoſed to be the preſent population of the whole earth.

Can we imagine, that in the uncultivated parts of Aſia, Africa, or America, the greateſt exertions, and the beſt directed endeavours, could in ſo ſhort a period, prepare a quantity of land, ſufficient for the ſupport of ſuch a population. If any ſanguine perſon ſhould feel a doubt upon the ſubject, let him only add 25 or 50 years more, and every doubt muſt be cruſhed in overwhelming conviction.

It is evident, therefore, that the reaſon why the reſource of emigration has ſo long continued to be held out as a remedy to redundant population, is, becauſe, from the natural unwillingneſs of people to deſert their native country, and the difficulty of clearing and cultivating freſh ſoil, it never is, nor can be, adequately adopted. If this remedy were indeed really effectual, and had power ſo far to relieve the diſorders of vice and miſery in old ſtates, as to place them in the condition of the moſt proſperous new colonies, we ſhould ſoon ſee the phial exhauſted, and when the diſorders returned with increaſed virulence, every hope from that quarter would be for ever cloſed.

It is clear, therefore, that with any view of making room for an unreſtricted increaſe of population, emigration is perfectly inadequate; but as a partial and temporary expedient, and with a view to the more general cultivation of the earth, and the wider ſpread of civilization,

zation, it ſeems to be both uſeful and proper; and if it cannot be proved that governments are bound actively to encourage it, it is not only ſtrikingly unjuſt, but in the higheſt degree impolitick, in them to prevent it. There are no fears ſo totally ill-grounded, as the fears of depopulation from emigration. The *vis inertiæ* of people in general, and their attachment to their homes, are qualities ſo ſtrong, and general, that we may reſt aſſured that they will not emigrate, unleſs, from political diſcontents, or extreme poverty, they are in ſuch a ſtate, as will make it as much for the advantage of their country as of themſelves that they ſhould go out of it. The complaints of high wages in conſequence of emigrations are, of all others, the moſt unreaſonable, and ought the leaſt to be attended to. If the wages of labour in any country be ſuch, as to enable the lower claſſes of people to live with tolerable comfort, we may be quite certain, that they will not emigrate; and if they be not ſuch, it is cruelty and injuſtice to detain them.

CHAP. V.

Of the Engliſh Poor Laws.

To remedy the frequent diſtreſſes of the poor, laws to enforce their relief have been inſtituted; and in the eſtabliſhment of a general ſyſtem of this kind, England has particularly diſtinguiſhed herſelf. But it is to be feared, that though it may have alleviated a little the intenſity of individual misfortune, it has ſpread the evil over a much larger ſurface.

It is a ſubject often ſtarted in converſation, and mentioned always as a matter of great ſurpriſe, that, notwithſtanding the immenſe ſum which is annually collected for the poor in this country, there is ſtill ſo much diſtreſs among them. Some think that the money muſt be embezzled for private uſe; others, that the churchwardens and overſeers conſume the greateſt part of it in feaſting. All agree, that ſomehow or other, it muſt be very ill managed. In ſhort, the fact, that, even before the late ſcarcities, three millions were collected annually for the poor, and yet that their diſtreſſes were not removed, is the ſubject of continual aſtoniſhment. But a man who looks a little below the ſurface of things, would be much more aſtoniſhed, if the fact were otherwiſe than it is obſerved to be; or even if a collection univerſally of eighteen ſhillings in the pound, inſtead of four, were materially to alter it.

Suppoſe, that by a ſubſcription of the rich, the eighteen-pence, or two ſhillings, which men earn now, were made up five ſhillings, it might be imagined, perhaps, that they would then be able to live

comfortably,

comfortably, and have a piece of meat every day for their dinner. But this would be a very falſe concluſion. The transfer of three additional ſhillings a day to each labourer would not increaſe the quantity of meat in the country. There is not at preſent enough for all to have a moderate ſhare. What would then be the conſequence? The competition among the buyers in the market of meat, would rapidly raiſe the price from eight pence or nine pence, to two or three ſhillings in the pound, and the commodity would not be divided among many more than it is at preſent. When an article is ſcarce, and cannot be diſtributed to all, he that can ſhew the moſt valid patent, that is, he that offers the moſt money, becomes the poſſeſſor. If we can ſuppoſe the competition among the buyers of meat, to continue long enough for a greater number of cattle to be reared annually, this could only be done at the expence of the corn, which would be a very diſadvantageous exchange; for it is well known, that the country could not then ſupport the ſame population; and when ſubſiſtence is ſcarce in proportion to the number of people, it is of little conſequence, whether the loweſt members of the ſociety poſſeſs two ſhillings or five. They muſt, at all events, be reduced to live upon the hardeſt fare, and in the ſmalleſt quantity.

It might be ſaid, perhaps, that the increaſed number of purchaſers in every article would give a ſpur to productive induſtry, and that the whole produce of the iſland would be increaſed. But the ſpur that theſe fancied riches would give to population, would more than counterbalance it; and the increaſed produce would be to be divided among a more than proportionably increaſed number of people.

A collection from the rich, of eighteen ſhillings in the pound, even if diſtributed in the moſt judicious manner, would have an effect ſimilar to that reſulting from the ſuppoſition which I have juſt made; and no poſſible ſacrifices of the rich, particularly in money, could, for any time, prevent the recurrence of diſtreſs among the lower members of ſociety, who ever theywere. Great changes might indeed be made. The rich might become poor, and ſome of the

poor

poor rich; but, while the preſent proportion between population and food continues, a part of ſociety muſt neceſſarily find it difficult to ſupport a family, and this difficulty will naturally fall on the leaſt fortunate members.

It may at firſt appear ſtrange, but I believe it is true, that I cannot by means of money, raiſe the condition of a poor man, and enable him to live much better than he did before, without proportionably depreſſing others in the ſame claſs. If I retrench the quantity of food conſumed in my houſe, and give him what I have cut off, I then benefit him without depreſſing any but myſelf and family, who perhaps may be well able to bear it. If I turn up a piece of uncultivated land, and give him the produce, I then benefit both him and all the members of ſociety, becauſe what he before conſumed is thrown into the common ſtock, and, probably, ſome of the new produce with it. But if I only give him money, ſuppoſing the produce of the country to remain the ſame, I give him a title to a larger ſhare of that produce than formerly, which ſhare he cannot receive without diminiſhing the ſhares of others. It is evident, that this effect in individual inſtances muſt be ſo ſmall as to be totally imperceptible; but ſtill it muſt exiſt, as many other effects do, which, like ſome of the inſects that people the air, elude our groſſer perceptions.

Suppoſing the quantity of food in any country, to remain the ſame for many years together, it is evident, that this food muſt be divided according to the value of each man's patent, or the ſum of money which he can afford to ſpend in this commodity ſo univerſally in requeſt. It is a demonſtrative truth, therefore, that the patents of one ſet of men could not be increaſed in value, without diminiſhing the value of the patents of ſome other ſet of men. If the rich were to ſubſcribe, and give five ſhillings a day to five hundred thouſand men, without retrenching their own tables, no doubt can exiſt that as theſe men would live more at their eaſe, and conſume a greater quantity of proviſions, there would be leſs food remaining to divide among the reſt; and conſequently, each man's patent would be diminiſhed

diminiſhed in value, or the ſame number of pieces of ſilver would purchaſe a ſmaller quantity of ſubſiſtence, and the price of proviſions would univerſally riſe.

Theſe general reaſonings have been ſtrikingly confirmed during the late ſcarcities. The ſuppoſition which I have made of a collection from the rich of eighteen ſhillings in the pound, has been nearly realized; and the effect has been ſuch as might have been expected. If the ſame diſtribution had been made, when no ſcarcity exiſted, a conſiderable advance in the price of proviſions would have been a neceſſary conſequence; but following as it did a ſcarcity, its effect muſt have been doubly powerful. No perſon, I believe, will venture to doubt, that, if we were to give three additional ſhillings a day to every labouring man in the kingdom, as I before ſuppoſed, in order that he might have meat for his dinner, the price of meat would riſe in the moſt rapid and unexampled manner. But ſurely, in a deficiency of corn, which renders it impoſſible for every man to have his uſual ſhare, if we ſtill continue to furniſh each perſon with the means of purchaſing the ſame quantity as before, the effect muſt be in every reſpect ſimilar.

It ſeems in great meaſure to have eſcaped obſervation, that the price of corn in a ſcarcity, will depend much more upon the obſtinacy with which the ſame degree of conſumption is perſevered in, than on the degree of the actual deficiency. A deficiency of one half of a crop, if the people could immediately conſent to conſume only one half of what they did before, would produce little or no effect on the price of corn. A deficiency of one twelfth, if exactly the ſame conſumption were to continue for ten or eleven months, might raiſe the price of corn to almoſt any height. The more is given in pariſh aſſiſtance, the more power is furniſhed of perſevering in the ſame conſumption, and of courſe the higher will the price riſe before the neceſſary diminution of conſumption is effected.

It has been aſſerted by ſome people that high prices do not diminiſh conſumption. If this were really true, we ſhould ſee the price

of a buſhel of corn at a hundred pounds or more, in every deficiency, which could not be fully and completely remedied by importation. But the fact is, that high prices do ultimately diminiſh conſumption; but, on account of the riches of the country, the unwillingneſs of the people to reſort to ſubſtitutes, and the immenſe ſums, which are diſtributed by pariſhes, this object cannot be attained till the prices become exceſſive, and force even the middle claſſes of ſociety, or at leaſt thoſe immediately above the poor, to ſave in the article of bread from the actual inability of purchaſing it in the uſual quantity. The poor who were aſſiſted by their pariſhes had no reaſon whatever to complain of the high price of grain; becauſe it was the exceſſiveneſs of this price, and this alone, which, by enforcing ſuch a ſaving, left a greater quantity of corn, for the conſumption of the loweſt claſſes, which corn, the pariſh allowances enabled them to command. The greateſt ſufferers in the ſcarcity were undoubtedly the claſſes immediately above the poor; and theſe were in the moſt marked manner depreſſed by the exceſſive bounties given to thoſe below them. Almoſt all poverty is relative; and I much doubt, whether theſe people would have been rendered ſo poor, if a ſum equal to half of theſe bounties had been taken directly out of their pockets, as they were, by that new diſtribution of the money of the ſociety which actually took place [a]. This diſtribution

[a] Suppoſing the lower claſſes to earn on an average ten ſhillings a week, and the claſſes juſt above them, twenty, it is not to be doubted, that, in a ſcarcity, theſe latter would be more ſtraightened in their power of commanding the neceſſaries of life, by a donation of ten ſhillings a week to thoſe below them, than by the ſubtraction of five ſhillings a week from their own earnings. In the one caſe, they would be all reduced to a level; the price of proviſions would riſe in an extraordinary manner from the greatneſs of the competition; and all would be ſtraightened for ſubſiſtence. In the other caſe, the claſſes above the poor would ſtill maintain a conſiderable part of their relative ſuperiority; the price of proviſions would by no means riſe in the ſame degree; and their remaining fifteen ſhillings would purchaſe much more than their twenty ſhillings in the former caſe.

by

by giving to the poorer claſſes a command of food, ſo much greater than their degree of ſkill and induſtry entitled them to, in the actual circumſtances of the country, diminiſhed, exactly in the ſame proportion, that command over the neceſſaries of life, which the claſſes above them, by their ſuperior ſkill and induſtry, would naturally poſſeſs; and it may be a queſtion, whether the degree of aſſiſtance which the poor received, and which prevented them from reſorting to the uſe of thoſe ſubſtitutes, which, in every other country, on ſuch occaſions, the great law of neceſſity teaches, was not more than overbalanced by the ſeverity of the preſſure on ſo large a body of people from the extreme high prices, and the permanent evil which muſt reſult from forcing ſo many perſons on the pariſh, who before thought themſelves almoſt out of the reach of want.

If we were to double the fortunes of all thoſe who poſſeſs above a hundred a year, the effect on the price of grain would be ſlow and inconſiderable; but if we were to double the price of labour throughout the kingdom, the effect, in raiſing the price of grain, would be rapid and great. The general principles on this ſubject will not admit of diſpute; and that in the particular caſe which we have been conſidering, the bounties to the poor were of a magnitude to operate very powerfully in this manner, will ſufficiently appear, if we recollect, that, before the late ſcarcities, the ſum collected for the poor was eſtimated at three millions, and that during the year 1801 it was ſaid to be ten millions. An additional ſeven millions acting at the bottom of the ſcale [a], and employed excluſively in the purchaſe of proviſions, joined to a conſiderable advance in the price of wages in many parts of the kingdom, and increaſed by a prodigious ſum expended in

[a] See a ſmall pamphlet publiſhed in November 1800, entitled, *An inveſtigation of the cauſe of the preſent high price of proviſions*. This pamphlet was miſtaken by ſome for an inquiry into the cauſe of the ſcarcity, and as ſuch, it would naturally appear to be incomplete, adverting, as it does, principally to a ſingle cauſe. But the ſole object of the pamphlet was, to give the principal reaſon for the extreme high price of proviſions, in proportion to the degree of the ſcarcity, admitting the deficiency of one fourth, as ſtated in the Duke of Portland's letter, which, I am much inclined to think, was very near the truth.

 voluntary

voluntary charity, muſt have had a moſt powerful effect in raiſing the price of the neceſſaries of life, if any reliance can be placed on the cleareſt general principles, confirmed as much as poſſible by appearances. A man with a family, has received, to my knowledge, fourteen ſhillings a week from the pariſh. His common earnings were ten ſhillings a week, and his weekly revenue, therefore, twenty-four. Before the ſcarcity, he had been in the habit of purchaſing a buſhel of flour a week with eight ſhillings perhaps, and conſequently had two ſhillings out of his ten, to ſpare for other neceſſaries. During the ſcarcity, he was enabled to purchaſe the ſame quantity at nearly three times the price. He paid twenty-two ſhillings for his buſhel of flour, and had, as before, two ſhillings remaining for other wants. Such inſtances could not poſſibly have been univerſal, without raiſing the price of wheat very much higher than it really was during any part of the dearth. But ſimilar inſtances were by no means infrequent, and the ſyſtem itſelf, of meaſuring the relief given by the price of grain, was general.

If the circulation of the country had conſiſted entirely of ſpecie, which could not have been immediately increaſed, it would have been impoſſible to give ſuch an additional ſum as ſeven millions to the poor, without embarraſſing, to a great degree, the operations of commerce. On the commencement, therefore, of this extenſive relief, which would neceſſarily occaſion a proportionate expenditure in proviſions throughout all the ranks of ſociety, a great demand would be felt for an increaſed circulating medium. The nature of the medium then principally in uſe, was ſuch, that it could be created immediately on demand. From the accounts of the bank of England, as laid before Parliament, it appeared that no very great additional iſſues of paper took place from this quarter. The three millions and a half added to its former average iſſues, were not probably much above what was ſufficient to ſupply the quantity of ſpecie that had been withdrawn from the circulation. If this ſuppoſition be true, and the ſmall quantity of gold which made its appearance

appearance at that time, furniſhes the ſtrongeſt reaſon for believing that as much as this muſt have been been withdrawn, it would follow, that the part of the circulation originating in the bank of England, though changed in its nature, had not been increaſed in its quantity; and with regard to the effect of the circulating medium on the price of all commodities, it cannot be doubted that it would be preciſely the ſame, whether it were made up principally of guineas, or of pound notes and ſhillings, which would paſs current for guineas.

The demand, therefore, for an increaſed circulating medium was left to be ſupplied by the country banks, and it could not be expected that they ſhould heſitate in taking advantage of ſo profitable an opportunity. The paper iſſues of a country bank are, as I conceive, meaſured by the quantity of its notes which will remain in circulation; and this quantity is again meaſured, ſuppoſing a confidence to be eſtabliſhed, by the ſum of what is wanted to carry on all the money tranſactions of the neighbourhood. From the high price of proviſions, all theſe tranſactions became more expenſive. In the ſingle article of the weekly payment of labourers' wages, including the pariſh allowances, it is evident, that a very great addition to the circulating medium of the neighbourhood would be wanted [a]. Had the country banks attempted to iſſue the ſame quantity of paper without ſuch a particular demand for it, they would quickly have been admoniſhed of their error by its rapid and preſſing return upon them; but at this time, it was wanted for immediate and daily uſe, and was therefore eagerly abſorbed into the circulation.

It may even admit of a queſtion, whether, under ſimilar circum-

[a] A riſe of wages, or of pariſh allowances, amounting to any particular ſum, would occaſion a much greater demand for the current circulating medium, than an increaſe of commercial tranſactions to the ſame amount; becauſe, in the firſt caſe, it is the common currency alone which can be uſed; in the latter, much is done by the bills of exchange, &c.; in the firſt alſo, much money is actually wanted, in proportion to the amount of the increaſed payments; in the latter, a little will go a great way.

ſtances, the country banks would not have iſſued nearly the ſame quantity of paper, if the bank of England had not been reſtricted from payment in ſpecie. Before this event, the iſſues of the country banks in paper were regulated by the quantity that the circulation would take up, and after, as well as before, they were obliged to pay the notes which returned upon them in bank of England circulation. The difference in the two caſes, would ariſe principally from the pernicious cuſtom, adopted ſince the reſtriction of the bank, of iſſuing one and two pound notes, and from the little preference that many people might feel, if they could not get gold, between country bank paper, and bank of England paper.

The very great iſſue of country bank paper during the years 1800 and 1801 was evidently, therefore, in its origin rather a conſequence than a cauſe of the high price of proviſions; but being once abſorbed into the circulation, it muſt neceſſarily affect the price of all commodities, and throw very great obſtacles in the way of returning cheapneſs [a]. This is the great miſchief of the ſyſtem. During the ſcarcity itſelf, it is not to be doubted, that the increaſed circulation, by preventing the embarraſſments which commerce and ſpeculation muſt otherwiſe have felt, enabled the country to continue all the branches of its trade with leſs interruption, and to import a much greater quantity of grain, than it could have done otherwiſe; but to overbalance theſe temporary advantages, a laſting evil might be entailed upon the community, and the prices of a time of ſcarcity might become permanent, from the difficulty of re-abſorbing this increaſed circulation.

In this reſpect, however, it is much better that the great iſſue of paper ſhould have come from the country banks, than from the

[a] It does not appear to me that Mr. Thornton in his valuable publication on paper credit, has taken ſufficient notice of the effects of the great paper iſſues of the country banks, in raiſing the price of commodities, and producing an unfavourable ſtate of exchange with foreigners.

bank

bank of England. During the reſtriction of payment in ſpecie, there is no poſſibility of forcing the bank to retake its notes, when too abundant; but with regard to the country banks, as ſoon as their notes are not wanted in the circulation, they will be returned; and if the bank of England notes be not increaſed, which they probably will not be, the whole circulating medium will thus be diminiſhed.

We may conſider ourſelves as peculiarly fortunate that the two years of ſcarcity were ſucceeded by two events the beſt calculated to reſtore plenty and cheapneſs—an abundant harveſt, and a peace; which, together, produced a general conviction of plenty, in the minds both of buyers and ſellers; and, by rendering the firſt ſlow to purchaſe, and the others eager to ſell, occaſioned a glut in the market, and a conſequent rapid fall of price, which has enabled pariſhes to take off their allowances to the poor, and thus to prevent a return of high prices when the alarm among the ſellers was over.

If the two years of ſcarcity had been ſucceeded merely by years of average crops, I am ſtrongly diſpoſed to believe, that as no glut would have taken place in the market, the price of grain would have fallen only in an inconſiderable degree, the pariſh allowances could not have been reſumed, the increaſed quantity of paper would ſtill have been wanted, and the prices of all commodities might by degrees have been regulated, permanently, according to the increaſed circulating medium.

If inſtead of giving the temporary aſſiſtance of pariſh allowances, which might be withdrawn on the firſt fall of price, we had raiſed univerſally the wages of labour, it is evident, that the obſtacles to a diminution of the circulation, and to returning cheapneſs, would have been ſtill further increaſed; and the high price of labour would have become permanent, without any advantage whatever to the labourer.

There is no one that more ardently deſires to ſee a real advance in the price of labour than myſelf; but the attempt to effect this object by forcibly raiſing the nominal price, which was practiſed to a certain

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degree, and recommended almoſt univerſally during the late ſcarcities, every thinking man muſt reprobate as puerile and ineffectual.

The price of labour, when left to find its natural level, is a moſt important political barometer, expreſſing the relation between the ſupply of proviſions, and the demand for them; between the quantity to be conſumed, and the number of conſumers; and taken on the average, independently of accidental circumſtances, it further expreſſes, clearly, the wants of the ſociety reſpecting population; that is, whatever may be the number of children to a marriage neceſſary to maintain exactly the preſent population, the price of labour will be juſt ſufficient to ſupport this number, or be above it, or below it, according to the ſtate of the real funds for the maintenance of labour, whether ſtationary, progreſſive, or retrograde. Inſtead, however, of conſidering it in this light, we conſider it as ſomething which we may raiſe or depreſs at pleaſure, ſomething which depends principally upon his majeſty's juſtices of the peace. When an advance in the price of proviſions already expreſſes that the demand is too great for the ſupply, in order to put the labourer in the ſame condition as before, we raiſe the price of labour, that is, we increaſe the demand, and are then much ſurpriſed that the price of proviſions continues riſing. In this, we act much in the ſame manner, as if, when the quickſilver in the common weather-glaſs ſtood at *ſtormy*, we were to raiſe it by ſome forcible preſſure to *ſettled fair*, and then be greatly aſtoniſhed that it continued raining.

Dr. Smith has clearly ſhewn, that the natural tendency of a year of ſcarcity, is, either to throw a number of labourers out of employment, or to oblige them to work for leſs than they did before, from the inability of maſters to employ the ſame number at the ſame price. The raiſing of the price of wages tends neceſſarily to throw more out of employment, and completely to prevent the good effects which, he ſays, ſometimes ariſe from a year of moderate ſcarcity, that of making the lower claſſes of people do more work, and

and become more careful and induſtrious. The number of ſervants out of place, and of manufacturers wanting employment during the late ſcarcities, were melancholy proofs of the truth of theſe reaſonings. If a general riſe in the wages of labour had taken place proportioned to the price of proviſions, none but farmers and a few gentlemen could have afforded to employ the ſame number of workmen as before. Additional crowds of ſervants and manufacturers would have been turned off; and thoſe who were thus thrown out of employment, would, of courſe, have no other refuge than the pariſh. In the natural order of things, a ſcarcity muſt tend to lower, inſtead of to raiſe, the price of labour.

After the publication, and general circulation of ſuch a work as Dr. Smith's, I confeſs, that it appears to me ſtrange, that ſo many men who would yet aſpire to be thought political economiſts, ſhould ſtill think, that it is in the power of the juſtices of the peace, or even of the omnipotence of parliament, to alter by a *fiat* the whole circumſtances of the country; and when the demand for proviſions is greater than the ſupply, by publiſhing a particular edict, to make the ſupply at once equal to, or greater, than the demand. Many men who would ſhrink at the propoſal of a maximum, would propoſe themſelves, that the price of labour ſhould be proportioned to the price of proviſions, and do not ſeem to be aware, that the two propoſals are very nearly of the ſame nature, and that both tend directly to famine. It matters not, whether we enable the labourer to purchaſe the ſame quantity of proviſions which he did before, by fixing their price, or by raiſing in proportion the price of labour. The only advantage on the ſide of raiſing the price of labour, is, that the riſe in the price of proviſions which neceſſarily follows it, encourages importation: but putting importation out of the queſtion, which might poſſibly be prevented by war, or other circumſtances, a univerſal riſe of wages in proportion to the price of proviſions, aided by adequate pariſh allowances to thoſe who were thrown out of work, would, by preventing any kind of ſaving, in the ſame manner

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as a maximum, cauſe the whole crop to be conſumed in nine months, which ought to have laſted twelve, and thus produce a famine.

As the inefficacy of poor laws, and of attempts forcibly to raiſe the price of labour, are moſt conſpicuous in a ſcarcity, I have thought myſelf juſtified in conſidering them under this view; and as theſe cauſes of increaſed price received great additional force during the late ſcarcity from the increaſe of the circulating medium, I truſt that the few obſervations which I have made on this ſubject, will be conſidered as an allowable digreſſion.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Subject of Poor Laws continued.

INDEPENDENTLY of any conſiderations reſpecting a year of deficient crops, it is evident, that an increaſe of population, without a proportional increaſe of food, muſt lower the value of each man's earnings. The food muſt neceſſarily be diſtributed in ſmaller quantities, and conſequently, a day's labour will purchaſe a ſmaller quantity of proviſions. An increaſe in the price of proviſions will ariſe, either from an increaſe of population faſter than the means of ſubſiſtence, or from a different diſtribution of the money of the ſociety. The food of a country which has been long peopled, if it be increaſing, increaſes ſlowly and regularly, and cannot be made to anſwer any ſudden demands; but variations in the diſtribution of the the money of the ſociety, are not unfrequently occurring, and are undoubtedly among the cauſes which occaſion the continual variations in the prices of proviſions.

The poor laws of England tend to depreſs the general condition of the poor in theſe two ways. Their firſt obvious tendency is to increaſe population without increaſing the food for its ſupport. A poor man may marry with little or no proſpect of being able to ſupport a family without pariſh aſſiſtance. They may be ſaid, therefore, to create the poor which they maintain; and as the proviſions of the country muſt, in conſequence of the increaſed population, be diſtributed to every man in ſmaller proportions, it is evident, that the labour of thoſe who are not ſupported by pariſh

assistance, will purchase a smaller quantity of provisions than before, and consequently more of them must be driven to apply for assistance.

Secondly, the quantity of provisions consumed in workhouses, upon a part of the society, that cannot in general be considered as the most valuable part, diminishes the shares that would otherwise belong to more industrious and more worthy members, and thus, in the same manner, forces more to become dependent. If the poor in the workhouses were to live better than they do now, this new distribution of the money of the society, would tend more conspicuously to depress the condition of those out of the workhouses by occasioning an advance in the price of provisions.

Fortunately for England, a spirit of independence still remains among the peasantry. The poor laws are strongly calculated to eradicate this spirit. They have succeeded in part; but had they succeeded as completely as might have been expected, their pernicious tendency would not have been so long concealed.

Hard as it may appear in individual instances, dependent poverty ought to be held disgraceful. Such a stimulus seems to be absolutely necessary to promote the happiness of the great mass of mankind; and every general attempt to weaken this stimulus, however benevolent its apparent intention, will always defeat its own purpose. If men be induced to marry from the mere prospect of parish provision, they are not only unjustly tempted to bring unhappiness and dependence upon themselves and children, but they are tempted, without knowing it, to injure all in the same class with themselves.

The parish laws of England appear to have contributed to raise the price of provisions, and to lower the real price of labour. They have therefore contributed to impoverish that class of people whose only possession is their labour. It is also difficult to suppose, that they have not powerfully contributed to generate that carelessness and want of frugality observable among the poor, so contrary to the disposition generally to be remarked among petty tradesmen and

small farmers. The labouring poor, to use a vulgar expression, seem always to live from hand to mouth. Their present wants employ their whole attention; and they seldom think of the future. Even when they have an opportunity of saving, they seldom exercise it; but all that they earn beyond their present necessities, goes, generally speaking, to the alehouse. The poor laws may, therefore, be said to diminish both the power, and the will, to save, among the common people, and thus to weaken one of the strongest incentives to sobriety and industry, and consequently to happiness.

It is a general complaint among master manufacturers that high wages ruin all their workmen; but it is difficult to conceive that these men would not save a part of their high wages for the future support of their families, instead of spending it in drunkenness and dissipation, if they did not rely on parish assistance for support in case of accidents. And that the poor employed in manufactures consider this assistance as a reason why they may spend all the wages which they earn, and enjoy themselves while they can, appears to be evident, from the number of families that, upon the failure of any great manufactory, immediately fall upon the parish; when, perhaps, the wages earned in this manufactory while it flourished, were sufficiently above the price of common country labour, to have allowed them to save enough for their support, till they could find some other channel for their industry.

A man who might not be deterred from going to the alehouse, from the consideration that, on his death, or sickness, he should leave his wife and family upon the parish, might yet hesitate in thus dissipating his earnings, if he were assured that, in either of these cases, his family must starve, or be left to the support of casual bounty.

The mass of happiness among the common people cannot but be diminished, when one of the strongest checks to idleness and dissipation is thus removed; and positive institutions, which render

dependent poverty ſo general, weaken that diſgrace, which for the beſt and moſt humane reaſons ought to be attached to it.

Tho' poor laws of England were undoubtedly inſtituted for the moſt benevolent purpoſe; but it is evident, that they have failed in attaining it. They certainly mitigate ſome caſes of ſevere diſtreſs, which might otherwiſe occur, though the ſtate of the poor who are ſupported by pariſhes, conſidered in all its circumſtances, is very miſerable. But one of the principal objections to the ſyſtem, is, that for the aſſiſtance which ſome of the poor receive, in itſelf almoſt a doubtful bleſſing, the whole claſs of the common people of England is ſubjected to a ſet of grating, inconvenient, and tyrannical laws, totally inconſiſtent with the genuine ſpirit of the conſtitution. The whole buſineſs of ſettlements, even in its preſent amended ſtate, is contradictory to all ideas of freedom. The pariſh perſecution of men whoſe families are likely to become chargeable, and of poor women who are near lying-in, is a moſt diſgraceful and diſguſting tyranny. And the obſtructions continually occaſioned in the market of labour by theſe laws, have a conſtant tendency to add to the difficulties of thoſe who are ſtruggling to ſupport themſelves without aſſiſtance.

Theſe evils attendant on the poor laws ſeem to be irremediable. If aſſiſtance be to be diſtributed to a certain claſs of people, a power muſt be lodged ſomewhere of diſcriminating the proper objects, and of managing the concerns of the inſtitutions that are neceſſary; but any great interference with the affairs of other people, is a ſpecies of tyranny; and, in the common courſe of things, the exerciſe of this power may be expected to become grating to thoſe who are driven to aſk for ſupport. The tyranny of juſtices, churchwardens, and overſeers, is a common complaint among the poor; but the fault does not lie ſo much in theſe perſons, who, probably, before they were in power, were not worſe than other people, but in the nature of all ſuch inſtitutions.

It

It will ſcarcely admit of a doubt, that if the poor laws had never exiſted in this country, though there might have been a few more inſtances of very ſevere diſtreſs, the aggregate maſs of happineſs among the common people would have been much greater than it is at preſent.

The radical defect of all ſyſtems of the kind, is, that of tending to increaſe population, without increaſing the means for its ſupport, and, by thus depreſſing the condition of thoſe that are not relieved by pariſhes, to create more poor. If, indeed, we examine ſome of our ſtatutes, ſtrictly, with reference to the principle of population, we ſhall find that they attempt an abſolute impoſſibility; and we cannot be ſurpriſed therefore, that they ſhould conſtantly fail in the attainment of their object.

The famous 43d of Elizabeth, which has been ſo often referred to, and admired, enacts, that the overſeers of the poor, "ſhall take "order from time to time, by and with the conſent of two or more "juſtices, for ſetting to work the children of all ſuch whoſe parents "ſhall not, by the ſaid perſons, be thought able to keep and main- "tain their children; and alſo ſuch perſons married or unmarried, "as, having no means to maintain them, uſe no ordinary and daily "trade of life to get their living by. And alſo to raiſe, weekly or "otherwiſe, by taxation of every inhabitant, and every occupier of "lands in the ſaid pariſh, (in ſuch competent ſums as they ſhall "think fit,) a convenient ſtock of flax, hemp, wool, thread, iron, "and other neceſſary ware and ſtuff, to ſet the poor to work."

What is this but ſaying, that the funds for the maintenance of labour in this country may be increaſed at will, and without limit, by a *fiat* of government, or an aſſeſſment of the overſeers. Strictly ſpeaking, this clauſe is as arrogant and as abſurd, as if it had enacted that two ears of wheat ſhould in future grow, where one only had grown before. Canute, when he commanded the waves not to wet his princely foot, did not, in reality, aſſume a greater power over the laws of nature. No directions are given to the overſeers how to

increaſe the funds for the maintenance of labour; the neceſſity of induſtry, economy, and enlightened exertion, in the management of agricultural and commercial capital is not inſiſted on, for this purpoſe; but it is expected, that a miraculous increaſe of theſe funds ſhould immediately follow an edict of the government, uſed at the diſcretion of ſome ignorant pariſh officers.

If this clauſe were really, and *bona fide*, put in execution, and the ſhame attending the receiving of pariſh aſſiſtance worn off, every labouring man might marry as early as he pleaſed, under the certain proſpect of having all his children properly provided for; and as, according to the ſuppoſition, there would be no check to population from the conſequences of poverty after marriage, the increaſe of people would be rapid beyond example in old ſtates. After what has been ſaid in the former parts of this work, it is ſubmitted to the reader, whether the utmoſt exertions of the moſt enlightened government could, in this caſe, make the food keep pace with the population, much leſs a mere arbitrary edict, the tendency of which is certainly rather to diminiſh than to increaſe the funds for the maintenance of productive labour.

In the actual circumſtances of every country, the principle of population ſeems to be always ready to exert nearly its full force; but, within the limit of poſſibility, there is nothing perhaps more improbable, or more out of the power of any government to effect, than the direction of the induſtry of its ſubjects in ſuch a manner, as to produce the greateſt quantity of human ſuſtenance that the earth could bear. It evidently could not be done without the moſt complete violation of the law of property, from which every thing that is valuable to man has hitherto ariſen. Such is the diſpoſition to marry, particularly in very young people, that, if the difficulties of providing for a family were entirely removed, very few would remain ſingle at twenty-two. But what ſtateſman, or rational government, could propoſe, that, all animal food ſhould be prohibited, that no horſes ſhould be uſed for buſineſs or pleaſure, that all the people ſhould

ſhould live upon potatoes, and that the whole induſtry of the nation ſhould be exerted in the production of them, except what was neceſſary for the mere neceſſaries of clothing and houſes. Could ſuch a revolution be effected, would it be deſirable; particularly, as in a few years, notwithſtanding all theſe exertions, want, with leſs reſource than ever, would inevitably recur.

After a country has once ceaſed to be in the peculiar ſituation of a new colony, we ſhall always find, that, in the actual ſtate of its cultivation, or in that ſtate, which may rationally be expected from the moſt enlightened government, the increaſe of its food can never allow, for any length of time, an unreſtricted increaſe of population; and therefore, the due execution of the clauſe in the 39th of Elizabeth, as a permanent law, is a phyſical impoſſibility.

It will be ſaid, perhaps, that the fact contradicts the theory, and that the clauſe in queſtion has remained in force, and has been executed during the laſt two hundred years. In anſwer to this, I ſhould ſay without heſitation, that it has not really been executed; and that it is merely owing to its incomplete execution, that it remains on our ſtatute book at preſent.

The ſcanty relief granted to perſons in diſtreſs, the capricious and inſulting manner in which it is ſometimes diſtributed by the overſeers, and the natural and becoming pride not yet quite extinct among the peaſantry of England, have deterred the more thinking and virtuous part of them, from venturing on marriage, without ſome better proſpect of maintaining their families, than mere pariſh aſſiſtance. The deſire of bettering our condition and the fear of making it worſe, like the *vis medicatrix naturæ* in phyſicks, is the *vis medicatrix reipublicæ* in politicks, and is continually counteracting the diſorders ariſing from narrow human inſtitutions. In ſpite of the prejudices in favour of population, and the direct encouragements to marriage from the poor laws, it operates as a preventive check to increaſe; and happy for this country is it that it does ſo.

Thoſe

Thoſe who are not deterred for a time from marriage, by conſiderations of this nature, are either relieved very ſcantily at their own homes, where they ſuffer all the conſequences ariſing from ſqualid poverty; or they are crowded together in cloſe and unwholeſome workhouſes, where a great mortality almoſt univerſally takes place, particularly among the young children. The dreadful account given by Jonas Hanway of the treatment of pariſh children in London, is too well known to need a comment; and it appears from Mr. Howlett, and other writers, that in ſome parts of the country they are not very much better off. A great part of the redundant population occaſioned by the poor laws, is thus taken off by the operation of the laws themſelves, or at leaſt by their ill execution. The remaining part which ſurvives, by cauſing the funds for the maintenance of labour to be divided among a greater number than can be properly maintained by them, and by turning a conſiderable ſhare from the ſupport of the diligent and careful workman, to the ſupport of the idle and the negligent, depreſſes the condition of all thoſe who are out of the workhouſes, forces more every year into them, and has ultimately produced the enormous evil which we all ſo juſtly deplore, that of the great and unnatural proportion of the people which is now become dependent upon charity.

If this be a juſt repreſentation of the manner in which the clauſe in queſtion has been executed, and of the effects which it has produced, it muſt be allowed that we have practiſed an unpardonable deceit upon the poor, and have promiſed what we have been very far from performing. It may be aſſerted, without danger of exaggeration, that the poor laws have deſtroyed many more lives than they have preſerved.

The attempts to employ the poor on any great ſcale in manufactures have almoſt invariably failed, and the ſtock and materials have been waſted. In thoſe few pariſhes which, by better management, or larger funds, have been enabled to perſevere in this ſyſtem, the effect of theſe new manufactures in the market, muſt have been, to throw out of employment many independent workmen who were before

before engaged in fabrications of a ſimilar nature. This effect has been placed in a ſtrong point of view by Daniel de Foe, in an addreſs to parliament, entitled, *Giving alms no charity*. Speaking of the employment of pariſh children in manufactures, he ſays, For every ſkein of worſted theſe poor children ſpin, there muſt be a ſkein the leſs ſpun by ſome poor family that ſpun it before; and for every piece of bays ſo made in London, there muſt be a piece the leſs made at Colcheſter, or ſomewhere elſe [a]. Sir F. M. Eden, on the ſame ſubject, obſerves, that whether mops and brooms are made by pariſh children, or by private workmen, no more can be ſold than the publick is in want of [b].

It will be ſaid, perhaps, that the ſame reaſoning might be applied to any new capital brought into competition in a particular trade or manufacture, which can rarely be done without injuring, in ſome degree, thoſe that were engaged in it before. But there is a material difference in the two caſes. In this, the competition is perfectly fair, and what every man, on entering into buſineſs, muſt lay his account to. He may reſt ſecure that he ſhall not be ſupplanted, unleſs his competitor poſſeſs ſuperior ſkill and induſtry. In the other caſe, the competition is ſupported by a great bounty, by which means, notwithſtanding very inferior ſkill and induſtry, on the part of his competitors, the independent workman may be underſold, and

[a] See extracts from Daniel de Foe, in Sir F. M. Eden's valuable work on the poor, vol. i. p. 261.

[b] Sir F. Eden ſpeaking of the ſuppoſed right of the poor to be ſupplied with employment while able to work, and with a maintenance when incapacitated from labour, very juſtly remarks, "It may, however, be doubted, whether any right, the gratification of "which ſeems to be impracticable, can be ſaid to exiſt," vol. i. p. 447. No man has collected ſo many materials for forming a judgment on the effects of the poor laws as Sir F. Eden, and the reſult he thus expreſſes. "Upon the whole, therefore, there ſeems "to be juſt grounds for concluding that the ſum of good to be expected from a com-"pulſory maintenance of the poor, will be far outbalanced by the ſum of evil which "it will inevitably create," vol. i. p. 467. I am happy to have the ſanction of ſo practical an inquirer to my opinion of the poor laws.

unjuſtly excluded from the market. He himſelf, perhaps, is made to contribute to this competition againſt his own earnings, and the funds for the maintenance of labour are thus turned, from the ſupport of a trade which yields a proper profit, to one which cannot maintain itſelf without a bounty. It ſhould be obſerved, in general, that when a fund for the maintenance of labour is raiſed by aſſeſſment, the greateſt part of it is not a new capital brought into trade, but an old one, which before was much more profitably employed, turned into a new channel. The farmer pays to the poor's rates, for the encouragement of a bad and unprofitable manufacture, what he would have employed on his land with infinitely more advantage to his country. In the one caſe, the funds for the maintenance of labour, are daily diminiſhed; in the other, daily increaſed. And this obvious tendency of aſſeſſments for the employment of the poor, to decreaſe the real funds for the maintenance of labour in any country, aggravates the abſurdity of ſuppoſing that it is in the power of a government to find employment for all its ſubjects, however faſt they may increaſe.

It is not intended that theſe reaſonings ſhould be applied againſt every mode of employing the poor on a limited ſcale, and with ſuch reſtrictions, as might not encourage, at the ſame time, their increaſe. I would never wiſh to puſh general principles too far, though I think that they ought always to be kept in view. In particular caſes, the individual good to be obtained may be ſo great, and the general evil ſo ſlight, that the former may clearly overbalance the latter.

The intention is merely to ſhew, that the poor laws, as a general ſyſtem, are founded on a groſs error; and that the common declamation on the ſubject of the poor, which we ſee ſo often in print, and hear continually in converſation, namely, that the market price of labour ought always to be ſufficient decently to ſupport a family, and that employment ought to be found for all thoſe who are willing to work, is in effect to ſay, that the funds for the maintenance

nance of labour, in this country, are not only infinite, but might be made to increaſe with ſuch rapidity, that, ſuppoſing us to have at preſent ſix millions of labourers, including their families, we might have 96 millions in another century; or if theſe funds had been properly managed ſince the beginning of the reign of Edward I. ſuppoſing that there were then only two millions of labourers, we might now have poſſeſſed above four million millions of labourers, or about four thouſand times as many labourers as it has been calculated that there are people now on the face of the earth.

CHAP. VII.

Of increaſing Wealth as it affects the Condition of the Poor.

THE profeſſed object of Dr. Smith's inquiry, is, the nature and cauſes of the wealth of nations. There is another, however, perhaps ſtill more intereſting, which he occaſionally mixes with it, the cauſes which affect the happineſs and comfort of the lower orders of ſociety, which is the moſt numerous claſs in every nation. I am ſufficiently aware of the near connexion of theſe two ſubjects, and that, generally ſpeaking, the cauſes which contribute to increaſe the wealth of a ſtate, tend alſo to increaſe the happineſs of the lower claſſes of the people. But perhaps Dr. Smith has conſidered theſe two inquiries, as ſtill more nearly connected than they really are; at leaſt, he has not ſtopped to take notice of thoſe inſtances, where the wealth of a ſociety may increaſe, according to his definition of wealth, without having any tendency to increaſe the comforts of the labouring part of it.

I do not mean to enter into any philoſophical diſcuſſion of what conſtitutes the proper happineſs of man, but ſhall merely conſider two univerſally acknowledged ingredients, the command of the neceſſaries and comforts of life, and the poſſeſſion of health.

The comforts of the labouring poor muſt neceſſarily depend upon the funds deſtined for the maintenance of labour; and will generally be in proportion to the rapidity of their increaſe. The demand for labour, which ſuch increaſe occaſions, will of courſe raiſe the value of labour; and till the additional number of hands required are reared,

reared, the increaſed funds will be diſtributed to the ſame number of perſons as before, and therefore, every labourer will live comparatively at his eaſe. The error of Dr. Smith lies in repreſenting every increaſe of the revenue or ſtock of a ſociety, as an increaſe of theſe funds. Such ſurplus ſtock or revenue, will indeed always be conſidered by the individual poſſeſſing it, as an additional fund from which he may maintain more labour: but it will not be a real and effectual fund for the maintenance of an additional number of labourers, unleſs the whole, or at leaſt a great part of it, be convertible into a proportional quantity of proviſions; and it will not be ſo convertible where the increaſe has ariſen merely from the produce of labour, and not from the produce of land. A diſtinction will in this caſe occur between the number of hands which the ſtock of the ſociety could employ, and the number which its territory can maintain.

Dr. Smith defines the wealth of a ſtate to be, the annual produce of its land and labour. This definition evidently includes manufactured produce, as well as the produce of the land. Now, ſuppoſing a nation, for a courſe of years, to add what it ſaved from its yearly revenue to its manufacturing capital ſolely, and not to its capital employed upon land, it is evident that it might grow richer according to the above definition, without a power of ſupporting a greater number of labourers, and therefore, without any increaſe in the real funds for the maintenance of labour. There would, notwithſtanding, be a demand for labour, from the power that each manufacturer would poſſeſs, or at leaſt think he poſſeſſed, of extending his old ſtock in trade, or of ſetting up freſh works. This demand, would of courſe raiſe the price of labour; but if the yearly ſtock of proviſions in the country were not increaſing, this riſe would ſoon turn out to be merely nominal, as the price of proviſions muſt neceſſarily riſe with it. The demand for manufacturing labourers might, indeed, entice many from agriculture, and thus tend to diminiſh the annual produce of the land; but we will ſuppoſe

ſuppoſe any effects of this kind to be compenſated by improvements in the inſtruments, or mode, of agriculture, and the quantity of proviſions therefore to remain the ſame. Improvements in manufacturing machinery would of courſe take place; and this circumſtance, added to the greater number of hands employed in manufactures, would augment conſiderably the annual produce of the labour of the country. The wealth, therefore, of the country would be increaſing annually, according to the definition, and might not be increaſing very ſlowly.

The queſtion is, how far, wealth, increaſing in this way, has a tendency to better the condition of the labouring poor. It is a ſelf-evident propoſition that any general advance in the price of labour, the ſtock of proviſions remaining the ſame, can only be a nominal advance, as it muſt ſhortly be followed by a proportional riſe in proviſions. The increaſe in the price of labour which we have ſuppoſed, would have no permanent effect therefore in giving to the labouring poor a greater command over the neceſſaries of life. In this reſpect, they would be nearly in the ſame ſtate as before. In ſome other reſpects, they would be in a worſe ſtate. A greater proportion of them would be employed in manufactures, and fewer conſequently in agriculture. And this exchange of profeſſions will be allowed, I think, by all to be very unfavourable, in reſpect of health, one eſſential ingredient of happineſs, and alſo with regard to the greater uncertainty of manufacturing labour, ariſing from the capricious taſte of man, the accidents of war, and other cauſes, which occaſionally produce very ſevere diſtreſs among the lower claſſes of ſociety. On the ſtate of the poor employed in manufactories, with reſpect to health and other circumſtances which affect their happineſs, I will beg leave to quote a paſſage from Dr. Aikin's deſcription of the country round Mancheſter.

" The invention and improvements of machines to ſhorten labour,
" have had a ſurpriſing influence to extend our trade, and alſo to
" call

" call in hands from all parts, eſpecially children for the cotton
" mills. It is the wiſe plan of Providence, that in this life there
" ſhall be no good without its attendant inconvenience. There are
" many which are too obvious in theſe cotton mills and ſimilar
" factories, which counteract that increaſe of population uſually
" conſequent on the improved facility of labour. In theſe, children
" of very tender age are employed, many of them collected from
" the workhouſes in London and Weſtminſter, and tranſported in
" crowds, as apprentices to maſters reſident many hundred miles
" diſtant, where they ſerve unknown, unprotected, and forgotten by
" thoſe to whoſe care, nature, or the laws, had conſigned them. Theſe
" children are uſually too long confined to work in cloſe rooms,
" often during the whole night. The air they breath from the
" oil, &c. employed in the machinery, and other circumſtances, is
" injurious; little attention is paid to their cleanlineſs; and frequent
" changes from a warm and denſe, to a cold and thin atmoſphere,
" are prediſpoſing cauſes to ſickneſs and diſability, and particularly
" to the epidemick fever which is ſo generally to be met with in
" theſe factories. It is alſo much to be queſtioned, if ſocicty does
" not receive detriment, from the manner in which children are
" thus employed during their early years. They are not generally
" ſtrong to labour, or capable of purſuing any other branch of
" buſineſs when the term of their apprenticeſhip expires. The
" females are wholly uninſtructed in ſowing, knitting, and other
" domeſtick affairs, requiſite to make them notable, and frugal
" wives and mothers. This is a very great misfortune to them and
" the publick, as is ſadly proved by a compariſon of the families of
" labourers in huſbandry, and thoſe of manufacturers in general.
" In the former we meet with neatneſs, cleanlineſs and comfort;
" in the latter, with filth, rags, and poverty, although their wages
" may be nearly double to thoſe of the huſbandman. It muſt be
" added that the want of early religious inſtruction and example,
" and

" and the numerous and indiſcriminate aſſociation in theſe buildings, " are very unfavourable to their future conduct in life[a].

In addition to the evils mentioned in this paſſage, we all know how ſubject particular manufactures are to fail, from the caprice of taſte, or the accident of war. The weavers of Spitalfields were plunged into the moſt ſevere diſtreſs by the faſhion of muſlins inſtead of ſilks; and numbers of the workmen in Sheffield and Birmingham were, for a time, thrown out of employment, from the adoption of ſhoe-ſtrings and covered buttons, inſtead of buckles and metal buttons. Our manufactures, taken in the maſs, have increaſed with great rapidity, but, in particular places, they have failed, and the pariſhes, where this has happened, are invariably loaded with a crowd of poor, in the moſt diſtreſſed and miſerable condition. In the work of Dr. Aikin juſt alluded to, it appears that the regiſter for the collegiate church at Mancheſter, from Chriſtmas 1793 to Chriſtmas 1794, ſtated a decreaſe of 168 marriages, 538 chriſtenings, and 250 burials. And in the pariſh of Rochdale, in the neighbourhood, a ſtill more melancholy reduction, in proportion to the number of people, took place. In 1792, the births were 746, the burials 646, and the marriages 339. In 1794, the births were 373, the burials 671, and the marriages 199. The cauſe of this ſudden check to population, was the commencement of the war, and the failure of commercial credit, which occurred about this time; and ſuch a check could not have taken place, in ſo ſudden a manner, without being occaſioned by the moſt ſevere diſtreſs.

Under ſuch circumſtances of ſituation, unleſs the increaſe of the riches of a country from manufactures, give the lower claſſes of the ſociety, on an average, a decidedly greater command over the

[a] P. 219. Endeavours have been made, Dr. Aikin ſays, to remedy theſe evils, and in ſome factories they have been attended with ſucceſs. An act of parliament has of late alſo paſſed on this ſubject, from which it is hoped, that much good will reſult.

neceſſaries and conveniencies of life, it will not appear that their condition is improved.

It will be ſaid, perhaps, that the advance in the price of proviſions will immediately turn ſome additional capital into the channel of agriculture, and thus occaſion a much greater produce. But from experience, it appears, that this is an effect which takes place very ſlowly, particularly when, as in the preſent inſtance, an advance in the price of labour had preceded the advance in the price of proviſions, and would therefore tend to impede the good effects upon agriculture, which the increaſed value of the produce of land might otherwiſe have occaſioned.

It may alſo be ſaid, that the additional capital of the nation would enable it to import proviſions, ſufficient for the maintenance of thoſe whom its ſtock could employ. A ſmall country, with a large navy, and great accommodations for inland carriage, may indeed import and diſtribute an effectual quantity of proviſions: but in large landed nations, if they may be ſo called, an importation adequate at all times to the demand, is ſcarcely poſſible. It ſeems in great meaſure to have eſcaped attention, that a nation, which, from its extent of territory and population, muſt neceſſarily ſupport the greater part of its people on the produce of its own ſoil; but which yet, on average years, draws a ſmall portion of its corn from abroad, is in a much more precarious ſituation with regard to the conſtancy of its ſupplies, than ſuch ſtates as draw almoſt the whole of their proviſions from other countries. The demands of Holland and Hamburgh may be known with conſiderable accuracy by thoſe who ſupply them. If they increaſe, they increaſe gradually, and are not ſubject, from year to year, to any great and ſudden variations. But it is otherwiſe with ſuch a country as England. Suppoſing it, in average years, to want about four hundred thouſand quarters of wheat. Such a demand will of courſe be very eaſily ſupplied. But a year of deficient crops occurs, and the demand is ſuddenly two millions of quarters. If

the demand had been, on an average, two millions, it might perhaps have been adequately ſupplied, from the extended agriculture of thoſe countries which are in the habit of exporting corn: but we cannot expect that it can eaſily be anſwered thus ſuddenly; and indeed, we know from experience, that an unuſual demand of this nature, in a nation capable of paying for it, cannot exiſt, without raiſing the price of wheat very conſiderably in all the ports of Europe. Hamburgh, Holland, and the ports of the Baltic, felt very ſenſibly the high prices of England during the late ſcarcity; and I have been informed from very good authority, that the price of bread in New York was little inferior to the higheſt price in London.

A nation, poſſeſſed of a large territory, is unavoidably ſubject to this uncertainty in its means of ſubſiſtence, when the commercial part of its population is either equal to, or has increaſed beyond, the ſurplus produce of its cultivators. No reſerve being, in theſe caſes, left in exportation, the full effect of every deficiency from unfavourable ſeaſons muſt neceſſarily be felt; and though the riches of ſuch a country may enable it, for a certain period, to continue raiſing the nominal price of wages, ſo as to give the lower claſſes of the ſociety a power of purchaſing imported corn at a high price; yet, as a ſudden demand can very ſeldom be fully anſwered, the competition in the market will invariably raiſe the price of proviſions, in full proportion to the advance in the price of labour; the lower claſſes will be but little relieved; and the dearth will operate ſeverely throughout all the ranks of ſociety.

According to the natural order of things, years of ſcarcity muſt occaſionally recur, in all landed nations. They ought always therefore to enter into our conſideration; and the proſperity of any country may juſtly be conſidered as precarious, in which the funds for the maintenance of labour are liable to great and ſudden fluctuations, from every unfavourable variation in the ſeaſons.

But putting, for the preſent, years of ſcarcity out of the queſtion; when the commercial population of any country increaſes ſo much beyond

beyond the ſurplus produce of the cultivators, that the demand for imported corn is not eaſily ſupplied, and the price riſes in proportion to the price of wages, no further increaſe of riches will have any tendency to give the labourer a greater command over the neceſſaries of life. In the progreſs of wealth, this will naturally take place; either from the largeneſs of the ſupply wanted; the increaſed diſtance from which it is brought, and conſequently the increaſed expence of importation; the greater conſumption of it in the countries in which it is uſually purchaſed; or what muſt unavoidably happen, the neceſſity of a greater diſtance of inland carriage, in theſe countries. Such a nation, by increaſing induſtry, and increaſing ingenuity in the improvement of machinery, may ſtill go on increaſing the yearly quantity of its manufactured produce; but its funds for the maintenance of labour, and conſequently its population, will be perfectly ſtationary. This point is the natural limit to the population of all commercial ſtates[a].

That every increaſe of the ſtock or revenue of a nation cannot be conſidered as an increaſe of the real funds for the maintenance of labour, and therefore, cannot have the ſame good effect upon the condition of the poor, will appear in a ſtrong light, if the argument be applied to China.

Dr. Smith obſerves, that China has probably long been as rich as the nature of her laws and inſtitutions will admit; but that, with other laws and inſtitutions, and if foreign commerce were held in honour, ſhe might ſtill be much richer. The queſtion is, would ſuch an increaſe of wealth, be an increaſe of the real funds for the maintenance of labour, and conſequently tend to place the lower claſſes of people in China in a ſtate of greater plenty?

If trade and foreign commerce were held in great honour in China, it is evident, that, from the great number of labourers, and the cheapneſs of labour, ſhe might work up manufactures for foreign ſale to an immenſe amount. It is equally evident, that, from the

[a] Sir James Steuart's Political Œconomy, vol. i. b. i. c. xviii. p. 119.

great bulk of proviſions, and the amazing extent of her inland territory, ſhe could not in return import ſuch a quantity, as would be any ſenſible addition to the annual ſtock of ſubſiſtence in the country. Her immenſe amount of manufactures, therefore, ſhe would exchange chiefly for luxuries collected from all parts of the world. At preſent it appears, that no labour whatever is ſpared in the production of food. The country is rather overpeopled in proportion to what its ſtock can employ, and labour is therefore ſo abundant, that no pains are taken to abridge it. The conſequence of this is probably the greateſt production of food that the ſoil can poſſibly afford; for it will be generally obſerved, that proceſſes for abridging labour, though they may enable a farmer to bring a certain quantity of grain cheaper to market, tend rather to diminiſh than increaſe the whole produce. An immenſe capital could not be employed in China in preparing manufactures for foreign trade, without taking off ſo many labourers from agriculture, as to alter this ſtate of things, and, in ſome degree, to diminiſh the produce of the country. The demand for manufacturing labourers would naturally raiſe the price of labour; but as the quantity of ſubſiſtence would not be increaſed, the price of proviſions would keep pace with it, or even more than keep pace with it, if the quantity of proviſions were really decreaſing. The country would, however, be evidently advancing in wealth; the exchangeable value of the annual produce of its land and labour would be annually augmented; yet the real funds for the maintenance of labour would be ſtationary, or even declining; and conſequently the increaſing wealth of the nation would tend rather to depreſs than to raiſe the condition of the poor[a].

[a] The condition of the poor in China is, indeed, very miſerable at preſent; but this is not owing to their want of foreign commerce, but to their extreme tendency to marriage and increaſe; and if this tendency were to continue the ſame, the only way in which the introduction of a greater number of manufacturers could poſſibly make the lower claſſes of people richer, would be, by increaſing the mortality amongſt them, which is certainly not a very deſirable mode of growing rich.

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With regard to the command over the neceſſaries of life, they would be in the ſame, or rather worſe ſtate, than before; and a great part of them would have exchanged the healthy labours of agriculture for the unhealthy occupations of manufacturing induſtry.

The argument, perhaps, appears clearer when applied to China, becauſe it is generally allowed, that its wealth has been long ſtationary, and its ſoil cultivated nearly to the utmoſt. With regard to any other country, it might always be a matter of diſpute, at which of the two periods compared, wealth was increaſing the faſteſt, as it is upon the rapidity of the increaſe of wealth, at any particular period, that, Dr. Smith ſays, the condition of the poor depends. It is evident, however, that two nations might increaſe exactly with the ſame rapidity in the exchangeable value of the annual produce of their land and labour; yet, if one had applied itſelf chiefly to agriculture, and the other chiefly to commerce, the funds for the maintenance of labour, and conſequently the effect of the increaſe of wealth in each nation, would be extremely different. In that, which had applied itſelf chiefly to agriculture, the poor would live in greater plenty, and population would rapidly increaſe. In that, which had applied itſelf chiefly to commerce, the poor would be comparatively but little benefited, and conſequently, population would either be ſtationary, or increaſe very ſlowly.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the Definitions of Wealth. Agricultural and Commercial Syſtems.

A QUESTION ſeems naturally to ariſe here, whether the exchangeable value of the annual produce of the land and labour, is the proper definition of the wealth of a country, or whether merely the produce of land, according to the French Economiſts, may not be a more correct definition. Certain it is, that every increaſe of wealth, according to this definition, will be an increaſe of the funds for the maintenance of labour, and conſequently will always tend to ameliorate the condition of the labouring poor, and increaſe population; though an increaſe of wealth, according to Dr. Smith's definition, will by no means invariably have the ſame tendency. And yet it may not follow, from this conſideration, that Dr. Smith's definition is falſe.

The Economiſts conſider all labour employed in manufactures as unproductive; and in endeavouring to diſprove this poſition, Dr. Smith has been accuſed of arguing obſcurely and inconcluſively. He appears to me, however, only incorrect in applying his own definition to try the reaſoning, by which the Economiſts ſupport theirs; when, in fact, the queſtion was, reſpecting the truth or falſehood of the definitions themſelves; and, of courſe, one could not be applied as a teſt to the other. Nothing can be more clear than that manufactures increaſe the wealth of a ſtate according to Dr. Smith's definition; and it is equally clear, that they do not increaſe it, according to the definition of the Economiſts. The queſtion of the productiveneſs or unproductiveneſs of manufactures, is allowed by the Economiſts

Economiſts to be a queſtion reſpecting net produce; and the determination of this queſtion either way, would not affect Dr. Smith's definition, which includes produce of every kind, whether net, or otherwiſe. And in the ſame manner, the proof of a net produce ariſing to individuals from manufactures, would not really invalidate the definition of the Economiſts, though they have laid themſelves open to objections from this quarter, by the manner in which they have defended their poſition.

They ſay, that labour employed upon land is productive, becauſe the produce, over and above completely paying the labourer and the farmer, affords a clear rent to the landlord; and that the labour employed upon a piece of lace is unproductive, becauſe it merely replaces the proviſions that the workman had conſumed while making it, and the ſtock of his employer, without affording any clear rent whatever. But ſuppoſing the value of the wrought lace to be ſuch, as that beſides paying in the moſt complete manner, the workman and his employer, it could afford a clear rent to a third perſon, the ſtate of the caſe would not really be altered. Though, according to this mode of reaſoning, the man employed in the manufacture of lace, would, upon the preſent ſuppoſition, appear to be a productive labourer; yet, according to their definition of the wealth of a ſtate, he ought not to be conſidered in that light. He will have added nothing to the produce of the land. He has conſumed a portion of this produce, and has left a piece of lace in return; and though he may ſell this piece of lace for three times the quantity of proviſions which he conſumed while he was making it, and thus be a very productive labourer with regard to himſelf; yet he has added nothing by his labour to the eſſential wealth of the ſtate.

Suppoſe, that two hundred thouſand men, who are now employed in producing manufactures, that only tend to gratify the vanity of a few rich people, were to be employed on ſome barren uncultivated land, and to produce only half of the quantity of food that they themſelves

themſelves conſumed, they might ſtill be conſidered, in ſome reſpects, as more productive labourers than they were before. In their former employment, they conſumed a certain portion of the food of the country, and left in return ſome ſilks and laces. In their latter employment, they conſumed the ſame quantity of food, and left in return, proviſion for a hundred thouſand men. There can be little doubt which of the two legacies would be the moſt really beneficial to the country, and which, according to the definition of the Economiſts, would add the moſt to the wealth of the ſtate.

A capital employed upon land may be unproductive to the individual that employs it, and yet be productive to the ſociety. A capital employed in trade, on the contrary, may be highly productive to the individual, and yet be almoſt totally unproductive to the ſociety. It is indeed impoſſible to ſee the great fortunes that are made in commerce, and, at the ſame time, the liberality with which ſo many merchants live, and yet agree in the ſtatement of the Economiſts, that manufacturers can only grow rich by depriving themſelves of the funds deſtined for their ſupport. In many branches of trade the profits are ſo great, as would allow of a clear rent to a third perſon; but as there is no third perſon in the caſe, and all the profits centre in the merchant or maſter manufacturer, he ſeems to have a fair chance of growing rich without much privation, and we conſequently ſee large fortunes acquired in trade by perſons who have not been remarked for their parſimony.

Theſe fortunes, however, by which individuals are greatly enriched, do not enrich proportionally the whole ſociety, and, in ſome reſpects, have even a contrary tendency. The home trade of conſumption is by far the moſt important trade of every nation. Putting then, for a moment, foreign trade out of the queſtion, the man who, by an ingenious manufacture, obtains a double portion out of the old ſtock of proviſions, will certainly not be ſo uſeful to the ſtate, as the man, who, by his labour, adds a ſingle ſhare to the former ſtock. And this

this view of the ſubject, ſhews that manufactures are eſſentially different from the produce of the land, and that the queſtion reſpecting their productiveneſs, or unproductiveneſs, by no means depends entirely upon the largeneſs of the profits upon them, or upon their yielding or not yielding a clear rent. If the Economiſts would allow, which, from the manner in which they expreſs themſelves, they might be ſometimes ſuppoſed to do, that the value yielded by manufacturers was of the ſame nature as the produce of the land, though it were allowed to be only accurately equal to the value of their conſumption, they certainly could not maintain the poſition that land is the only ſource of wealth. A marriage which produces two children, though it contain in itſelf no principle of increaſe, yet it adds to the ſum of the actual population, which would have been leſs by two perſons, if the marriage had been really barren. But the fact is, that though the language of the Economiſts has fairly warranted this illuſtration, which Dr. Smith gives; yet the illuſtration itſelf is incorrect. In the caſe of the marriage, the two children are really a new production, a completely new creation. But manufactures, ſtrictly ſpeaking, are no new production, no new creation, but merely a modification of an old one, and when ſold muſt be paid for out of a revenue already in exiſtence, and conſequently the gain of the ſeller is the loſs of the buyer. A revenue is transferred, but not created.

If, in aſſerting the productiveneſs, of the labour employed upon land, we look only to the clear monied rent yielded to a certain number of proprietors, we undoubtedly conſider the ſubject in a very contracted point of view. The quantity of the ſurplus produce of the cultivators is, indeed, meaſured by this clear rent; but its real value conſiſts in its capability of ſupporting a certain number of people, or millions of people, according to its extent, all exempted from the labour of procuring their own food, and who may, therefore, either live without manual exertions, or employ themſelves in modifying the

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raw produce of nature into the forms beſt ſuited to the gratification of man.

A net monied revenue, ariſing from manufactures, of the ſame extent, and to the ſame number of individuals, would by no means be accompanied by the ſame circumſtances. It would throw the country in which it exiſted into an abſolute dependence upon the ſurplus produce of others; and if this foreign revenue could not be obtained, the clear monied rent, which we have ſuppoſed, would be abſolutely of no value to the nation.

As manufactures are not a new production, but the modification of an old one, the moſt natural and obvious way of eſtimating them, is by the labour which this modification coſts. At the ſame time, it may be doubted, whether we can ſay poſitively, that the price of this labour, added to the price of the raw material, is exactly their real value. The ultimate value of every thing, according to the general reaſoning of the Economiſts, conſiſts in being *propre a la jouiſſance*. In this view, ſome manufactures are of very high value; and in general, they may be ſaid to be worth to the purchaſer what that purchaſer will conſent to give. In the actual ſtate of things, from monopolies, from ſuperior machinery, or other cauſes, they are generally ſold a price above what the Economiſts conſider as their real worth; and with regard to a mere monied revenue to an individual, there is no apparent difference, between a manufacture which yields very large profits, and a piece of land which is farmed by the proprietor[a].

Land, in an enlarged view of the ſubject, is incontrovertibly the ſole ſource of all riches; but when we take individuals or particular

[a] I do not mean to ſay that the Economiſts do not fully comprehend the true diſtinction between the labour employed upon land, and the labour employed in manufactures, and really underſtand the value of the ſurplus produce of the cultivators, as totally diſtinct from the net monied revenue which it yields; but it appears to me that they have expoſed themſelves to be miſunderſtood, in their reaſonings reſpecting the productiveneſs of land, and the unproductiveneſs of manufactures, by dwelling too much on the circumſtance of a net rent to individuals. In an enlarged ſenſe, it is certainly true, that land is the only ſource of net rent.

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nations into our view, the ſtate of the queſtion is altered, as both nations and individuals may be enriched by a transfer of revenue, without the creation of a new one.

There are none of the definitions of the wealth of a ſtate that are not liable to ſome objections. If we take the groſs produce of the land, it is evident that the funds for the maintenance of labour, the population, and the wealth, may increaſe very rapidly, while the nation is apparently poor, and has very little diſpoſeable revenue. If we take Dr. Smith's definition, wealth may increaſe as has before been ſhewn, without tending to increaſe the funds for the maintenance of labour and the population. If we take the clear ſurplus produce of the land, according to moſt of the Economiſts; in this caſe, the funds for the maintenance of labour and the population may increaſe, without an increaſe of wealth, as in the inſtance of the cultivation of new lands, which will pay a profit but not a rent; and, *vice verſa*, wealth may increaſe, without increaſing the funds for the maintenance of labour, and the population, as in the inſtance of improvements in agricultural inſtruments, and in the mode of agriculture, which may make the land yield the ſame produce, with fewer perſons employed upon it; and conſequently the diſpoſeable wealth, or revenue, would be increaſed, without a power of ſupporting a greater number of people.

The objections, however, to the two laſt definitions do not prove that they are incorrect; but merely that an increaſe of wealth, though generally, is not neceſſarily and invariably accompanied by an increaſe of the funds for the maintenance of labour; and conſequently, by the power of ſupporting a greater number of people, or of enabling the former number to live in greater plenty and happineſs.

Whichever of theſe two definitions is adopted, as the beſt criterion of the wealth, power, and proſperity of a ſtate, the great poſition of the Economiſts will always remain true, that the ſurplus produce of the cultivators is the great fund which ultimately pays all thoſe who

are not employed upon the land. Throughout the whole world, the number of manufacturers, of proprietors, and of perſons engaged in the various civil and military profeſſions, muſt be exactly proportioned to this ſurplus produce, and cannot in the nature of things increaſe beyond it. If the earth had been ſo niggardly of her produce as to oblige all her inhabitants to labour for it, no manufacturers or idle perſons could ever have exiſted. But her firſt intercourſe with man was a voluntary preſent; not very large indeed, but ſufficient as a fund for his ſubſiſtence, till by the proper exerciſe of his faculties he could procure a greater. In proportion as the labour and ingenuity of man, exerciſed upon the land, have increaſed this ſurplus produce, leiſure has been given to a greater number of perſons to employ themſelves in all the inventions which embelliſh civilized life. And though, in its turn, the deſire to profit by theſe inventions, has greatly contributed to ſtimulate the cultivators to increaſe their ſurplus produce; yet the order of precedence is clearly the ſurplus produce; becauſe the funds for the ſubſiſtence of the manufacturer muſt be advanced to him, before he can complete his work: and if we were to imagine that we could command this ſurplus produce, whenever we willed it, by forcing manufactures, we ſhould be quickly admoniſhed of our groſs error, by the inadequate ſupport which the workman would receive, in ſpite of any riſe that might take place in his nominal wages.

According to the ſyſtem of the Economiſts, manufactures are an object on which revenue is ſpent, and not any part of the revenue itſelf[a]. But though from this deſcription of manufactures, and the epithet

[a] Even upon this ſyſtem, there is one point of view, in which manufactures appear greatly to add to the riches of a ſtate. The uſe of a revenue, according to the Economiſts, is to be ſpent; and a great part of it will of courſe be ſpent in manufactures. But if by the judicious employment of manufacturing capital, theſe commodities grow conſiderably cheaper, the ſurplus produce becomes proportionably of ſo much greater value, and the real revenue of the nation is virtually increaſed. There is no light, perhaps, in which we

epithet ſterile ſometimes applied to them, they ſeem rather to be degraded by the terms of the Economiſts, it is a very great error to ſuppoſe that their ſyſtem is really unfavourable to them. On the contrary, I am diſpoſed to believe, that it is the only ſyſtem by which commerce and manufactures can prevail to a very great extent, without bringing with them, at the ſame time, the ſeeds of their own ruin. Before the late revolution in Holland, the high price of the neceſſaries of life had deſtroyed many of its manufactures[a]. Monopolies are always ſubject to be broken; and even the advantage of capital and machinery, which may yield extraordinary profits for a time, is liable to be greatly leſſened by the competition of other nations. In the hiſtory of the world, the nations, whoſe wealth has been derived principally from manufactures and commerce, have been perfectly ephemeral beings, compared with thoſe, the baſis of whoſe wealth has been agriculture. It is in the nature of things, that a ſtate which ſubſiſts upon a revenue furniſhed by other countries, muſt be infinitely more expoſed to all the accidents of time and chance, than one which produces its own.

No error is more frequent, than that of miſtaking effects for cauſes. We are ſo blinded by the ſhewineſs of commerce and manufactures, as to believe that they are almoſt the ſole cauſe of the wealth, power, and proſperity of England. But perhaps, they may be more juſtly conſidered as the conſequences, than the cauſe of this wealth. According to the definition of the Economiſts, which conſiders only the produce of land, England is the richeſt country in Europe in proportion to her ſize. Her ſyſtem of agriculture is beyond compariſon better, and conſequently her ſurplus produce is more conſiderable. France is very greatly ſuperior to England in

we can view manufactures, where they appear to be ſo productive as in this; and if it do not completely juſtify Dr. Smith in calling manufacturing labour *productive* in the ſtrict ſenſe of that term; it fully warrants all the pains he has taken in explaining the nature and effects of commercial capital, and of the diviſion of manufacturing labour.

[a] Smith's Wealth of Nations, vol. iii. b. v. c. ii. p. 392.

extent

extent of territory and population; but when the ſurplus produce, or diſpoſeable revenue of the two nations are compared, the ſuperiority of France almoſt vaniſhes. And it is this great ſurplus produce in England, ariſing from her agriculture, which enables her to ſupport ſuch a vaſt body of manufactures, ſuch formidable fleets and armies, ſuch a crowd of perſons engaged in the liberal profeſſions, and a proportion of the ſociety living on money rents, very far beyond what has ever been known in any other country of the world. According to the returns lately made of the population of England and Wales, it appears that the number of perſons employed in agriculture, is conſiderably leſs than a fifth part of the whole. There is reaſon to believe that the claſſifications in theſe returns are incorrect; but making very great allowances for errors of this nature, it can ſcarcely admit of a doubt, that the number of perſons employed in agriculture is very unuſually ſmall in proportion to the actual produce. Of late years indeed, the part of the ſociety, not connected with agriculture, has unfortunately increaſed beyond this produce; but the average importation of corn, as yet, bears but a ſmall proportion to that which is grown in the country, and conſequently the power which England poſſeſſes of ſupporting ſo vaſt a body of idle conſumers muſt be attributed principally to the greatneſs of her ſurplus produce.

It will be ſaid that it was her commerce and manufactures which encouraged her cultivators to obtain this great ſurplus produce, and therefore indirectly, if not directly, created it. That commerce and manufactures produce this effect in a certain degree, is true; but that they ſometimes produce a contrary effect, and generally ſo, when carried to exceſs, is equally true. Undoubtedly agriculture cannot flouriſh without a vent for its commodities, either at home or abroad; but when this want has been adequately ſupplied, the intereſts of agriculture demand nothing more. When too great a part of a nation is engaged in commerce and manufactures, it is a clear proof,

that, either from undue encouragement, or from other particular cauſes, a capital is employed in this way to much greater advantage than on land; and under ſuch circumſtances, it is impoſſible, that the land ſhould not be robbed of much of the capital which would naturally have fallen to its ſhare. Dr. Smith juſtly obſerves, that the navigation act, and the monopoly of the colony trade, neceſſarily forced into a particular and not very advantageous channel, a greater proportion of the capital of Great Britain than would otherwiſe have gone to it; and by thus taking capital from other employments, and at the ſame time univerſally raiſing the rate of Britiſh mercantile profit, diſcouraged the improvement of the land [a]. If the improvement of land, he goes on to ſay, affords a greater capital than what can be drawn from an equal capital in any mercantile employment, the land will draw capital from mercantile employments. If the profit be leſs, mercantile employments will draw capital from the improvement of land. The monopoly, therefore, by raiſing the rate of Britiſh mercantile profit, and thus diſcouraging agricultural improvement, has neceſſarily retarded the natural increaſe of a great original ſource of revenue, the rent of land [b].

The Eaſt and Weſt Indies, are indeed ſo great an object, and afford employment with high profits, to ſo great a capital, that it is impoſſible that they ſhould not draw capital from other employments, and particularly from the cultivation of the ſoil, the profits upon which, in general, are unfortunately very ſmall.

All corporations, patents, and excluſive privileges of every kind, which abound ſo much in the mercantile ſyſtem, have in proportion to their extent the ſame effect. And the experience of the laſt twenty years ſeems to warrant us in concluding, that the high price of proviſions ariſing from the abundance of commercial wealth, accompanied, as it has been, by very great variations, and by a great riſe, in the price of labour, does not operate as an encouragement to

[a] Wealth of Nations, vol. ii. b. iv. c. vii. p. 435. [b] Id. p. 436.

agriculture, ſufficient to make it keep pace with the rapid ſtrides of commerce.

It will be ſaid, perhaps, that land is always improved by the redundancy of commercial capital. But this effect is late and ſlow, and in the nature of things cannot take place till this capital is really redundant, which it never is, while the intereſt of money and the profits of mercantile ſtock are high. We cannot look forwards to any conſiderable effect of this kind till the intereſt of money ſinks to 3 per cent. When men can get 5 or 6 per cent. for their money, without any trouble, they will hardly venture a capital upon land, where, including riſks, and the profits upon their own labour and attendance, they may not get much more. Wars and loans, as far as internal circumſtances are concerned, impede but little the progreſs of thoſe branches of commerce where the profits of ſtock are high; but affect very conſiderably the increaſe of that more eſſential and permanent ſource of wealth, the improvement of the land. It is in this point, I am inclined to believe, that the national debt of England has been moſt injurious to her. By abſorbing the redundancy of commercial capital, and keeping up the rate of intereſt, it has prevented this capital from overflowing upon the ſoil. And a large mortgage[a] has thus been eſtabliſhed on the lands of England, the

[a] One of the principal errors of the French Economiſts appears to be on the ſubject of taxation. Admitting, as I ſhall be diſpoſed to do, that the ſurplus produce of the land is the fund which pays every thing beſides the food of the cultivators; yet it ſeems to be a miſtake to ſuppoſe, that the owners of land are the ſole proprietors of this ſurplus produce. It appears to me, that every man who has realized a capital in money, on which he can live without labour, has virtually a mortgage on the land for a certain portion of the ſurplus produce. This mortgage may not indeed be ſo well ſecured, as thoſe which uſually bear this title, or as the money rent of the land-owner; but while the power of obtaining this monied intereſt remains, its effect, or command over the ſurplus produce, is exactly the ſame. The landholders, therefore, are not the ſole proprietors of ſurplus produce; and their joint proprietors, thoſe who live upon the intereſt of money, certainly pay a general tax in the ſame manner as the landholders, and cannot throw it off from their ſhoulders, like thoſe who live upon the profits of ſtock, or the wages of labour. Practically,

the intereſt of which is drawn from the payment of productive labour, and dedicated to the ſupport of idle conſumers.

cally, indeed, it cannot be doubted that even the profits of ſtock and the wages of labour, particularly of profeſſional labour, pay ſome taxes on neceſſaries, and many on luxuries, for a very conſiderable time. The real ſurplus produce of this country, or all the produce not actually conſumed by the cultivators, is a very different thing, and ſhould carefully be diſtinguiſhed from the ſum of the net rents of the landlords. This ſum, it is ſuppoſed, does not much exceed a fifth part of the groſs produce. The remaining four fifths, is certainly not conſumed by the labourers and horſes employed in agriculture; but a very conſiderable portion of it is paid by the farmer, in taxes, in the inſtruments of agriculture, and in the manufactures uſed in his own family, and in the families of his labourers. It is in this manner that a kind of mortgage is ultimately eſtabliſhed on the land, by taxes, and the progreſs of commercial wealth; and in this ſenſe, all taxes certainly fall upon the land. Before the exiſtence of national debts, and the accumulation of monied capitals, the ſimple territorial impoſt would be the faireſt and moſt eligible of all taxes; but when theſe mortgages alluded to have been actually eſtabliſhed, and the intereſt of them cannot be changed with every new tax, which in many inſtances is the caſe, particularly with regard to government annuitants, the mortgagee will really and *bonâ fide* pay a part of the taxes on conſumption; and though theſe taxes may ſtill fall wholly on the land, they will not fall wholly on the landholders. It ſeems a little hard, therefore, in taxing ſurplus produce to make the landlords pay for what they do not receive. At the ſame time, it muſt be confeſſed, that, independently of theſe conſiderations, which makes a land tax partial, it is the beſt of all taxes, as it is the only one which does not tend to raiſe the price of commodities. Taxes on conſumption, by which alone monied revenues can be reached, without an income tax, neceſſarily raiſe all prices to a degree greatly injurious to the country. A land tax, or tax upon net rent, has little or no effect in diſcouraging the improvement of land, as many have ſuppoſed. It is only a tithe, or a tax, in proportion to the groſs produce, which does this. No man in his ſenſes will be deterred from getting a clear profit of 20*l.* inſtead of 10*l.* becauſe he is always to pay a fourth or fifth of his clear gains; but when he is to pay a tax in proportion to his groſs produce, which, in the caſe of capital laid out in improvements, is ſcarcely ever accompanied with a proportional increaſe of his clear gains, it is a very different thing, and muſt neceſſarily impede, in a great degree, the progreſs of cultivation. I am aſtoniſhed that ſo obvious and eaſy a commutation for tithes, as a land tax on improved rents, has not been adopted. Such a tax would be paid by the ſame perſons as before, only in a better form; and the change would not be felt, except in the advantage that would accrue to all the parties concerned, the landlord, the tenant, and the clergyman. Tithes undoubtedly operate as a high bounty on paſture, and a great diſcouragement to tillage, which in the preſent peculiar circumſtances of the country is a very great diſadvantage.

It muſt be allowed, therefore, upon the whole, that our commerce has not done much for our agriculture; but that our agriculture has done a great deal for our commerce; and that the improved ſyſtem of cultivation which has taken place, in ſpite of conſiderable diſcouragements, creates yearly a ſurplus produce, which enables the country, with but little aſſiſtance, to ſupport ſo vaſt a body of people engaged in purſuits unconnected with the land.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX

Different Effects of the Agricultural and Commercial Syſtems.

ABOUT the middle of the laſt century, we were genuinely, and in the ſtrict ſenſe of the Economiſts, an agricultural nation. Our commerce and manufactures were, however, then in a very reſpectable and thriving ſtate; and if they had continued to bear the ſame relative proportion to our agriculture, they would evidently have gone on increaſing conſiderably, with the improving cultivation of the country. There is no apparent limit to the quantity of manufactures which might in time be ſupported in this way. The increaſing wealth of a country in ſuch a ſtate, ſeems to be out of the reach of all common accidents. There is no diſcoverable germ of decay in the ſyſtem; and in theory, there is no reaſon to ſay, that it might not go on increaſing in wealth and proſperity for thouſands of years.

We have now, however, ſtepped out of the agricultural ſyſtem, into a ſtate, in which the commercial ſyſtem clearly predominates; and there is but too much reaſon to fear, that even our commerce and manufactures will ultimately feel the diſadvantage of the change. It has been already obſerved, that we are exactly in that ſituation, in which a country feels moſt fully the effect of thoſe common years of deficient crops, which, in the natural courſe of things, are to be expected. The competition of increaſing commercial wealth, operating upon a ſupply of corn not increaſing in the ſame proportion, muſt at all times greatly tend to raiſe the price of labour; but when ſcarce years are taken into the conſideration, its effect in this

way muſt ultimately be prodigious. We know how extremely difficult it is in England to lower the wages of labour, after they have once been raiſed. During the late ſcarcities, the price of labour has been continually riſing—not to fall again; the rents of land have been every where advancing—not to fall again; and of courſe, the price of produce muſt riſe—not to fall again; as, independently of a particular competition from ſcarcity, or the want of competition from plenty, its price is neceſſarily regulated by the wages of labour, and the rent of land. We have no reaſon whatever for ſuppoſing that we ſhall be exempt in future from ſuch ſcarcities as we have of late experienced. On the contrary, upon our preſent ſyſtem, they ſeem to be unavoidable. And if we go on, as we have done lately, the price of labour and of proviſions muſt ſoon increaſe in a manner out of all proportion to their price in the reſt of Europe; and it is impoſſible that this ſhould not ultimately check all our dealings with foreign powers, and give a fatal blow to our commerce and manufactures. The effect of capital, ſkill, machinery, and eſtabliſhments, in their full vigour, is great; ſo great, indeed, that it is difficult to gueſs at its limit; but ſtill it is not infinite, and without doubt has this limit. The principal ſtates of Europe, except this fortunate iſland, have of late ſuffered ſo much by the actual preſence of war, that their commerce and manufactures have been nearly deſtroyed, and we may be ſaid in a manner to have the monopoly of the trade of Europe. All monopolies yield high profits, and at preſent, therefore, the trade can be carried on to advantage, in ſpite of the high price of labour. But when the other nations of Europe ſhall have had time to recover themſelves, and gradually to become our competitors, it would be raſh to affirm, that, with the prices of proviſions and of labour ſtill going on increaſing, from what they are at preſent, we ſhall be able to ſtand the competition. Dr. Smith ſays, that, in his time, merchants frequently complained of the high price of Britiſh labour as the cauſe of their manufactures being underſold in foreign markets.

markets[a]. If ſuch complaints were in any degree founded at that time, how will they be aggravated twenty years hence! And have we not ſome reaſon to fear that our preſent great commercial proſperity is temporary, and belongs a little to that worſt feature of the commercial ſyſtem, the riſing by the depreſſion of others.

When a country, in average years, grows more corn than it conſumes, and is in the habit of exporting a part of it, its price, and the price of labour as depending on it, can never riſe in any very extraordinary degree above the common price in other commercial countries; and under ſuch circumſtances, England would have nothing to fear from the fulleſt, and moſt open competition. The increaſing proſperity of other countries, would only open to her a more extenſive market for her commodities, and give additional ſpirit to all her commercial tranſactions.

The high price of corn and of rude produce in general, as far as it is occaſioned by the freeſt competition among the nations of Europe, is a very great advantage, and is the beſt poſſible encouragement to agriculture; but when occaſioned merely by the competition of monied wealth at home, its effect is totally different. In the one caſe, a great encouragement is given to production in general, and the more is produced, the better. In the other caſe, the produce is neceſſarily confined to the home conſumption. The cultivators are juſtly afraid of growing too much corn, as a conſiderable loſs will be ſuſtained upon that part of it which is ſold abroad; and a glut in the home market will univerſally make the price fall below the fair and proper recompence to the grower. It is impoſſible that a country, under ſuch circumſtances, ſhould not be ſubject to great and frequent variations in the price of corn, and occaſionally to ſevere ſcarcities.

If we were to endeavour to lower the price of labour by encouraging the importation of foreign corn, we ſhould probably aggra-

[a] Wealth of Nations, vol. ii. b. iv. c. vii. p. 413.

vate

vate the evil tenfold. Experience warrants us in ſaying, that, from political fears, or other cauſes, the fall in the price of labour would be uncertain; but the ruin of our agriculture would be certain. The Britiſh grower of corn could not, in his own markets, ſtand the competition of the foreign grower, in average years. We ſhould be daily thrown more and more into a dependence upon other countries for our ſupport. Arable lands of a moderate quality would not pay the expence of cultivation. Rich ſoils alone would yield a rent. Round all our towns, the appearances would be the ſame as uſual; but in the interior of the country, half of the lands would be neglected, and almoſt univerſally, where it was practicable, paſture would take place of tillage. How dreadfully precarious would our commerce and manufactures, and even our very exiſtence be, under ſuch circumſtances! It could hardly be expected that a century ſhould elapſe without ſeeing our population repreſſed within the limits of our ſcanty cultivation; and ſuffering the ſame melancholy reverſe, as the once flouriſhing population of Spain.

Nothing perhaps will ſhew more clearly the abſurdity of that artificial ſyſtem, which prompts a country, with a large territory of its own, to depend upon others for its food, than the ſuppoſition of the ſame ſyſtem being purſued by many other ſtates. If France, Germany, and Pruſſia, were to become manufacturing nations, and to conſider agriculture as a ſecondary concern, how would their wants, in the indiſpenſable article of food, be ſupplied. The increaſing demand for corn, would tend certainly to encourage the growth of it in Ruſſia and America; but we know that in theſe countries, at preſent, particularly in America, the natural progreſs of population is not very greatly checked; and that, as their towns and manufactories increaſe, the demand for their own corn will of courſe increaſe with them. The Ruſſian nobleman, whoſe revenue depends upon the number of his boors, will hardly be perſuaded to check their increaſe, in order to accommodate other nations; and the independent cultivator of America will ſurely feed his

his own family and ſervants, and probably ſupply the home market, before he begins to export. But allowing that at firſt, and for ſome time, the increaſing demands of theſe manufacturing countries might be adequately ſupplied; yet this could not in the nature of things laſt long. The manufacturers, from the decay of agriculture in their own countries, would annually want more; and Ruſſia and America, from their rapidly increaſing population, and the gradual eſtabliſhment of manufactures at home, would annually be able to ſpare leſs. From theſe cauſes and the neceſſity of drawing a part of ſuch vaſt ſupplies of corn from a much greater diſtance inland, and loaded perhaps with the expence of land carriage, the price would ultimately riſe ſo extravagantly high, that the poor manufacturers would be totally unable to pay it, and want and famine would convince them too late of the precarious and ſubordinate nature of their wealth. They would learn by painful experience, that, though agriculture may flouriſh conſiderably, and give plenty and happineſs to great numbers, without many manufactures; yet, that manufactures cannot ſtir a ſingle ſtep, without their agricultural pay-maſters, either at home or abroad; and that therefore it is the height of folly and imprudence, to have theſe pay-maſters at a great diſtance, with different intereſts, and their payments precarious, inſtead of at home, with the ſame intereſts, and their payments always ready and certain. Nothing can be ſo hateful to a liberal mind, as the idea of being placed in a ſituation in which the growing proſperity of your neighbours will be the ſignal of your own approaching ruin. Yet this would be the ſituation of the principal countries of Europe, if they depended chiefly upon Ruſſia and America, or any other nations for their corn. A ſyſtem, which, like the preſent commercial ſyſtem of England, throws a country into this ſtate, without any phyſical neceſſity for it, cannot be founded on the genuine principles of the wealth of nations.

It ſeems almoſt impoſſible, that a country poſſeſſed of a conſiderable territory, ſhould have its means of ſubſiſtence well aſſured, without

growing at home more corn than it conſumes. Nor can it be exempt from thoſe great and ſudden variations of price, which produce ſuch ſevere diſtreſs throughout ſo large a part of the community, and are often attended with great and laſting diſadvantages; unleſs this ſuperfluity of produce bear ſome conſiderable proportion to the common deficiencies of unfavourable years. It has been almoſt univerſally acknowledged that there is no branch of trade, more profitable to a country, even in a commercial point of view, than the ſale of rude produce. In general, its value bears a much greater proportion to the expence incurred in procuring it, than that of any other commodity whatever, and the national profit on its ſale is in conſequence greater. This is often noticed by Dr. Smith; but in combating the arguments of the Economiſts, he ſeems for a moment to forget it, and to ſpeak of the ſuperior advantage of exporting manufactures.

He obſerves, that a trading and manufacturing country exports what can ſubſiſt and accommodate but very few, and imports the ſubſiſtence and accommodation of a great number. The other, exports the ſubſiſtence and accommodation of a great number, and imports that of a very few only. The inhabitants of the one muſt always enjoy a much greater quantity of ſubſiſtence, than what their own lands in the actual ſtate of their cultivation could afford. The inhabitants of the other muſt always enjoy a much ſmaller quantity [a].

In this paſſage he does not ſeem to argue with his uſual accuracy. Though the manufacturing nation may export a commodity which, in its actual ſhape, can only ſubſiſt and accommodate a very few; yet it muſt be recollected, that, in order to prepare this commodity for exportation, a conſiderable part of the revenue of the country had been employed in ſubſiſting and accommodating a great number of workmen. And with regard to the ſubſiſtence and accommodation which the other nation exports, whether it be of a great or a

[a] Wealth of Nations, vol. iii. b. iv. c. ix. p. 27.

ſmall number, it is certainly no more than ſufficient to replace the ſubſiſtence that had been conſumed in the manufacturing nation, together with the profits of the maſter manufacturer and merchant, which, probably, are not ſo great as the profits of the farmer and the merchant in the agricultural nation. And though it may be true, that the inhabitants of the manufacturing nation enjoy a greater quantity of ſubſiſtence than what their own lands, in the actual ſtate of their cultivation, could afford; yet an inference in favour of the manufacturing ſyſtem by no means follows, becauſe the adoption of the one, or the other ſyſtem, will make the greateſt difference in their actual ſtate of cultivation. If, during the courſe of a century, two landed nations were to purſue theſe two different ſyſtems, that is, if one of them were regularly to export manufactures, and import ſubſiſtence; and the other to export ſubſiſtence, and import manufactures, there would be no compariſon at the end of the period, between the ſtate of cultivation in the two countries; and no doubt could rationally be entertained that the country which exported its raw produce, would be able to ſubſiſt and accommodate a much greater population than the other.

In the ordinary courſe of things, the exportation of raw produce is ſufficiently profitable to the individuals concerned in it. But with regard to national profit, it poſſeſſes two peculiar and eminent advantages above any other kind of export. In the firſt place, raw produce, and more particularly corn, pays from its own funds the expences of procuring it, and the whole of what is ſold is a clear national profit. If I ſet up a new manufacture, the perſons employed in it muſt be ſupported out of the funds of ſubſiſtence already exiſting in the country, the value of which muſt be deducted from the price for which the commodity is ſold, before we can eſtimate the clear national profit; and of courſe, this profit can only be the profit of the maſter manufacturer and the exporting merchant. But if I cultivate freſh land, or employ more men in the improvement of what was before cultivated, I increaſe the general funds of

ſubſiſtence in the country. With a part of this increaſe I ſupport all the additional perſons employed, and the whole of the remainder which is exported and ſold, is a clear national gain; beſides the advantage to the country, of ſupporting an additional population equal to the additional number of perſons ſo employed, without the ſlighteſt tendency to diminiſh the plenty of the reſt.

Secondly, it is impoſſible always to be ſecure of having enough, if we have not, in general, too much; and the habitual exportation of corn, ſeems to be the only practicable mode of laying by a ſtore of ſufficient magnitude to anſwer the emergencies, that are to be expected. The evil of ſcarcity is ſo dreadful, that any branch of commerce, the tendency of which is to prevent it, cannot but be conſidered, in a national point of view, as pre-eminently beneficial.

Theſe two advantages, added to that which muſt neceſſarily accrue to manufactures from the ſteady and comparatively low price of proviſions and of labour, are ſo ſtriking, that it muſt be a point of the firſt conſequence to the permanent proſperity of any country, to be able to carry on the export trade of corn, as one conſiderable branch of its commercial tranſactions.

But how to give this ability, how to turn a nation from the habit of importing corn, to the habit of exporting it, is the great difficulty. It has been generally acknowledged, and is frequently noticed by Dr. Smith, that the policy of modern Europe has led it to encourage the induſtry of the towns more than the induſtry of the country, or, in other words, trade more than agriculture. In this policy, England has certainly not been behind the reſt of Europe; perhaps, indeed, except in one inſtance[a], it may be ſaid that ſhe has been the foremoſt. If things had been left to take their natural courſe, there is no reaſon to think that the commercial part of the ſociety would have increaſed beyond the ſurplus produce of the cultivators; but the high profits of commerce from monopolies, and

[a] The bounty on the exportation of corn.

other

other peculiar encouragements, have altered this natural courſe of things; and the body politick is in an artificial, and in ſome degree, diſeaſed ſtate, with one of its principal members out of proportion to the reſt. Almoſt all medicine is in itſelf bad; and one of the great evils of illneſs is, the neceſſity of taking it. No perſon can well be more averſe to medicine in the animal economy, or a ſyſtem of expedients in political economy, than myſelf; but in the preſent ſtate of the country, ſomething of the kind may be neceſſary to prevent greater evils. It is a matter of very little comparative importance, whether we are fully ſupplied with broadcloth, linens, and muſlins, or even with tea, ſugar, and coffee; and no rational politician therefore, would think of propoſing a bounty upon ſuch commodities. But it is certainly a matter of the very higheſt importance, whether we are fully ſupplied with food; and if a bounty would produce ſuch a ſupply, the moſt liberal political economiſt might be juſtified in propoſing it; conſidering food as a commodity diſtinct from all others, and pre-eminently valuable.

CHAP. X.

Of Bounties on the Exportation of Corn.

It is acknowledged by Dr. Smith, that the encouragement given to the induſtry of the towns has turned more capital into that channel than would otherwiſe have gone to it; and if this be true, it follows that the land muſt have had leſs than its natural ſhare; and under ſuch a diſcouragement, we cannot reaſonably expect that agriculture ſhould be able to keep pace with manufactures. The corn laws, as they were eſtabliſhed in 1688 and 1700, did not do more than place them upon an equality.

The regulations reſpecting importation and exportation adopted in theſe corn laws, ſeemed to have the effect of giving that encouragement to agriculture, which it ſo much wanted, and the apparent reſult was gradually to produce a growth of corn in the country, conſiderably above the wants of the actual population, and conſequently to lower greatly the prices of it, and give a ſteadineſs to theſe prices that had never been experienced before.

During the ſeventeenth century, and indeed the whole period of our hiſtory previous to it, the prices of wheat were ſubject to great fluctuations, and the average price was very high. For fifty years before the year 1700, the average price of wheat per quarter was 3l. 11d. and before 1650 it was 6l. 8s. 10d[a]. From the time of the completion of the corn laws in 1700 and 1706, the

[a] Dirom's Inquiry into the Corn Laws, Appendix, No. I.

prices

prices became extraordinarily ſteady; and the average price for forty years previous to the year 1750, ſunk ſo low as 1l. 16s. per quarter. This was the period of our greateſt exportations. In the year 1757, the laws were ſuſpended, and in the year 1773, they were totally altered. The exports of corn have ſince been regularly decreaſing, and the imports increaſing. The average price of wheat for the forty years ending in 1800, was 2l. 9s. 5d; and for the laſt five years of this period, 3l. 6s. 6d. During this laſt term, the balance of the imports of all ſorts of grain is eſtimated at 2,938,357[a], and the dreadful fluctuations of price which have occurred of late years, we are but too well acquainted with.

It is at all times dangerous to be haſty in drawing general inferences from partial experience; but, in the preſent inſtance, the period that has been conſidered is of ſo conſiderable an extent, and the changes from fluctuating and high prices, to ſteady and low prices, with a return to fluctuating and high prices again, correſpond ſo accurately with the eſtabliſhment and full vigour of the corn laws, and with their ſubſequent alterations and inefficacy, that it was certainly rather a bold aſſertion in Dr. Smith to ſay, that the fall in the price of corn muſt have happened in ſpite of the bounty, and could not poſſibly have happened in conſequence of it[b]. We have a right to expect that he ſhould defend a poſition, ſo contrary to all apparent experience, by the moſt powerful arguments. As in the preſent ſtate of this country, the ſubject ſeems to be of the higheſt importance, it will be worth while to examine the validity of theſe arguments.

He obſerves, that both in years of plenty and in years of ſcarcity, the bounty neceſſarily tends to raiſe the money price of corn ſomewhat higher than it otherwiſe would be in the home market[c].

[a] Anderſon's Inveſtigation of the Circumſtances which led to Scarcity, table, p. 40.
[b] Wealth of Nations, vol. ii. b. iv. c. v. p. 264. [c] Id. p. 265.

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That it does ſo, in years of plenty is undoubtedly true; but that it does ſo in years of ſcarcity, appears to me as undoubtedly falſe. The only argument by which Dr. Smith ſupports this latter poſition, is, by ſaying, that the exportation prevents the plenty of one year from relieving the ſcarcity of another. But this is certainly a very inſufficient reaſon. The ſcarce year may not immediately follow the moſt plentiful year; and it is totally contrary to the habits and practice of farmers, to ſave the ſuperfluity of ſix or ſeven years for a contingency of this kind. Great practical inconveniences generally attend the keeping of ſo large a reſerved ſtore. Difficulties often occur from a want of proper accommodations for it. It is at all times liable to damage from vermin, and other cauſes. When very large, it is apt to be viewed with a jealous and grudging eye by the common people. And in general the farmer may either not be able to remain ſo long without his returns; or may not be willing to employ ſo conſiderable a capital in a way, in which the returns muſt neceſſarily be diſtant and precarious. On the whole, therefore, we cannot reaſonably expect, that, upon this plan, the reſerved ſtore ſhould in any degree be equal to that, which in a ſcarce year would be kept at home, in a country which was in the habit of conſtant exportation to a conſiderable amount; and we know that even a very little difference in the degree of deficiency, will often make a very great difference in the price.

Dr. Smith then proceeds to ſtate, very juſtly, that the defenders of the corn laws do not inſiſt ſo much upon the price of corn in the actual ſtate of tillage, as upon their tendency to improve this actual ſtate, by opening a more extenſive foreign market to the corn of the farmer, and ſecuring to him a better price than he could otherwiſe expect for his commodity: which double encouragement they imagine muſt, in a long period of years, occaſion ſuch an increaſe in the production of corn, as may lower its price in the home market much

much more than the bounty can raiſe it, in the ſtate of tillage then actually exiſting [a].

In anſwer to this, he obſerves, that whatever extenſion of the foreign market can be occaſioned by the bounty, muſt, in every particular year, be altogether at the expence of the home market, as every buſhel of corn, which is exported by means of the bounty, and which would not have been exported without the bounty, would have remained in the home market to increaſe the conſumption, and to lower the price of that commodity.

In this obſervation he appears to me a little to miſuſe the term market. Becauſe, by ſelling a commodity below its natural price, it is poſſible to get rid of a greater quantity of it, in any particular market, than would have gone off otherwiſe, it cannot juſtly be ſaid that, by this proceſs, ſuch a market is proportionally extended. Though the removal of the two taxes mentioned by Dr. Smith, as paid on account of the bounty, would certainly rather increaſe the power of the lower claſſes to purchaſe; yet in each particular year the conſumption muſt be ultimately limited by the population; and the increaſe of conſumption from the removal of theſe taxes, might by no means be ſufficient to take off the whole ſuperfluity of the farmers, without lowering the general price of corn, ſo as to deprive them of their fair recompence.

Suppoſe, that the cultivators in England had a million quarters of wheat, beyond what would ſupply the country, at a price, for which they muſt ſell their whole crop, or loſe their fair profits. And ſuppoſe, at the ſame time, that, from the high price of land, the great taxes on conſumption, and the conſequent high price of labour, the Britiſh farmer cannot grow corn at the average price in Europe, which is always true when a bounty upon exportation is rendered neceſſary. Under theſe circumſtances if the cultivators endeavoured to force the additional million of quarters on the home market, it is

[a] Wealth of Nations, vol. ii. b. iv. c. v. p. 265.

perfectly

perfectly clear, that not only the price of this additional million, but the price of their whole crop, would fall very conſiderably; and, without a bounty, it could not anſwer to the farmer to export, till the prices in the home market had fallen below the average price in Europe, which we ſuppoſed to be lower, than what would properly pay to the Britiſh farmer the expences of cultivation. The purchaſers in the home market would undoubtedly live for this year in great plenty. They might eat as much bread as they pleaſed themſelves, and perhaps even feed their hogs and their horſes on wheat corn; but the farmers in the mean time would be ruined, and would dread, as the greateſt of all evils, the growing of too much corn. Finding, therefore, that tillage would not anſwer to them, they would of courſe neglect the plough, and gradually lay more of their land into paſture, till the return of ſcarcity, or at leaſt the total removal of the ſuperfluity, had again raiſed the prices to ſuch a height as would make it anſwer to them to grow corn, provided that they never overſtocked the home market. An individual farmer cannot know the quantity of corn that is ſown by his brother farmers in other counties. The ſtate of the future ſupply, in proportion to the future demand, remains in a great meaſure concealed till the harveſt; and the cheapneſs or dearneſs of the current year can alone regulate the conduct of the farmer in the management of his land for the following year. Under ſuch circumſtances, great variations in the ſupply of corn, and conſequently in its price, muſt neceſſarily occur.

There cannot be a greater diſcouragement to the production of any commodity in a large quantity, than the fear of overſtocking the market with it[a]. Nor can there be a greater encouragement to ſuch

[a] I am ſufficiently aware that, in common years, the farmer is apt to proceed in a regular routine of crops, without much attention to prices; but we cannot doubt for a moment, that this routine will yield to extreme caſes. No man in his ſenſes will long go on with any ſpecies of cultivation by which he loſes.

a production, than the certainty of finding an effectual market for any quantity, however great, that can be obtained. It is obvious, that in the caſe which we have ſuppoſed, nothing but a bounty upon corn can extend the effectual market for it to the Britiſh farmer.

Dr. Smith goes on to ſay, that if the two taxes paid by the people on account of the bounty, namely, the one to the government to pay this bounty, and the other paid in the advanced price of the commodity, in the actual ſtate of the crop, do not raiſe the price of labour, and thus return upon the farmer; they muſt reduce the ability of the labouring poor to bring up their children, and, by thus reſtraining the population and induſtry of the country, muſt tend to ſtunt and reſtrain the gradual extenſion of the home market, and thereby, in the long run, rather to diminiſh than to augment the whole market and conſumption of corn[a].

I think it has been ſhewn, and indeed it will ſcarcely admit of a doubt, that the ſyſtem of exportation ariſing from the bounty, has an evident tendency in years of ſcarcity to increaſe the ſupplies of corn, or to prevent their being ſo much diminiſhed as they otherwiſe would be, which comes to the ſame thing. Conſequently, the labouring poor will be able to live better, and the population will be leſs checked in theſe particular years, than they would have been without the ſyſtem of exportation ariſing from the bounty. But if the effect of the bounty, in this view of the ſubject, be only to repreſs a little the population in years of plenty, while it encourages it comparatively in years of ſcarcity, its effect is evidently to regulate the population more equally according to that quantity of ſubſiſtence, which can permanently, and without occaſional defalcations, be ſupplied. And this effect, I have no heſitation in ſaying, is one of the greateſt advantages which can poſſibly occur to a ſociety, and contributes more to the happineſs of the labouring poor, than can eaſily be conceived by thoſe who have not deeply conſidered the

[a] Wealth of Nations, vol. ii. b. iv. c. v. p. 267.

ſubject. In the whole compaſs of human events, I doubt if there be a more fruitful ſource of miſery, or one more invariably productive of diſaſtrous conſequences, than a ſudden ſtart of population from two or three years of plenty, which muſt neceſſarily be repreſſed on the firſt return of ſcarcity, or even of average crops. With the preſent high price of labour, and the exiſting habits of the poor, in this country, I ſhould conſider it as a great misfortune, if from the late alarms reſpecting ſcarcity, and the unuſual quantity of corn ſown in conſequence of them, the price of wheat, for the next two years, were to fall to ten or twelve pounds the load. It is not to be doubted, that in this caſe a more than uſual number of marriages would take place among the common people. The mouths would be rapidly increaſing; but as this price of corn, with the preſent advanced rents of land, accumulated taxes on conſumption, and high price of labour, would certainly not repay the farmer, the ſupplies would be rapidly decreaſing, and the conſequences are but too obvious.

The moſt plauſible argument that Dr. Smith adduces againſt the corn laws, is, that, as the money price of corn regulates that of all other home-made commodities, the advantage to the proprietor from the increaſed money price is merely apparent, and not real; ſince what he gains in his ſales, he muſt loſe in his purchaſes[a].

This poſition, however, is not true, without many limitations[b]. The money price of corn, in a particular country, is undoubtedly by far the moſt powerful ingredient in regulating the price of labour, and of all other commodities; but it is not the ſole ingredient. Many parts of the raw produce of land, though affected by the price of corn, do not, by any means, riſe and fall exactly in pro-

[a] Wealth of Nations, vol. ii. b. iv. c. v. p. 269.

[b] In the Phyſiocratie, by Dupont de Nemours, it is propoſed as a problem in political economy, to determine, whether an advance in the money price of corn is a real or only nominal advantage: and the queſtion is reſolved, I think juſtly, on the ſide of the reality of the advantage. Tom. ii.

portion

portion to this price. When great improvements in manufacturing machinery have taken place in any country, the part of the expence ariſing from the wages of labour will bear a comparatively ſmall proportion to the whole value of the wrought commodity, and conſequently, the price of it, though affected by the price of corn, will not be affected proportionally. When great and numerous taxes on conſumption exiſt in any country, thoſe who live by the wages of labour muſt always receive wherewithal to pay them, at leaſt all thoſe upon neceſſaries, ſuch as ſoap, candles, leather, ſalt, &c. A fall in the price of corn, therefore, though it would decreaſe that part of the wages of labour which reſolves itſelf into food, evidently, would not decreaſe the whole in the ſame proportion. And beſides theſe, and other limitations that might be named, the experienced difficulty of lowering wages when once they have been raiſed, ſhould be taken into conſideration before the poſition can be practically applied.

During the firſt half of the eighteenth century, the price of corn gradually fell, and that, in a very conſiderable degree; but it does not appear that the price of labour fell in conſequence of it. If this effect therefore did not take place in the courſe of fifty years, we could hardly expect that it would in ſeven or eight. And if with the view of lowering the price of labour, the farmers were to puſh their ſuperfluity on the home market, the diſappointment of this view would clearly diſable them from growing the ſame quantity of corn in future: and under ſuch circumſtances, it is obvious, that a bounty alone could encourage them to continue the ſame growth of corn, and that this bounty is a great poſitive advantage to them, and far from being merely apparent, as Dr. Smith endeavours to prove.

Even ſuppoſing, that either by glutting the home market with Britiſh corn, or by the importation of foreign corn, duty free, we could ſucceed in lowering the wages of labour, the expences of the Britiſh farmer in raiſing corn and bringing it to market, would not

be lowered in proportion. One of the principal ingredients in the price of Britiſh corn, is the high rent of land; another, the numerous taxes on conſumption which the farmer pays in his inſtruments of agriculture, his horſes, his windows, and the neceſſary expences of his eſtabliſhment. While theſe ingredients of price remained the ſame, a fall in the wages of labour could not proportionally affect the price at which Britiſh corn could be brought to market[a]: and the Britiſh farmer would labour under a very conſiderable diſadvantage in a competition with the farmers of America and the ſhores of the Baltic, where theſe two ingredients of price are comparatively trifling.

When Dr. Smith ſays, that the nature of things has ſtamped upon corn a real value, which cannot be altered by merely altering the money price; and that no bounty upon exportation, no monopoly of the home market, can raiſe that value; nor the freeſt competition lower it[b]; it is evident, that he changes the queſtion from the profits of the growers of corn in any particular country, to the phyſical and abſolute value of corn in itſelf. Nothing can be more obvious than that the competition of farmers who pay few or no taxes, and little comparative rent for their land, muſt lower the profits of thoſe who labour under theſe diſadvantages, and other things being equal, muſt ultimately juſtle them out of the market. And it is alſo obvious, that the bounty to thoſe who labour under theſe diſadvantages, muſt tend to raiſe their profits and give them a fairer chance of ſtanding the competition with the others. But all this while, undoubtedly, the phyſical value of corn remains juſt the ſame, untouched either by competition, or bounty. I certainly do not mean to ſay, that the bounty alters the phyſical value of corn,

[a] The immenſe tax paid in this country for the ſupport of the poor, forms undoubtedly, another powerful ingredient in the price of Britiſh corn; but I have not mentioned it in the text, becauſe it would always diminiſh immediately with the price of corn, which the other two ingredients would not.

[b] Wealth of Nations, vol. ii. b. iv. c. v. p. 278.

and

and makes a buſhel of it ſupport a greater number of labourers for a day, than it did before: but I certainly do mean to ſay, that the bounty to the Britiſh cultivator does, in the actual ſtate of things, really increaſe his profits on this commodity; and by thus making the growth of corn anſwer to him, encourages him to ſow more than he otherwiſe would do, and enables him in conſequence to employ more buſhels of corn in the maintenance of a greater number of labourers. For, even ſuppoſing that the part of the price of labour which depends directly upon corn, were to riſe and fall exactly with the variations in the price of this commodity, it is demonſtrably evident, that the other two principal ingredients in the price remaining the ſame, every riſe in the money price of corn would be a poſitive gain to the grower or proprietor, and every fall a poſitive loſs. And were we to go ſtill further, and ſuppoſe that the rent of land would vary in the ſame way, which might be the caſe in the long run; yet ſtill the money taxes on conſumption remaining unaltered, the effect of a riſe or fall in the money price of corn, would be to benefit or injure the grower or proprietor though in a leſs degree than before. But in applying a theory to practice, all circumſtances ſhould certainly be taken into conſideration; and in judging of the practical effects of the corn laws, or the oppoſite ſyſtem, of importation duty free, not only, as was before obſerved, the difficulty of lowering the price of labour ſhould be attended to, but alſo the length of time which it would require to lower the rents of land, and the probable ruin of agriculture before theſe two objects could be effected.

If Dr. Smith's theory be juſt, and if it be impoſſible in the nature of things to encourage the growth of corn by bounties, or any other human inſtitutions, then it follows clearly, that every rich country muſt ceaſe to grow corn, as ſoon as the price of labour, the rents of land, and the taxes on conſumption, riſe ſo high as to exceed the advantages of ſuperior ſkill and a home market. As we cannot force people to raiſe a commodity which will not pay them, this point evidently forms an impaſſable limit to the agriculture of

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all modern countries which have a free intercourſe with others; and, from this period, they muſt daily grow more and more dependent upon their leſs rich neighbours for their ſubſiſtence.

But if the reaſons that have been adduced againſt this theory be judged valid, then it will appear, that though agriculture be not altogether ſo manageable as manufactures, yet that it is ſtill capable of being encouraged and protected by human inſtitutions. And that conſequently a ſyſtem of laws reſpecting bounties upon exportation, and duties upon importation, framed according to the circumſtances of a particular country, with reference to the expence of bringing corn to market at home, and the average price of foreign corn, may make the production of this commodity anſwer to the farmers of ſuch a country, however high may be, the taxes on conſumption, the rent of land, and the price of labour.

And if it be admitted, that the cultivation of corn is ſuſceptible of being encouraged by a bounty like other commodities, it will ſcarcely fail to follow, that the greater plenty, occaſioned by this encouragement, will in the long run lower the price.

After all the circumſtances which have been before mentioned as affecting price, have had their due weight, another cauſe muſt enter into our conſideration capable of producing the greateſt variations, and in its immediate effects more powerful than all the reſt combined. This is, the proportion of the ſupply to the demand. A degree of plenty, indeed, which forces farmers to ſell their corn below prime coſt, evidently cannot laſt long; but the effects of ſcarcity are often permanent. The practical difficulty of lowering wages has before been noticed, but the ſame difficulty by no means exiſts with regard to raiſing them. Two or three years of high price from accidental cauſes are generally ſufficient to do this; and when they are followed, as they generally are, by a riſe in the rents of land, the extreme difficulty of a return to the former ſtate of cheapneſs is obvious. Though it be allowed, therefore, that the growing of more corn, in average years, than is wanted for home conſumption, in

conſequence of a bounty upon exportation, cannot permanently ſink the price below what will fairly pay the Britiſh farmer; yet if it prevent that continual, and often permanent riſe, occaſioned by every ſlight deficiency of ſupply or increaſe of demand[a], its effect will clearly be, to keep the average price of corn lower than it otherwiſe would be. When a habit of conſiderable exportation prevails in conſequence of a bounty, a ſlight increaſe of demand, or deficiency of ſupply, will produce ſcarcely any perceptible effect in the price of corn in the home market. This price can never exceed the average price in the ports of the commercial world, with the addition of the bounty, whatever that may be; and this addition will be abſolutely nothing, compared with the increaſe of price which ariſes from the ſlighteſt deficiency of ſupply; a deficiency which the ſyſtem of importation in a large, rich, and populous country, ſuch as Great Britain, will always render probable, not only in the home market, but in all the ports of the commercial world, as we have lately experienced to our coſt.

And if the ultimate tendency of the bounty be clearly to lower the average price of corn in the home market, all Dr. Smith's juſt reaſonings reſpecting the diſadvantage of the cheapneſs of ſilver in any particular country, or the dearneſs of all other commodities, return upon himſelf, and are applicable in favour of the corn laws, not againſt them.

We are now indeed feeling the diſadvantage of the cheapneſs of ſilver in this country, and in a few years, when our commercial competitors have recovered from their late depreſſion, ſhall probably feel it much more than we do at preſent; but it certainly is not owing to a ſyſtem of exporting corn in conſequence of the corn laws; but, apparently, to our having altered theſe corn laws in ſuch a manner as to make them fail in producing the effect of exportation.

[a] An occaſional increaſe of demand for the ſupply of government ſtores, produces, in the preſent ſtate of things, a great effect upon the price of corn, but under a ſyſtem of exportation, it would not be felt.

That

That we can readily, and with perfect facility, turn ourſelves from an importing, to an exporting nation, in the article of corn, I would by no means pretend to ſay; but both theory, and the experience of the firſt half of the laſt century, warrant us in concluding it practicable; and we cannot but allow that it is worth the experiment, as the continuance of our national greatneſs, and commercial proſperity, ſeem abſolutely to depend upon it. If we proceed in our preſent courſe, let us but for a moment reflect on the probable conſequences. There cannot be a doubt, that, in the courſe of a few years, we ſhall draw from America, and the nations bordering on the Baltic, as much as two millions quarters of wheat, beſides other corn, the ſupport of above two millions of people. If, under theſe circumſtances, any commercial diſcuſſion, or other diſpute, were to ariſe with theſe nations, with what a weight of power they would negotiate! Not the whole Britiſh navy could offer a more convincing argument than the ſimple threat of ſhutting all their ports. I am not unaware, that, in general, you may ſecurely depend upon people's not acting directly contrary to their intereſt. But this conſideration, all powerful as it is, will ſometimes yield voluntarily to national indignation, and is ſometimes forced to yield to the reſentment of a ſovereign. It is of ſufficient weight in practice, when applied to manufactures; becauſe a delay in their ſale is not of ſuch immediate conſequence, and from their ſmaller bulk, they are eaſily ſmuggled. But in the caſe of corn, a delay of three or four months may produce the moſt complicated miſery; and from the great bulk of corn, it will generally be in the power of a ſovereign to execute almoſt completely his reſentful purpoſe. Small commercial ſtates which depend nearly for the whole of their ſupplies on foreign powers, will always have many friends. They are not of ſufficient conſequence to excite any general indignation againſt them, and if they cannot be ſupplied from one quarter, they will from another. But this is by no means the caſe with ſuch a country as Great Britain, whoſe commercial ambition is peculiarly calculated to excite a general jealouſy, and in fact

fact has excited it, to a very great degree. If our commerce continue increaſing for a few years, and our commercial population with it, we ſhall be laid ſo bare to the ſhafts of fortune, that nothing but a miracle can ſave us from being ſtruck. The periodical return of ſuch ſeaſons of dearth, as thoſe which we have of late experienced, I conſider as abſolutely certain, upon our preſent importing ſyſtem: but, excluding from the queſtion, at preſent, the dreadful diſtreſs that they occaſion, which however no man of humanity can long baniſh from his mind, I would aſk, is it politick, merely with a view to our national greatneſs, to render ourſelves thus dependent upon others for our ſupport, and put it in the power of a combination againſt us, to diminiſh our population two millions?

To reſtore our independence, and build our national greatneſs and commercial proſperity on the ſure foundation of agriculture; it is evidently not ſufficient, to propoſe premiums for tillage, to cultivate this or that waſte, or even to paſs a general incloſure bill, though theſe may be all good as far as they go. If the increaſe of the commercial population keep pace with theſe efforts, we ſhall only be where we were before, with regard to the neceſſity of importation. The object required, is to alter the relative proportion between the commercial and the agricultural population of the country, which can only be done by ſome ſyſtem, which will permanently raiſe the profits of agriculture, encourage cultivators to employ more labour in the growing of corn, and completely ſecure them from all apprehenſions of overſtocking the market. I ſee no other way, at preſent, of effecting this object, but by a ſyſtem of corn laws adapted to the peculiar circumſtances of the country, and the ſtate of foreign markets. All ſyſtems of peculiar reſtraints and encouragements are undoubtedly diſagreeable, and the neceſſity of reſorting to them may juſtly be lamented. But the objection which Dr. Smith brings againſt bounties in general, that, of forcing ſome part of the induſtry of the country into a channel leſs advantageous than that in which it would run of its own accord[a], does not apply in the preſent

[a] Wealth of Nations, vol. ii. b. iv. c. v. p. 278.

 inſtance,

inſtance, on account of the pre-eminent qualities of the products of agriculture, and the dreadful conſequences that attend the ſlighteſt failure of them. The nature of things has, indeed, ſtamped upon corn a peculiar value[a]; and this remark, made by Dr. Smith for another purpoſe, may fairly be applied to juſtify the exception of this commodity from the objections againſt bounties in general. If, throughout the commercial world, every kind of trade were perfectly free, one ſhould undoubtedly feel the greateſt reluctance in propoſing any interruption to ſuch a ſyſtem of general liberty; and indeed, under ſuch circumſtances, agriculture would not need peculiar encouragements. But under the preſent univerſal prevalence of the commercial ſyſtem, with all its different expedients of encouragement and reſtraint, it is folly to except from our attention the great manufacture of corn which ſupports all the reſt. The high duties paid on the importation of foreign manufactures, are ſo direct an encouragement to the manufacturing part of the ſociety, that nothing but ſome encouragement of the ſame kind, operating with the ſame force, can place the manufacturers and cultivators of this country on a fair footing. Any ſyſtem of encouragement, therefore, which might be found neceſſary for the commerce of grain, would evidently be owing to the prior encouragements which had been given to manufactures. We conſider the woollen manufacture of England as of the firſt importance, and protect and encourage it with peculiar care; but can any thinking man compare its influence on the ſtrength and proſperity of the ſtate, with the manufacture of corn, the ſcarcity or failure of which, will involve in it the failure of the favourite manufacture itſelf. If all be free, I have nothing to ſay; but if we protect and encourage, it ſeems to be folly not to encourage that production, which of all others is the moſt important and valuable[b].

Let

[a] Wealth of Nations, vol. ii. b. iv. c. v. p. 278.

[b] Though I have dwelt much on the importance of raiſing a quantity of corn in the country beyond the demands of the home conſumption, yet I do not mean to recommend that

Let it not, however, be imagined, that the moſt enlightened ſyſtem of agriculture, though it will undoubtedly be able to produce food beyond

that general ſyſtem of ploughing, which takes place in moſt parts of France, and defeats its own purpoſe. A large ſtock of cattle is not only neceſſary as a very valuable part of the food of the country, and as contributing very greatly to the comforts of a conſiderable portion of its population; but it is alſo neceſſary in the production of corn itſelf. A large ſurplus produce, in proportion to the number of perſons employed, can never be obtained without a great ſtock of cattle. At the ſame time, it does not follow, that we ſhould throw all the land that is fit for it into paſture. It is an obſervation of Arthur Young, and I ſhould think a juſt one, that the firſt and moſt obvious improvement in agriculture, is to make the fallows of a country ſupport the additional cattle and ſheep wanted in it. (Travels in France, vol. i. p. 361.) I am by no means ſanguine, however, as to the practicability of converting England again into an exporting country, while the demands for the products of paſture are daily increaſing, from the increaſing riches of the commercial part of the nation. But ſhould this be really conſidered as impracticable, it ſeems to point out to us, one of the great cauſes of the decay of nations. We have always heard, that ſtates and empires have their periods of declenſion; and we learn from hiſtory, that the different nations of the earth have flouriſhed in a kind of ſucceſſion; and that poor countries have been continually riſing on the ruins of their richer neighbours. Upon the commercial ſyſtem, this kind of ſucceſſion ſeems to be in the natural and neceſſary courſe of things, independently of the effects of war. If from the increaſing riches of the commercial part of any nation and the conſequently increaſing demands for the products of paſture, more lands were daily laid down to graſs, and more corn imported from other countries, the unavoidable conſequence ſeems to be, that the increaſing proſperity of theſe countries, which their exportations of corn would contribute to accelerate, muſt ultimately deſtroy the population and power of the countries which had foſtered them. The ancients always attributed this natural weakneſs and old age of ſtates to luxury. But the moderns, who have generally conſidered luxury as a principal encouragement to commerce and manufactures, and conſequently a powerful inſtrument of proſperity, have, with great appearance of reaſon, been unwilling to conſider it as a cauſe of decline. But allowing with the moderns, all the advantages of luxury, and when it falls ſhort of actual vice, they are certainly great; there ſeems to be a point, beyond which it muſt neceſſarily become prejudicial to a ſtate, and bring with it the ſeeds of weakneſs and decay. This point is, when it is puſhed ſo far, as to trench on the funds neceſſary for its ſupport, and to become an impediment inſtead of an encouragement to agriculture. I ſhould be much miſunderſtood, if, from any thing that I have ſaid in the four laſt chapters, I ſhould be conſidered as not ſufficiently aware of the advantages derived from commerce and manufactures. I look upon them as the moſt diſtinguiſhing characteriſtics of civili-

beyond the demands of the actual population, can ever be made to keep pace with an unchecked population. The errors that have arisen

zation, the most obvious and striking marks of the improvement of society, and calculated to enlarge our enjoyments, and add to the sum of human happiness. No great surplus produce of agriculture could exist without them, and if it did exist, it would be comparatively of very little value. But still they are rather the ornaments and embellishments of the political structure than its foundations. While these foundations are perfectly secure, we cannot be too solicitous to make all the apartments convenient and elegant; but if there be the slightest reason to fear that the foundations themselves may give way, it seems to be folly to continue directing our principal attention to the less essential parts. The most determined friend of commerce and manufactures must allow, that the persons employed in them cannot exist without the food to support them; and I cannot persuade myself to believe that they can be sufficiently secure of this food, if they depend for it principally on other countries. There has never yet been an instance in history, of a large nation continuing, with undiminished vigour, to support four or five millions of its people on imported corn; nor do I believe that there ever will be such an instance in future. England is, undoubtedly, from her insular situation, and commanding navy, the most likely to form an exception to this rule; but considering the subject as a general question in political economy, these advantages must evidently be looked upon as peculiar and incidental; and what might be applicable to England, would not be so to other countries. In spite, however, of the peculiar advantages of England, it appears to me clear that if she continue yearly to increase her importations of corn, she cannot ultimately escape that decline which seems to be the natural and necessary consequence of excessive commercial wealth; and the growing prosperity of those countries which supply her with corn, must, in the end, diminish her population, her riches, and her power. I am not now speaking of the next twenty or thirty years, but of the next two or three hundred. And though we are little in the habit of looking so far forwards, yet it may be questioned, whether we have a right knowingly to adopt a system which must necessarily terminate in the weakness and decline of our posterity. But whether we make any practical application of such a discussion or not, it is curious to contemplate the causes of those reverses in the fates of empires, which so frequently changed the face of the world in past times, and may be expected to produce similar, though perhaps not such violent, changes in future. War was, undoubtedly, in ancient times, the principal cause of these changes; but it frequently only finished a work which excess of luxury and the neglect of agriculture had begun. With regard to ourselves, we should recollect that it is only within the last twenty or thirty years, that we have become an importing nation. In so short a period, it could hardly be expected, that the evils of the system should be perceptible. We have, however, already felt some of its inconveniences; and if we persevere in it, its evil consequences may by no means be a matter

arisen from the constant appearance of a full supply, produced by the agricultural system, and the source of some other prejudices on the subject of population, will be noticed in the following chapter.

matter of remote speculation. It has been before observed, that, if from the beginning every kind of trade had been left to find its own level, agriculture would probably never have wanted any particular support; but when once this general and desirable liberty has been infringed, it seems to be clearly our interest to attend principally to those parts of the political structure, which in the actual circumstances of the country appear to be comparatively the weakest; and, upon this principle, we should be justified in giving particular encouragement to manufactures in such countries as Poland, and the southern parts of Siberia, and the same kind of encouragement to agriculture, in England.

CHAP. XI.

Of the principal Sources of the prevailing Errors on the Subject of Population.

It has been obſerved, that many countries at the period of their greateſt degree of populouſneſs, have lived in the greateſt plenty, and have been able to export corn; but at other periods, when their population was very low, have lived in continual poverty and want, and have been obliged to import corn. Egypt, Paleſtine, Rome, Sicily, and Spain, are cited as particular exemplifications of this fact: and it has been inferred, that an increaſe of population in any ſtate, not cultivated to the utmoſt, will tend rather to augment than diminiſh the relative plenty of the whole ſociety; and that, as Lord Kaimes obſerves, a country cannot eaſily become too populous for agriculture; becauſe agriculture has the ſignal property of producing food in proportion to the number of conſumers[a].

The general facts from which theſe inferences are drawn, there is no reaſon to doubt; but the inferences by no means follow from the premiſes. It is the nature of agriculture, particularly when well conducted, to produce ſupport for a conſiderable number above that which it employs; and conſequently if theſe members of the ſociety, or as Sir James Steuart calls them, the free hands, do not increaſe, ſo as to reach the limit of the number which can be ſupported by the ſurplus produce, the whole population of the country may continue for ages increaſing with the improving ſtate of agriculture, and yet

[a] Sketches of the Hiſtory of Man, b. i. ſketch i. p. 106, 107. 8vo. 1788.

always be able to export corn. But this increaſe, after a certain period, will be very different from the natural, and unreſtricted, increaſe of population; it will merely follow the ſlow augmentation of produce from the gradual improvement of agriculture; and population will ſtill be checked by the difficulty of procuring ſubſiſtence. It is very juſtly obſerved by Sir James Steuart, that the population of England in the middle of the laſt century when the exports of corn were conſiderable, was ſtill checked for want of food[a]. The preciſe meaſure of the population in a country thus circumſtanced, will not, indeed, be the quantity of food, becauſe part of it is exported, but the quantity of employment. The ſtate of this employment, however, will neceſſarily regulate the wages of labour, on which depends the power of the lower claſſes of people to procure food; and according as the employment in the country is increaſing, whether ſlowly, or rapidly, theſe wages will be ſuch, as either to check, or to encourage, early marriages, ſuch, as to enable a labourer to ſupport, only two or three, or as many as five or ſix, children.

The quantity of employment in any country will not of courſe vary from year to year, in the ſame manner as the quantity of produce muſt neceſſarily do, from the variation of the ſeaſons; and conſequently the check from want of employment will be much more ſteady in its operation, and be much more favourable to the lower claſſes of people, than the check from the immediate want of food. The firſt will be the preventive check; the ſecond the poſitive check. When the demand for labour is either ſtationary, or increaſing very ſlowly, people, not ſeeing any employment open by which they can ſupport a family, or the wages of common labour being inadequate to this purpoſe, will of courſe be deterred from marrying. But if a demand for labour continue increaſing with ſome rapidity, although the ſupply of food be uncertain, on account of variable ſeaſons, and a dependence on other countries, the population will evidently go on,

[a] Polit. Econ. vol. i. b. i. c. xv. p. 100.

till it is positively checked by famine, or the diseases arising from severe want.

Scarcity and extreme poverty, therefore, may, or may not, accompany an increasing population, according to circumstances. But they must necessarily accompany a permanently declining population; because there never has been, nor probably ever will be, any other cause than want of food, which makes the population of a country permanently decline. In the numerous instances of depopulation which occur in history, the causes of it may always be traced to the want of industry, or the ill direction of that industry, arising from violence, bad government, ignorance, &c. which first occasions a want of food, and of course depopulation follows. When Rome adopted the custom of importing all her corn, and laying all Italy into pasture, she soon declined in population. The causes of the depopulation of Egypt and Turkey have already been alluded to; and, in the case of Spain, it was certainly not the numerical loss of people, occasioned by the expulsion of the Moors; but the industry and capital thus expelled, which permanently injured her population. When a country has been depopulated by violent causes, if a bad government, with its usual concomitant, insecurity of property, ensue, which has generally been the case in all those countries which are now less peopled than formerly; neither the food nor the population can recover themselves, and the inhabitants will probably live in severe want. But when an accidental depopulation takes place, in a country which was before populous and industrious, and in the habit of exporting corn, if the remaining inhabitants be left at liberty to exert, and do exert, their industry in the same direction as before, it is a strange idea to entertain, that they would then be unable to supply themselves with corn in the same plenty; particularly, as the diminished numbers would, of course, cultivate principally the more fertile parts of their territory, and not be obliged, as in their more populous state, to apply to ungrateful soils. Countries in this situation would evidently have the same chance of recovering their former

mer number, as they had originally of reaching this number; and indeed if absolute populousness were necessary to relative plenty, as some agriculturists have supposed[a], it would be impossible for new colonies to increase with the same rapidity as old states.

The prejudices on the subject of population, bear a very striking resemblance to the old prejudices about specie, and we know how slowly, and with what difficulty, these last have yielded to juster conceptions. Politicians observing, that states which were powerful and prosperous, were almost invariably populous, have mistaken an effect for a cause, and concluded that their population was the cause of their prosperity, instead of their prosperity being the cause of their population, as the old political economists concluded, that the abundance of specie was the cause of national wealth, instead of the effect of it. The annual produce of the land and labour, in

[a] Among others, I allude more particularly to Mr. Anderson, who, in a *Calm Investigation of the Circumstances which have led to the present Scarcity of Grain in Britain*, (published in 1801,) has laboured, with extraordinary earnestness, and I believe with the best intentions possible, to impress this curious truth on the minds of his countrymen. The particular position which he attempts to prove is, *that an increase of population in any state whose fields have not been made to attain their highest possible degree of productiveness*, (*a thing that probably has never yet been seen on this globe,*) *will necessarily have its means of subsistence rather augmented, than diminished, by that augmentation of its population*; *and the reverse.* The proposition is, to be sure, expressed rather obscurely; but, from the context, his meaning evidently is, that every increase of population tends to increase relative plenty, and vice versâ. He concludes his proofs by observing, that, if the facts which he has thus brought forward and connected, do not serve to remove the fears of those who doubt the possibility of this country producing abundance to sustain its increasing population, were it to augment in a ratio greatly more progressive than it has yet done, he should doubt, whether they could be convinced of it, were one even to rise from the dead to tell them so. Mr. A. is, perhaps, justified in this doubt, from the known incredulity of the age, which might cause people to remain unconvinced in both cases. I agree with Mr. A. however, entirely, respecting the importance of directing a greater part of the national industry to agriculture; but from the circumstance of its being possible for a country with a certain direction of its industry, always to export corn, although it may be very populous, he has been led into the strange error of supposing, that an agricultural country could support an unchecked population.

both theſe inſtances, became, in conſequence, a ſecondary conſideration, and its increaſe, it was conceived, would naturally follow the increaſe of ſpecie in the one caſe, or of population in the other. The folly of endeavouring, by forcible means, to increaſe the quantity of ſpecie in any country, and the abſolute impoſſibility of accumulating it beyond a certain level by any human laws that can be deviſed, are now fully eſtabliſhed, and have been completely exemplified in the inſtances of Spain and Portugal; but the illuſion ſtill remains reſpecting population; and under this impreſſion, almoſt every political treatiſe has abounded in propoſals to encourage population, with little or no comparative reference to the means of its ſupport. Yet, ſurely, the folly of endeavouring to increaſe the quantity of ſpecie in any country without an increaſe of the commodities which it is to circulate, is not greater, than that of endeavouring to increaſe the number of people, without an increaſe of the food which is to maintain them; and it will be found, that the level above which no human laws can raiſe the population of a country, is a limit more fixed and impaſſable, than the limit to the accumulation of ſpecie. However improbable, in fact, it is poſſible to conceive, that means might be invented of retaining a quantity of ſpecie in a ſtate, greatly beyond what was demanded by the produce of its land and labour; but when, by great encouragements, population has been raiſed to ſuch a height, that this produce is meted out to each individual in the ſmalleſt portions that can ſupport life, no ſtretch of ingenuity can even conceive the poſſibility of going further.

It has appeared, I think, clearly, in the review of different ſocieties given in the former part of this work, that thoſe countries, the inhabitants of which were ſunk in the moſt barbarous ignorance, or oppreſſed by the moſt cruel tyranny, however low they might be in actual population, were very populous in proportion to their means of ſubſiſtence; and upon the ſlighteſt failure of the ſeaſons generally ſuffered the ſeverities of want. Ignorance and deſpotiſm ſeem to have

have no tendency to deſtroy the paſſion which prompts to increaſe; but they effectually deſtroy the checks to it from reaſon and foreſight. The improvident barbarian who thinks only of his preſent wants, or the miſerable peaſant, who, from his political ſituation, feels little ſecurity of reaping what he has ſown, will ſeldom be deterred from gratifying his paſſions by the proſpect of inconveniences which cannot be expected to preſs on him under three or four years. But though this want of foreſight, which is foſtered by ignorance and deſpotiſm, tend thus rather to encourage the procreation of children, it is abſolutely fatal to the induſtry which is to ſupport them. Induſtry cannot exiſt without foreſight and ſecurity. The indolence of the ſavage is well known; and the poor Egyptian or Abyſſinian farmer, without capital, who rents land, which is let out yearly to the higheſt bidder, and who is conſtantly ſubject to the demands of his tyrannical maſters, to the caſual plunder of an enemy, and, not unfrequently, to the violation of his miſerable contract, can have no heart to be induſtrious, and if he had, could not exerciſe that induſtry with ſucceſs. Even poverty itſelf, which appears to be the great ſpur to induſtry, when it has once paſſed certain limits, almoſt ceaſes to operate. The indigence which is hopeleſs, deſtroys all vigorous exertion, and confines the efforts to what is ſufficient for bare exiſtence. It is the hope of bettering our condition, and the fear of want, rather than want itſelf, that is the beſt ſtimulus to induſtry, and its moſt conſtant and beſt directed efforts will almoſt invariably be found among a claſs of people above the claſs of the wretchedly poor.

The effect of ignorance and oppreſſion will therefore always be to deſtroy the ſprings of induſtry, and conſequently to diminiſh the annual produce of the land and labour in any country; and this diminution will inevitably be followed by a decreaſe of the population, in ſpite of the birth of any number of children whatever, annually. The deſire of immediate gratification, and the removal of the reſtraints to it from prudence, may perhaps, in ſuch countries,

prompt univerſally to early marriages; but when theſe habits have once reduced the people to the loweſt poſſible ſtate of poverty, they can evidently have no further effect upon the population. Their only effect muſt be on the degree of mortality; and there is no doubt, that, if we could obtain accurate bills of mortality in thoſe ſouthern countries, where very few women remain unmarried, and all marry young, the proportion of the annual deaths would be 1 in 17, 18, or 20, inſtead of 1 in 34, 36, or 40, as in European ſtates, where the preventive check operates.

That an increaſe of population, when it follows in its natural order, is both a poſitive good in itſelf, and abſolutely neceſſary to a further increaſe in the annual produce of the land and labour of any country, I ſhould be the laſt to deny. The only queſtion is, what is the natural order of its progreſs? In this point, Sir James Steuart, who has in general explained this ſubject ſo well, appears to me to have fallen into an error. He determines that multiplication is the efficient cauſe of agriculture, and not agriculture of multiplication [a]. But though it may be allowed that the increaſe of people beyond what could eaſily ſubſiſt on the natural fruits of the earth, firſt prompted man to till the ground; and that the view of maintaining a family, or of obtaining ſome valuable conſideration in exchange for the products of agriculture, ſtill operates as the principal ſtimulus to cultivation; yet it is clear, that theſe products in their actual ſtate, muſt be beyond the loweſt wants of the exiſting population, before any permanent increaſe can poſſibly be ſupported. And we know that multiplication has in numberleſs inſtances taken place, which has produced no effect upon agriculture, and has merely been followed by an increaſe of diſeaſes; but perhaps there is no inſtance, where a permanent increaſe of agriculture, has not effected a permanent increaſe of population, ſomewhere or other. Conſequently, agriculture may with more propriety be termed the efficient cauſe of population, than popu-

[a] Polit. Econ. vol. i. b. i. c. xviii. p. 114.

tion of agriculture [a], though they certainly re-act upon each other, and are mutually neceſſary to each other's ſupport. This indeed ſeems to be the hinge on which the ſubject turns, and all the prejudices reſpecting population have, perhaps, ariſen from a miſtake about the order of precedence.

The author of *L'Ami des Hommes*, in a chapter on the effects of a decay of agriculture upon population, acknowledges that he had fallen into a fundamental error in conſidering population as the ſource of revenue; and that he was afterwards fully convinced that revenue was the ſource of population [b]. From a want of attention to this moſt important diſtinction, ſtateſmen, in purſuit of the deſireable object of population, have been led to encourage early marriages, to reward the fathers of families, and to diſgrace celibacy; but this, as the ſame author juſtly obſerves, is to dreſs and water a piece of land without ſowing it, and yet to expect a crop.

Among the other prejudices which have prevailed on the ſubject of population, it has been generally thought, that, while there is either waſte among the rich, or land remaining uncultivated in any country, the complaints for want of food cannot be juſtly founded, or, at leaſt, that the preſſure of diſtreſs upon the poor is to be attributed to the ill-conduct of the higher claſſes of ſociety, and the bad management of the land. The real effect, however, of theſe two circumſtances, is merely to narrow the limit of the actual population; but they have little or no influence on what may be called the average preſſure of diſtreſs on the poorer members of ſociety. If our anceſtors had been ſo frugal and induſtrious, and had tranſmitted ſuch habits to their poſterity, that nothing ſuperfluous was now conſumed by the higher claſſes, no horſes were uſed for pleaſure,

[a] Sir James Steuart explains himſelf afterwards, by ſaying that he means principally the multiplication of thoſe perſons who have ſome valuable conſideration to give for the products of agriculture; but this is evidently not mere increaſe of population, and ſuch an explanation ſeems to admit the incorrectneſs of the general propoſition.

[b] Tom. viii. p. 84. 12mo. 9 vols. 1762.

and no land was left uncultivated, a ſtriking difference would appear in the ſtate of the actual population; but probably none whatever, in the ſtate of the lower claſſes of people, with reſpect to the price of labour, and the facility of ſupporting a family. The waſte among the rich, and the horſes kept for pleaſure, have indeed a little the effect of the conſumption of grain in diſtilleries, noticed before with regard to China. On the ſuppoſition that the food conſumed in this manner may be withdrawn on the occaſion of a ſcarcity, and be applied to the relief of the poor, they operate, certainly, as far as they go, like granaries which are only opened at the time that they are moſt wanted, and muſt therefore tend rather to benefit than to injure the lower claſſes of ſociety.

With regard to uncultivated land, it is evident, that its effect upon the poor is neither to injure, nor to benefit them. The ſudden cultivation of it, will indeed tend to improve their condition for a time, and the neglect of lands before cultivated, will certainly make their ſituation worſe for a certain period; but when no changes of this kind are going forward, the effect of uncultivated land on the lower claſſes, operates merely like the poſſeſſion of a ſmaller territory. It is, indeed, a point of very great importance to the poor, whether a country be in the habit of exporting or importing corn; but this point is not neceſſarily connected with the complete or incomplete cultivation of the whole territory, but depends upon the proportion of the ſurplus produce, to thoſe who are ſupported by it; and, in fact, this proportion is generally the greateſt, in countries which have not yet completed the cultivation of all their territory. If every inch of land in this country were well cultivated, there would be no reaſon to expect, merely from this circumſtance, that we ſhould be able to export corn. Our power in this reſpect would depend entirely on the proportion of the ſurplus produce to the commercial population; and this, of courſe, would in its turn depend on the direction of capital to agriculture, or commerce.

It is not probable that any country with a large territory ſhould ever

ever be completely cultivated; and I am inclined to think, that we often draw very inconſiderate concluſions againſt the induſtry and government of ſtates from the appearance of uncultivated lands in them. It ſeems to be the clear and expreſs duty of every government, to remove all obſtacles, and give every facility, to the incloſure and cultivation of land; but when this has been done, the reſt muſt be left to the operation of individual intereſt; and, upon this principle, it cannot be expected that any new land ſhould be brought into cultivation, the manure and the labour neceſſary for which, might be employed to greater advantage on the improvement of land already in cultivation; and this is a caſe which will very frequently occur. In countries poſſeſſed of a large territory, there will always be a great quantity of land of a middling quality, which requires conſtant dreſſing to prevent it from growing worſe; but which would admit of very great improvement, if a greater quantity of manure and labour could be employed upon it. The great obſtacle to the amelioration of land is the difficulty, the expence, and, ſometimes, the impoſſibility, of procuring a ſufficient quantity of dreſſing. As this inſtrument of improvement, therefore, is in practice limited, whatever it may be in theory, the queſtion will always be, how it may be moſt profitably employed; and in any inſtance where a certain quantity of dreſſing and labour employed to bring new land into cultivation, would have yielded a permanently greater produce if employed upon old land, both the individual and the nation are loſers. Upon this principle it is not uncommon for farmers in ſome ſituations, never to dreſs their pooreſt land, but to get from it merely a ſcanty crop every three or four years, and to employ the whole of their manure, which they practically feel is limited, on thoſe parts of their farms, where it will produce a greater proportional effect.

The caſe will be different, of courſe, in a ſmall territory with a great population, ſupported on funds not derived from their own ſoil. In this caſe there will be little or no choice of land, and a

comparative ſuperabundance of manure; and under ſuch circumſtances the pooreſt ſoils may be brought under cultivation. But for this purpoſe, it is not mere population that is wanted, but a population which can obtain the produce of other countries, while it is gradually improving its own; otherwiſe, it would be immediately reduced in proportion to the limited produce of this ſmall and barren territory; and the amelioration of the land might perhaps never take place; or if it did, it would take place very ſlowly indeed, and the population would always be exactly meaſured by this tardy rate, and could not poſſibly increaſe beyond it.

This ſubject is illuſtrated in the cultivation of the Campine in Brabant, which, according to the Abbé Mann [a], conſiſted originally of the moſt barren and arid ſand. Many attempts were made by private individuals to bring it under cultivation, but without ſucceſs; which prove that, as a farming project, and conſidered as a ſole dependence, the cultivation of it would not anſwer. Some religious houſes, however, at laſt ſettled there, and being ſupported by other funds, and improving the land merely as a ſecondary object, they, by degrees, in the courſe of ſome centuries, brought nearly the whole under cultivation, letting it out to farmers as ſoon as it was ſufficiently improved.

There is no ſpot, however barren, which might not be made rich this way, or by the concentrated population of a manufacturing town; but this is no proof whatever that with reſpect to population and food, population has the precedence, becauſe this concentrated population could not poſſibly exiſt, without the preceding exiſtence of an adequate quantity of food in the ſurplus produce of ſome other diſtrict.

In a country like Brabant or Holland, where territory is the principal want, and not manure, ſuch a diſtrict as the Campine is

[a] Memoir on the Agriculture of the Netherlands, publiſhed in vol. i. of Communications to the Board of Agriculture, p. 225.

deſcribed

deſcribed to be, may perhaps be cultivated with advantage. But in countries, poſſeſſed of a large territory, and with a conſiderable quantity of land of a middling quality, the attempt to cultivate ſuch a ſpot, would be a palpable miſdirection and waſte, both of individual and national reſources.

The French have already found their error in bringing under cultivation too great a quantity of poor land. They are now ſenſible that they have employed in this way a portion of labour and dreſſing, which would have produced a permanently better effect, if it had been applied to the further improvement of better land. Even in China, which is ſo fully cultivated and ſo fully peopled, barren heaths have been noticed in ſome diſtricts; which prove, that, diſtreſſed as the people appear to be for ſubſiſtence, it does not anſwer to them to employ any of their manure on ſuch ſpots. Theſe remarks will be ſtill further confirmed, if we recollect, that in the cultivation of a large ſurface of bad land, there muſt neceſſarily be a very great waſte of ſeed corn.

We ſhould not, therefore, be too ready to make inferences againſt the internal economy of a country, from the appearance of uncultivated heaths, without other evidence. But the fact is, that as no country has ever reached, or probably ever will reach, its higheſt poſſible achme of produce, it appears always, as if the want of induſtry, or the ill-direction of that induſtry, was the actual limit to a further increaſe of produce and population, and not the abſolute refuſal of nature to yield any more; but a man who is locked up in a room, may be fairly ſaid to be confined by the walls of it, though he may never touch them; and with regard to the principle of population, it is never the queſtion, whether a country will produce *any more*, but whether it may be made to produce a ſufficiency to keep pace with an unchecked increaſe of people. In China, the queſtion is not, whether a certain additional quantity of rice might be raiſed by improved culture, but whether ſuch an addition could be expected during the next twenty-five years, as would be ſufficient

to ſupport an additional three hundred millions of people. And in this country, it is not the queſtion, whether by cultivating all our commons, we could raiſe conſiderably more corn than at preſent; but whether we could raiſe ſufficient for a population of twenty millions in the next twenty-five years, and forty millions, in the next fifty years.

The allowing of the produce of the earth to be abſolutely unlimited, ſcarcely removes the weight of a hair from the argument, which depends entirely upon the differently increaſing ratios of population and food: and all that the moſt enlightened governments, and the moſt perſevering and beſt guided efforts of induſtry can do, is to make the neceſſary checks to population operate more equably, and in a direction to produce the leaſt evil; but to remove them, is a taſk abſolutely hopeleſs.

ESSAY, &c.

BOOK IV.

OF OUR FUTURE PROSPECTS RESPECTING THE REMOVAL OR MITIGATION OF THE EVILS ARISING FROM THE PRINCIPLE OF POPULATION.

CHAP. I.

Of moral reſtraint, and the foundations of our obligation to practiſe this virtue.

As it appears, that in the actual ſtate of every ſociety which has come within our review, the natural progreſs of population has been conſtantly and powerfully checked; and as it ſeems evident, that no improved form of government, no plans of emigration, no benevolent inſtitutions, and no degree or direction of national induſtry, can prevent the continued action of a great check to increaſe in ſome form or other; it follows, that we muſt ſubmit to it as an inevitable law of nature; and the only inquiry that remains, is, how it may take place with the leaſt poſſible prejudice to the virtue and happineſs of human ſociety. The various checks to population which have been obſerved to prevail in the ſame and different countries, ſeem all to be reſolvable into moral reſtraint, vice, and miſery; and if our choice be confined to theſe three, we cannot long heſitate in our deciſion reſpecting which it would be moſt eligible to encourage.

In the former edition of this eſſay, I obſerved, that, as from the laws of nature it appeared, that ſome check to population muſt exiſt, it was better that this check ſhould ariſe from a foreſight of the difficulties attending a family, and the fear of dependent poverty, than from the actual preſence of want and ſickneſs. This idea will admit of being purſued further, and I am inclined to think, that, from the prevailing opinions reſpecting population, which undoubtedly originated in barbarous ages, and have been continued and circulated by that part of every community, which may be ſuppoſed to be intereſted in their ſupport, we have been prevented from attending to the clear dictates of reaſon and nature on this ſubject.

Natural and moral evil ſeem to be the inſtruments employed by the Deity in admoniſhing us to avoid any mode of conduct, which is not ſuited to our being, and will conſequently injure our happineſs. If we be intemperate in eating and drinking, we are diſordered; if we indulge the tranſports of anger, we ſeldom fail to commit acts of which we afterwards repent; if we multiply too faſt, we die miſerably of poverty and contagious diſeaſes. The laws of nature in all theſe caſes are ſimilar and uniform. They indicate to us, that we have followed theſe impulſes too far, ſo as to trench upon ſome other law which equally demands attention. The uneaſineſs we feel from repletion, the injuries that we inflict on ourſelves or others in anger, and the inconveniencies we ſuffer on the approach of poverty, are all admonitions to us to regulate theſe impulſes better; and if we heed not this admonition, we juſtly incur the penalty of our diſobedience, and our ſufferings operate as a warning to others.

From the inattention of mankind hitherto, to the conſequences of increaſing too faſt, it muſt be preſumed, that theſe conſequences are not ſo immediately and powerfully connected with the conduct which leads to them, as in the other inſtances; but the delayed knowledge of any particular effects does not alter their nature, nor our obligation to regulate our conduct accordingly, as ſoon as we are

are ſatisfied of what this conduct ought to be. In many other inſtances it has not been till after long and painful experience, that the conduct moſt favourable to the happineſs of man has been forced upon his attention. The kind of food, and the mode of preparing it, beſt ſuited to the purpoſes of nutrition and the gratification of the palate; the treatment and remedies of different diſorders; the bad effects on the human frame, of low and marſhy ſituations; the invention of the moſt convenient and comfortable clothing; the conſtruction of good houſes; and all the advantages and extended enjoyments which diſtinguiſh civilized life; were not pointed out to the attention of man at once; but were the ſlow and late reſult of experience, and of the admonitions received by repeated failures.

Diſeaſes have been generally conſidered as the inevitable inflictions of Providence; but, perhaps, a great part of them may more juſtly be conſidered as indications that we have offended againſt ſome of the laws of nature. The plague at Conſtantinople, and in other towns of the Eaſt, is a conſtant admonition of this kind to the inhabitants. The human conſtitution cannot ſupport ſuch a ſtate of filth and torpor; and as dirt, ſqualid poverty, and indolence, are in the higheſt degree unfavourable to happineſs and virtue, it ſeems a benevolent diſpenſation, that ſuch a ſtate ſhould by the laws of nature produce diſeaſe and death, as a beacon to others to avoid ſplitting on the ſame rock.

The prevalence of the plague in London till the year 1666, operated in a proper manner on the conduct of our anceſtors; and the removal of nuiſances, the conſtruction of drains, the widening of the ſtreets, and the giving more room and air to their houſes, had the effect of eradicating completely this dreadful diſorder, and of adding greatly to the health and happineſs of the inhabitants.

In the hiſtory of every epidemick it has almoſt invariably been obſerved, that the lower claſſes of people, whoſe food was poor and inſufficient, and who lived crowded together, in ſmall and dirty houſes, were the principal victims. In what other manner can nature

nature point out to us, that if we increaſe too faſt for the means of ſubſiſtence, ſo as to render it neceſſary for a conſiderable part of the ſociety to live in this miſerable manner, we have offended againſt one of her laws. This law ſhe has declared exactly in the ſame manner, as ſhe declares that intemperance in eating and drinking will be followed by ill health; and that, however grateful it may be to us at the moment to indulge theſe paſſions to exceſs, this indulgence will ultimately produce unhappineſs. It is as much a law of nature that repletion is bad for the human frame, as that eating and drinking, unattended with this conſequence, is good for it.

An implicit obedience to the impulſes of our natural paſſions would lead us into the wildeſt and moſt fatal extravagancies; and yet we have the ſtrongeſt reaſons for believing that all theſe paſſions are ſo neceſſary to our being, that they could not be generally weakened or diminiſhed, without injuring our happineſs. The moſt powerful and univerſal of all our deſires is the deſire of food, and of thoſe things, ſuch as clothing, houſes, &c. which are immediately neceſſary to relieve us from the pains of hunger and cold. It is acknowledged by all, that theſe deſires put in motion the greateſt part of that activity from which ſpring the multiplied improvements and advantages of civilized life; and that the purſuit of theſe objects and the gratification of theſe deſires form the principal happineſs of the larger half of mankind, civilized or uncivilized, and are indiſpenſably neceſſary to the more refined enjoyments of the other half. We are all conſcious, of the ineſtimable benefits that we derive from theſe deſires when directed in a certain manner; but we are equally conſcious, of the evils reſulting from them when not directed in this manner; ſo much ſo, that ſociety has taken upon itſelf to puniſh moſt ſeverely, what it conſiders as an irregular gratification of them. And yet the deſires in both caſes are equally natural, and, abſtractedly conſidered, equally virtuous. The act of the hungry man who ſatisfies his appetite by taking a loaf from the ſhelf of another, is in no reſpect to be diſtinguiſhed from

from the act of him who does the ſame thing with a loaf of his own, but by its conſequences. From the conſideration of theſe conſequences, we feel the moſt perfect conviction, that if people were not prevented from gratifying their natural deſires with the loaves in the poſſeſſion of others, that the number of loaves would univerſally diminiſh. This experience is the foundation of the laws relating to property, and of the diſtinctions of virtue and vice, in the gratification of deſires, otherwiſe perfectly the ſame.

If the pleaſure ariſing from the gratification of theſe propenſities were univerſally diminiſhed in vividneſs, violations of property would become leſs frequent; but this advantage would be greatly overbalanced by the narrowing of the ſources of enjoyment. The diminution in the quantity of all thoſe productions, which contribute to human gratification, would be much greater, in proportion, than the diminution of theſts; and the loſs of general happineſs on the one ſide, would be beyond compariſon greater, than the gain to happineſs on the other. When we contemplate the conſtant and ſevere toils of the greateſt part of mankind, it is impoſſible not to be forcibly impreſſed with the reflection, that the ſources of human happineſs would be moſt cruelly diminiſhed, if the proſpect of a good meal, a warm houſe, and a comfortable fireſide in the evening, were not incitements ſufficiently vivid, to give intereſt and cheerfulneſs to the labours and privations of the day.

After the deſire of food, the moſt powerful and general of our deſires, is, the paſſion between the ſexes, taken in an enlarged ſenſe. Of the happineſs ſpread over human life by this paſſion, very few are unconſcious. Virtuous love, exalted by friendſhip, ſeems to be that ſort of mixture of ſenſual and intellectual enjoyment, particularly ſuited to the nature of man, and moſt powerfully calculated to awaken the ſympathies of the ſoul, and produce the moſt exquiſite gratifications. Perhaps there is ſcarcely a man who has once experienced the genuine delight of virtuous love, however great his intellectual pleaſures may have been, that does not look back to the

the period, as the ſunny ſpot, in his whole life, where his imagination loves moſt to baſk, which he recollects and contemplates with the fondeſt regret, and which he would moſt wiſh to live over again.

It has been ſaid by Mr. Godwin, in order to ſhew the evident inferiority of the pleaſures of ſenſe, "Strip the commerce of the "ſexes of all its attendant circumſtances, and it would be generally "deſpiſed." He might as well ſay to a man who admired trees, ſtrip them of their ſpreading branches, and lovely foliage, and what beauty can you ſee in a bare pole? But it was the tree with the branches and foliage, and not without them, that excited admiration. It is "the ſymmetry of perſon, the vivacity, the voluptuous ſoftneſs "of temper, the affectionate kindneſs of feeling, the imagination "and the wit[a]" of a woman, which excite the paſſion of love, and not the mere diſtinction of her being a female.

It is a very great miſtake to ſuppoſe, that the paſſion between the ſexes, only operates and influences human conduct, when the immediate gratification of it is in contemplation. The formation and ſteady purſuit of ſome particular plan of life, has been juſtly conſidered as one of the moſt permanent ſources of happineſs; but I am inclined to believe, that there are not many of theſe plans formed, that are not connected, in a conſiderable degree, with the proſpect of the gratification of this paſſion, and with the ſupport of children ariſing from it. The evening meal, the warm houſe, and the comfortable fireſide, would loſe half of their intereſt, if we were to exclude the idea of ſome object of affection with whom they were to be ſhared.

We have alſo great reaſon to believe, that the paſſion between the ſexes has the moſt powerful tendency to ſoften and meliorate the human character, and keep it more alive to all the kindlier emotions of benevolence and pity. Obſervations on ſavage life have generally tended to prove, that nations in which this paſſion appeared to be leſs vivid, were diſtinguiſhed by a ferocious and malignant ſpirit;

[a] Political Juſtice, vol. i. b. i. c. v. p. 72. 8vo.

and particularly by tyranny and cruelty to the ſex. If, indeed, this bond of conjugal affection were conſiderably weakened, it ſeems probable, either that the man would make uſe of his ſuperior phyſical ſtrength, and turn his wife into a ſlave, as among the generality of ſavages; or at beſt, that every little inequality of temper which muſt neceſſarily occur between two perſons, would produce a total alienation of affection; and this could hardly take place, without a diminution of parental fondneſs and care, which would have the moſt fatal effect on the happineſs of ſociety.

It may be further remarked, that obſervations on the human character in different countries, warrant us in the concluſion, that the paſſion is ſtronger, and its general effects in producing gentleneſs, kindneſs, and ſuavity of manners, much more powerful, where obſtacles are thrown in the way of very early and univerſal gratification. In ſome of the ſouthern countries where every impulſe may be almoſt immediately indulged, the paſſion ſinks into mere animal deſire, is ſoon weakened and almoſt extinguiſhed by exceſs; and its influence on the character is extremely confined. But in European countries, where, though the women are not ſecluded, yet manners have impoſed conſiderable reſtraints on this gratification, the paſſion not only riſes in force, but in the univerſality and beneficial tendency of its effects, and has often the moſt influence in the formation and improvement of the character, where it is the leaſt gratified.

Conſidering then the paſſion between the ſexes in all its bearings and relations, and including the endearing engagement of parent and child reſulting from it, few will be diſpoſed to deny that it is one of the principal ingredients of human happineſs. Yet experience teaches us that much evil flows from the irregular gratification of it; and though the evil be of little weight in the ſcale, when compared with the good; yet its abſolute quantity cannot be inconſiderable, on account of the ſtrength and univerſality of the paſſion. It is evident, however, from the general conduct of all

governments in their diſtribution of puniſhments, that the evil reſulting from this cauſe is not ſo great, and ſo immediately dangerous to ſociety, as the irregular gratification of the deſire of property; but placing this evil in the moſt formidable point of view, we ſhould evidently purchaſe a diminution of it at a very dear price, by the extinction or diminution of the paſſion which cauſes it; a change, which would probably convert human life, either into a cold and cheerleſs blank, or a ſcene of ſavage and mercileſs ferocity.

A careful attention to the remote as well as immediate effects of all the human paſſions, and all the general laws of nature, leads us ſtrongly to the concluſion, that, under the preſent conſtitution of things, few or none of them would admit of being greatly diminiſhed, without narrowing the ſources of good, more powerfully than the ſources of evil. And the reaſon ſeems to be obvious. They are, in fact, the materials of all our pleaſures, as well as of all our pains; of all our happineſs, as well as of all our miſery; of all our virtues, as well as of all our vices. It muſt therefore be regulation and direction that are wanted, not diminution or extinction.

It is juſtly obſerved by Dr. Paley, that, "Human paſſions are "either neceſſary to human welfare, or capable of being made, and "in a great majority of inſtances in fact made, conducive to its "happineſs. Theſe paſſions are ſtrong and general; and perhaps "would not anſwer their purpoſe, unleſs they were ſo. But ſtrength "and generality, when it is expedient that particular circumſtances "ſhould be reſpected, become, if left to themſelves, exceſs and "miſdirection. From which exceſs and miſdirection, the vices of "mankind (the cauſes no doubt of much miſery) appear to ſpring. "This account, while it ſhews us the principle of vice, ſhews us "at the ſame time, the province of reaſon and ſelf-government[a]."

Our virtue, therefore, as reaſonable beings, evidently conſiſts in educing, from the general materials which the Creator has placed under

[a] Natural Theology, c. xxvi. p. 547.

under our guidance, the greateſt ſum of human happineſs; and as all our natural impulſes are abſtractedly conſidered good, and only to be diſtinguiſhed by their conſequences, a ſtrict attention to theſe conſequences, and the regulation of our conduct conformably to them, muſt be conſidered as our principal duty.

The fecundity of the human ſpecies is, in ſome reſpects, a diſtinct conſideration from the paſſion between the ſexes, as it evidently depends more upon the power of women in bearing children, than upon the ſtrength or weakneſs of this paſſion. It is, however, a law, exactly ſimilar in its great features to all the other laws of nature. It is ſtrong and general, and apparently would not admit of any very conſiderable diminution, without being inadequate to its object; the evils ariſing from it are incidental to theſe neceſſary qualities of ſtrength and generality; and theſe evils are capable of being very greatly mitigated, and rendered comparatively light by human energy and virtue. We cannot but conceive, that it is an object of the Creator, that the earth ſhould be repleniſhed, at leaſt to a conſiderable degree; and it appears to me clear, that this could not be effected, without a tendency in population to increaſe faſter than food; and as with the preſent law of increaſe, the peopling of the earth does not proceed very rapidly, we have undoubtedly ſome reaſon to believe, that this law is not too powerful for its apparent object. The deſire of the means of ſubſiſtence would be comparatively confined in its effects, and would fail of producing that general activity ſo neceſſary to the improvement of the human faculties, were it not for the ſtrong and univerſal effort of population, to increaſe with greater rapidity than its ſupplies. If theſe two tendencies were exactly balanced, I do not ſee what motive there would be, ſufficiently ſtrong, to overcome the acknowledged indolence of man, and make him proceed in the cultivation of the ſoil. The population of any large territory, however fertile, would be as likely to ſtop at five hundred, or five thouſand, as at five millions, or fifty millions. Such a balance therefore, would clearly defeat one great purpoſe of creation;

and if the queſtion be merely a queſtion of degree, a queſtion of a little more, or a little leſs, ſtrength, we may fairly diſtruſt our competence to judge of the preciſe quantity neceſſary to anſwer the object, with the ſmalleſt ſum of incidental evil. In the preſent ſtate of things we appear to have under our guidance a great power, capable of peopling a deſert region in a ſmall number of years; and yet, under other circumſtances, capable of being confined, by human energy and virtue, to any limits, however narrow, at the expence of a ſmall comparative quantity of evil. The analogy of all the other laws of nature would be completely violated, if in this inſtance alone, there were no proviſion for accidental failures, no reſources againſt the vices of mankind, or the partial miſchiefs reſulting from other general laws. To effect the apparent object without any attendant evil, it is evident, that a perpetual change in the law of increaſe would be neceſſary, varying with the varying circumſtances of each country. But inſtead of this, it is not only more conſonant to the analogy of the other parts of nature, but we have reaſon to think, that it is more conducive to the formation and improvement of the human mind, that the law ſhould be uniform, and the evils, incidental to it under certain circumſtances, be left to be mitigated or removed by man himſelf. His duties in this caſe vary with his ſituation; and he is thus kept more alive to the conſequences of his actions, and his faculties have evidently greater play and opportunity of improvement, than if the evil were removed by a perpetual change of the law, according to circumſtances.

Even if from paſſions too eaſily ſubdued, or the facility of illicit intercourſe, a ſtate of celibacy were a matter of indifference, and not a ſtate of ſome privation, the end of nature in the peopling of the earth would be apparently liable to be defeated. It is of the very utmoſt importance to the happineſs of mankind, that they ſhould not increaſe too faſt; but it does not appear that the object to be accompliſhed, would admit of any very conſiderable diminution in the deſire of marriage. It is clearly the duty of each individual not to marry

marry till he has a proſpect of ſupporting his children; but it is at the ſame time to be wiſhed, that he ſhould retain undiminiſhed his deſire of marriage, in order that he may exert himſelf to realize this proſpect, and be ſtimulated to make proviſion for the ſupport of greater numbers.

It is evidently therefore, regulation and direction that is required with regard to the principle of population, not diminution or alteration. And if moral reſtraint be the only virtuous mode of avoiding the incidental evils ariſing from this principle, our obligation to practiſe it will evidently reſt exactly upon the ſame foundation, as our obligation to practiſe any of the other virtues, the foundation of utility.

Whatever indulgence we may be diſpoſed to allow to occaſional failures in the diſcharge of a duty, of acknowledged difficulty; yet, of the ſtrict line of duty, during the period of celibacy, whatever that may be, we cannot doubt. And, with regard to the neceſſity of this celibacy in countries that have been long peopled, or our obligation not to marry till we have a fair proſpect of being able to ſupport our children, it will appear to deſerve the attention of the moraliſt, if it can be proved, that an attention to this obligation is of more effect in the prevention of miſery, than all the other virtues combined; and that if, in violation of this duty, it were the general cuſtom to follow the firſt impulſe of nature, and marry at the age of puberty, the univerſal prevalence of every known virtue in the greateſt conceivable degree, would fail of reſcuing ſociety from the moſt wretched and deſperate ſtate of want, and all the diſeaſes and famines which uſually accompany it.

CHAP. II.

Of the Effects which would reſult to Society from the general practice of this virtue.

ONE of the principal reaſons, which has prevented an aſſent to the doctrine of the conſtant tendency of population to increaſe beyond the means of ſubſiſtence, is, a great unwillingneſs to believe, that the Deity would, by the laws of nature, bring beings into exiſtence, which, by the laws of nature, could not be ſupported in that exiſtence. But if, in addition to that general activity and direction of our induſtry put in motion by theſe laws, we further conſider, that the incidental evils ariſing from them, are conſtantly directing our attention to the proper check to population, moral reſtraint; and if it appear, that by a ſtrict obedience to thoſe duties which are pointed out to us by the light of nature and reaſon, and are confirmed and ſanctioned by revelation, theſe evils may be avoided, the objection will, I truſt, be removed, and all apparent imputation on the goodneſs of the Deity be done away.

The heathen moraliſts never repreſented happineſs as attainable on earth, but through the medium of virtue; and among their virtues, prudence ranked in the firſt claſs, and by ſome was even conſidered as including every other. The chriſtian religion places our preſent as well as future happineſs in the exerciſe of thoſe virtues which tend to fit us for a ſtate of ſuperior enjoyment; and the ſubjection of the paſſions to the guidance of reaſon, which, if not the whole, is a principal branch of prudence, is in conſequence moſt particularly inculcated.

If,

If, for the ſake of illuſtration, we might be permitted to draw a picture of ſociety, in which, each individual endeavoured to attain happineſs by the ſtrict fulfilment of thoſe duties which the moſt enlightened of the antient philoſophers deduced from the laws of nature, and which have been directly taught, and received ſuch powerful ſanctions in the moral code of Chriſtianity, it would preſent a very different ſcene from that which we now contemplate. Every act which was prompted by the deſire of immediate gratification, but which threatened an ultimate overbalance of pain, would be conſidered as a breach of duty; and, conſequently, no man whoſe earnings were only ſufficient to maintain two children, would put himſelf in a ſituation in which he might have to maintain four or five, however he might be prompted to it by the paſſion of love. This prudential reſtraint, if it were generally adopted, by narrowing the ſupply of labour in the market, would, in the natural courſe of things, ſoon raiſe its price. The period of delayed gratification would be paſſed in ſaving the earnings which were above the wants of a ſingle man, and in acquiring habits of ſobriety, induſtry, and economy, which would enable him, in a few years, to enter into the matrimonial contract without fear of its conſequences. The operation of the preventive check in this way, by conſtantly keeping the population within the limits of the food, though conſtantly following its increaſe, would give a real value to the riſe of wages, and the ſums ſaved by labourers before marriage, very different from thoſe forced advances in the price of labour, or arbitrary parochial donations, which, in proportion to their magnitude and extenſiveneſs, muſt of neceſſity be followed by a proportional advance in the price of proviſions. As the wages of labour would thus be ſufficient to maintain with decency a large family, and as every married couple would ſet out with a ſum for contingencies, all ſqualid poverty would be removed from ſociety, or, at leaſt, be confined to a very few, who had fallen into misfortunes againſt which, no prudence or foreſight could provide.

The

The interval between the age of puberty, and the period at which each individual might venture on marriage, muſt, according to the ſuppoſition, be paſſed in ſtrict chaſtity; becauſe the law of chaſtity cannot be violated without producing evil. The effect of any thing like a promiſcuous intercourſe, which prevents the birth of children, is evidently to weaken the beſt affections of the heart, and, in a very marked manner, to degrade the female character. And any other intercourſe, would, without improper arts, bring as many children into the ſociety as marriage, with a much greater probability of their becoming a burden to it.

Theſe conſiderations ſhew, that the virtue of chaſtity is not, as ſome have ſuppoſed, a forced produce of artificial ſociety; but that it has the moſt real and ſolid foundation in nature and reaſon; being apparently the only virtuous mean of avoiding the vice and miſery which reſult from the principle of population.

In ſuch a ſociety as we have been ſuppoſing, it might be neceſſary for both ſexes to paſs many of the early years of life in the ſingle ſtate; and if this were general, there would certainly be room for a much greater number to marry afterwards, ſo that fewer, upon the whole, would be condemned to paſs their lives in celibacy. If the cuſtom of not marrying early prevailed generally, and if violations of chaſtity were equally diſhonourable in both ſexes, a more familiar and friendly intercourſe between them might take place without danger. Two young people might converſe together intimately, without its being immediately ſuppoſed, that they either intended marriage or intrigue; and a much better opportunity would thus be given to both ſexes of finding out kindred diſpoſitions, and of forming thoſe ſtrong and laſting attachments, without which, the married ſtate is generally more productive of miſery than of happineſs. The earlier years of life would not be ſpent without love, though without the full gratification of it. The paſſion, inſtead of being extinguiſhed, as it now too frequently is by early ſenſuality, would only be repreſſed for a time, that it might afterwards burn with a brighter, purer, and ſteadier

ſteadier flame; and the happineſs of the married ſtate, inſtead of an opportunity of immediate indulgence, would be looked forward to, as the prize of induſtry and virtue, and the reward of a genuine and conſtant attachment [a].

The paſſion of love is a powerful ſtimulus in the formation of character, and often prompts to the moſt noble and generous exertions; but this is only when the affections are centered in one object; and generally, when full gratification is delayed by difficulties [b]. The heart is perhaps never ſo much diſpoſed to virtuous conduct, and certainly at no time is the virtue of chaſtity ſo little difficult to men, as when under the influence of ſuch a paſſion. Late marriages taking place in this way, would be very different from thoſe of the ſame name at preſent, where the union is too frequently prompted ſolely by intereſted views, and the parties meet, not unfrequently, with exhauſted conſtitutions, and generally with exhauſted affections. The late marriages at preſent, are indeed principally confined to the men; and there are few, however advanced in life they may be, who,

[a] Dr. Currie, in his intereſting obſervations on the character and condition of the Scotch Peaſantry, which he has prefixed to his life of Burns, remarks, with a juſt knowledge of human nature, that "in appreciating the happineſs and virtue of a community, there is "perhaps no ſingle criterion on which ſo much dependence may be placed, as the ſtate "of the intercourſe between the ſexes. Where this diſplays ardour of attachment, accom-"panied by purity of conduct, the character and the influence of women riſe, our imper-"fect nature mounts in the ſcale of moral excellence; and, from the ſource of this ſingle "affection, a ſtream of felicity deſcends, which branches into a thouſand rivulets, that "enrich and adorn the field of life. Where the attachment between the ſexes ſinks into "an appetite, the heritage of our ſpecies is comparatively poor, and man approaches to "the condition of the brutes that periſh." Vol. i. p. 18.

[b] Dr. Currie obſerves, that the Scottiſh peaſant, in the courſe of his paſſion, often exerts a ſpirit of adventure, of which a Spaniſh cavalier need not be aſhamed. Burns' Works, vol. i. p. 16. It is not to be doubted, that this kind of romantic paſſion, which, Dr. C. ſays, characterizes the attachments of the humbleſt of the people of Scotland, and which has been greatly foſtered by the elevation of mind given to them by a ſuperior education, has had a moſt powerful and moſt beneficial influence on the national character.

if they determine to marry, do not fix their choice on a very young wife. A young woman, without fortune, when ſhe has paſſed her twenty-fifth year, begins to fear, and with reaſon, that ſhe may lead a life of celibacy; and with a heart capable of forming a ſtrong attachment, feels, as each year creeps on, her hopes of finding an object on which to reſt her affections gradually diminiſhing, and the uneaſineſs of her ſituation aggravated by the ſilly and unjuſt prejudices of the world. If the general age of marriage among women were later, the period of youth and hope would be prolonged, and fewer would be ultimately diſappointed.

That a change of this kind would be a moſt decided advantage to the more virtuous half of ſociety, we cannot for a moment doubt. However impatiently the privation might be borne by the men, it would be ſupported by the women readily and cheerfully; and if they could look forwards with juſt confidence to marriage at twenty-eight or thirty, I fully believe, that if the matter were left to their free choice, they would clearly prefer waiting till this period, to the being involved in all the cares of a large family at twenty-five. The moſt eligible age of marriage, however, could not be fixed; but muſt depend on circumſtances and ſituation, and muſt be determined entirely by experience. There is no period of human life at which nature more ſtrongly prompts to an union of the ſexes, than from ſeventeen or eighteen, to twenty. In every ſociety above that ſtate of depreſſion which almoſt excludes reaſon and foreſight, theſe early tendencies muſt neceſſarily be reſtrained; and if, in the actual ſtate of things, ſuch a reſtraint on the impulſes of nature be found unavoidable, at what time can we be conſiſtently releaſed from it, but at that period, whatever it may be, when in the exiſting circumſtances of the ſociety a fair proſpect preſents itſelf of maintaining a family.

The difficulty of moral reſtraint, will perhaps be objected to this doctrine. To him who does not acknowledge the authority of the Chriſtian religion, I have only to ſay, that, after the moſt careful inveſti-

inveſtigation, this virtue appears to be abſolutely neceſſary, in order to avoid certain evils which would otherwiſe reſult from the general laws of nature. According to his own principles, it is his duty to purſue the greateſt good conſiſtent with theſe laws; and not to fail in this important end, and produce an overbalance of miſery, by a partial obedience to ſome of the dictates of nature while he neglects others. The path of virtue, though it be the only path which leads to permanent happineſs, has always been repreſented by the heathen moraliſts, as of difficult aſcent.

To the Chriſtian I would ſay, that the ſcriptures moſt clearly and preciſely point it out to us as our duty, to reſtrain our paſſions within the bounds of reaſon; and it is a palpable diſobedience of this law, to indulge our deſires in ſuch a manner, as reaſon tells us, will unavoidably end in miſery. The Chriſtian cannot conſider the difficulty of moral reſtraint as any argument againſt its being his duty; ſince in almoſt every page of the ſacred writings, man is deſcribed as encompaſſed on all ſides by temptations, which it is extremely difficult to reſiſt; and though no duties are enjoined, which do not contribute to his happineſs on earth as well as in a future ſtate, yet an undeviating obedience is never repreſented as an eaſy taſk.

There is in general ſo ſtrong a tendency to love in early youth, that it is extremely difficult, at this period, to diſtinguiſh a genuine, from a tranſient paſſion. If the earlier years of life were paſſed by both ſexes in moral reſtraint, from the greater facility that this would give to the meeting of kindred diſpoſitions, it might even admit of a doubt whether more happy marriages would not take place, and conſequently more pleaſure from the paſſion of love, than in a ſtate ſuch as that of America, the circumſtances of which would allow of a very early union of the ſexes. But if we compare the intercourſe of the ſexes in ſuch a ſociety as I have been ſuppoſing, with that which now exiſts in Europe, taken under all its circumſtances, it may ſafely be aſſerted, that, independently of the load of miſery which would be removed by the prevalence of moral reſtraint, the

ſum of pleaſurable ſenſations from the paſſion of love would be increaſed in a very great degree.

If we could ſuppoſe ſuch a ſyſtem general, the acceſſion of happineſs to ſociety in its internal economy, would ſcarcely be greater than in its external relations. It might fairly be expected that war, that great peſt of the human race, would, under ſuch circumſtances, ſoon ceaſe to extend its ravages ſo widely, and ſo frequently, as it does at preſent, and might ultimately perhaps ceaſe entirely.

One of its firſt cauſes, and moſt powerful impulſes, was undoubtedly an inſufficiency of room and food; and, greatly as the circumſtances of mankind have changed ſince it firſt began, the ſame cauſe ſtill continues to operate, and to produce, though in a ſmaller degree, the ſame effects. The ambition of princes would want inſtruments of deſtruction, if the diſtreſſes of the lower claſſes of people did not drive them under their ſtandards. A recruiting ſerjeant always prays for a bad harveſt, and a want of employment, or, in other words, a redundant population.

In the earlier ages of the world, when war was the great buſineſs of mankind, and the drains of population from this cauſe were, beyond compariſon, greater than in modern times, the legiſlators and ſtateſmen of each country, adverting principally to the means of offence and defence, encouraged an increaſe of people in every poſſible way, fixed a ſtigma on barrenneſs and celibacy, and honoured marriage. The popular religious followed theſe prevailing opinions. In many countries, the prolifick power of nature was the object of ſolemn worſhip. In the religion of Mahomet, which was eſtabliſhed by the ſword, and the promulgation of which, in conſequence, could not be unaccompanied by an extraordinary deſtruction of its followers, the procreation of children to glorify the Creator, was laid down as one of the principal duties of man; and he who had the moſt numerous offspring, was conſidered as having beſt anſwered the end of his creation. The prevalence of ſuch moral ſentiments had naturally a great effect in encouraging marriage; and the rapid procreation

tion which followed, was partly the effect and partly the cauſe of inceſſant war. The vacancies occaſioned by former deſolations made room for the rearing of freſh ſupplies; and the overflowing rapidity, with which theſe ſupplies followed, conſtantly furniſhed freſh incitements and freſh inſtruments for renewed hoſtilities. Under the influence of ſuch moral ſentiments, it is difficult to conceive how the fury of inceſſant war ſhould ever abate.

It is a pleaſing confirmation of the truth and divinity of the Chriſtian religion, and of its being adapted to a more improved ſtate of human ſociety, that it places our duties reſpecting marriage, and the procreation of children, in a different light from that in which they were before beheld.

Without entering minutely into the ſubject, which would evidently lead too far, I think it will be admitted, that if we apply the ſpirit of St. Paul's declarations reſpecting marriage, to the preſent ſtate of ſociety, and the known conſtitution of our nature, the natural inference ſeems to be, that when marriage does not interfere with higher duties, it is right; when it does, it is wrong. According to the genuine principles of moral ſcience, "The method of "coming at the will of God from the light of nature is to inquire "into the tendency of the action to promote or diminiſh the general "happineſs[a]." There are perhaps few actions that tend ſo directly to diminiſh the general happineſs, as to marry without the means of ſupporting children. He who commits this act, therefore, clearly offends againſt the will of God; and having become a burden on the ſociety in which he lives, and plunged himſelf and family into a ſituation, in which virtuous habits are preſerved with more difficulty than in any other, he appears to have violated his duty to his neighbours and to himſelf, and thus to have liſtened to the voice of paſſion in oppoſition to his higher obligations.

In a ſociety, ſuch as I have ſuppoſed, all the members of which

[a] Paley's Moral Philoſophy, vol. i. b. ii. c. iv. p. 65.

endeavour

endeavour to attain happineſs by obedience to the moral code, derived from the light of nature, and enforced by ſtrong ſanctions in revealed religion, it is evident that no ſuch marriages could take place; and the prevention of a redundant population, in this way, would remove one of the principal cauſes, and certainly the principal means of offenſive war; and at the ſame time tend powerfully to eradicate thoſe two fatal political diſorders, internal tyranny and internal tumult, which mutually produce each other.

Weak in offenſive war, in a war of defence, ſuch a ſociety would be ſtrong as a rock of adamant. Where every family poſſeſſed the neceſſaries of life in plenty, and a decent portion of its comforts and conveniences, there could not exiſt that hope of change, or at beſt that melancholy and diſheartening indifference to it, which ſometimes prompts the lower claſſes of people to ſay, "let what will "come, we cannot be worſe off than we are now." Every heart and hand would be united to repel an invader, when each individual felt the value of the ſolid advantages which he enjoyed, and a proſpect of change preſented only a proſpect of being deprived of them.

As it appears, therefore, that it is in the power of each individual to avoid all the evil conſequences to himſelf and ſociety reſulting from the principle of population, by the practice of a virtue clearly dictated to him by the light of nature, and expreſsly enjoined in revealed religion; and as we have reaſon to think that the exerciſe of this virtue to a certain degree, would rather tend to increaſe than diminiſh individual happineſs; we can have no reaſon to impeach the juſtice of the Deity, becauſe his general laws make this virtue neceſſary, and puniſh our offences againſt it by the evils attendant upon vice, and the pains that accompany the various forms of premature death. A really virtuous ſociety, ſuch as I have ſuppoſed, would avoid theſe evils. It is the apparent object of the Creator to deter us from vice by the pains which accompany it, and to lead us to

virtue by the happineſs that it produces. This object appears to our conceptions to be worthy of a benevolent Creator. The laws of nature reſpecting population, tend to promote this object. No imputation, therefore, on the benevolence of the Deity, can be founded on theſe laws, which is not equally applicable to any of the evils neceſſarily incidental to an imperfect ſtate of exiſtence.

CHAP. III.

Of the only effectual mode of improving the condition of the Poor.

He who publiſhes a moral code, or ſyſtem of duties, however firmly he may be convinced of the ſtrong obligation on each individual ſtrictly to conform to it, has never the folly to imagine that it will be univerſally or even generally practiſed. But this is no valid objection againſt the publication of the code. If it were, the ſame objection would always have applied; we ſhould be totally without general rules; and to the vices of mankind ariſing from temptation, would be added a much longer liſt, than we have at preſent, of vices from ignorance.

Judging merely from the light of nature, if we feel convinced of the miſery ariſing from a redundant population, on the one hand, and of the evils and unhappineſs, particularly to the female ſex, ariſing from promiſcuous intercourſe, on the other, I do not ſee how it is poſſible for any perſon, who acknowledges the principle of utility as the great foundation of morals, to eſcape the concluſion that moral reſtraint, till we are in a condition to ſupport a family, is the ſtrict line of duty; and when revelation is taken into the queſtion, this duty undoubtedly receives very powerful confirmation. At the ſame time, I believe that few of my readers can be leſs ſanguine in their expectations of any great change in the general conduct of men on this ſubject than I am; and the chief reaſon, why, in the laſt chapter, I allowed myſelf to ſuppoſe the univerſal prevalence of this virtue, was, that I might endeavour to remove any imputation on the goodneſs of the Deity, by ſhewing that

that the evils ariſing from the principle of population were exactly of the ſame nature as the generality of other evils which excite fewer complaints, that they were increaſed by human ignorance and indolence, and diminiſhed by human knowledge and virtue; and on the ſuppoſition, that each individual ſtrictly fulfilled his duty, would be almoſt totally removed; and this, without any general diminution of thoſe ſources of pleaſure, ariſing from the regulated indulgence of the paſſions, which have been juſtly conſidered as the principal ingredients of human happineſs.

If it will anſwer any purpoſe of illuſtration, I ſee no harm in drawing the picture of a ſociety in which each individual is ſuppoſed ſtrictly to fulfil his duties; nor does a writer appear to be juſtly liable to the imputation of being viſionary, unleſs he make ſuch univerſal or general obedience neceſſary to the practical utility of his ſyſtem, and to that degree of moderate and partial improvement, which is all that can rationally be expected from the moſt complete knowledge of our duties.

But in this reſpect, there is an eſſential difference between that improved ſtate of ſociety which I have ſuppoſed in the laſt chapter, and moſt of the other ſpeculations on this ſubject. The improvement there ſuppoſed, if we ever ſhould make approaches towards it, is to be effected in the way in which we have been in the habit of ſeeing all the greateſt improvements effected, by a direct application to the intereſt and happineſs of each individual. It is not required of us to act from motives, to which we are unaccuſtomed; to purſue a general good, which we may not diſtinctly comprehend, or the effect of which may be weakened by diſtance and diffuſion. The happineſs of the whole is to be the reſult of the happineſs of individuals, and to begin firſt with them. No co-operation is required. Every ſtep tells. He who performs his duty faithfully will reap the full fruits of it, whatever may be the number of others who fail. This duty is expreſs, and intelligible to the humbleſt capacity. It is merely that he is not to bring beings into the world for whom he cannot

find the means of ſupport. When once this ſubject is cleared from the obſcurity thrown over it by parochial laws and private benevolence, every man muſt feel the ſtrongeſt conviction of ſuch an obligation. If he cannot ſupport his children, they muſt ſtarve; and if he marry in the face of a fair probability that he ſhall not be able to ſupport his children, he is guilty of all the evils which he thus brings upon himſelf, his wife, and his offspring. It is clearly his intereſt, and will tend greatly to promote his happineſs, to defer marrying, till, by induſtry and economy, he is in a capacity to ſupport the children that he may reaſonably expect from his marriage; and as he cannot in the mean time gratify his paſſions, without violating an expreſs command of God, and running a great riſk of injuring himſelf, or ſome of his fellow creatures, conſiderations of his own intereſt and happineſs will dictate to him the ſtrong obligation to moral reſtraint.

However powerful may be the impulſes of paſſion, they are generally in ſome degree modified by reaſon. And it does not ſeem entirely viſionary to ſuppoſe, that if the true and permanent cauſe of poverty were clearly explained, and forcibly brought home to each man's boſom, it would have ſome, and perhaps not an inconſiderable, influence on his conduct; at leaſt, the experiment has never yet been fairly tried. Almoſt every thing that has been hitherto done for the poor, has tended, as if with ſolicitous care, to throw a veil of obſcurity over this ſubject, and to hide from them the true cauſe of their poverty. When the wages of labour are hardly ſufficient to maintain two children, a man marries and has five or ſix. He of courſe finds himſelf miſerably diſtreſſed. He accuſes the inſufficiency of the price of labour to maintain a family. He accuſes his pariſh for their tardy and ſparing fulfilment of their obligation to aſſiſt him. He accuſes the avarice of the rich, who ſuffer him to want what they can ſo well ſpare. He accuſes the partial and unjuſt inſtitutions of ſociety, which have awarded him an inadequate ſhare of the produce of the earth. He accuſes perhaps the diſpenſations of Providence, which

which have aſſigned to him a place in ſociety ſo beſet with unavoidable diſtreſs and dependance. In ſearching for objects of accuſation, he never adverts to the quarter from which all his misfortunes originate. The laſt perſon that he would think of accuſing is himſelf, on whom, in fact, the whole of the blame lies, except in as far as he has been deceived by the higher claſſes of ſociety. He may perhaps wiſh that he had not married, becauſe he now feels the inconveniences of it; but it never enters into his head that he can have done any thing wrong. He has always been told that to raiſe up ſubjects for his king and country is a very meritorious act. He has done this act, and yet is ſuffering for it. He naturally thinks that he is ſuffering for righteouſneſs ſake; and it cannot but ſtrike him as moſt extremely unjuſt and cruel in his king and country, to allow him thus to ſuffer, in return, for giving them what they are continually declaring that they particularly want.

Till theſe erroneous ideas have been corrected, and the language of nature and reaſon has been generally heard on the ſubject of population, inſtead of the language of error and prejudice, it cannot be ſaid that any fair experiment has been made with the underſtandings of the common people; and we cannot juſtly accuſe them of improvidence and want of induſtry, till they act as they do now, after it has been brought home to their comprehenſions, that they are themſelves the cauſe of their own poverty; that the means of redreſs are in their own hands, and in the hands of no other perſons whatever; that the ſociety in which they live, and the government which preſides over it, are totally without power in this reſpect; and however ardently they may deſire to relieve them, and whatever attempts they may make to do ſo, they are really and truly unable to execute what they benevolently wiſh, but unjuſtly promiſe; that when the wages of labour will not maintain a family, it is an incontrovertible ſign that their king and country do not want more ſubjects, or at leaſt that they cannot ſupport them; that if they marry in this caſe, ſo far from fulfilling a duty to ſociety, they are throwing a uſeleſs

burden on it, at the ſame time that they are plunging themſelves into diſtreſs; and that they are acting directly contrary to the will of God, and bringing down upon themſelves various diſeaſes, which might all, or in a great part, have been avoided, if they had attended to the repeated admonitions which he gives, by the general laws of nature, to every being capable of reaſon.

Dr. Paley, in his Moral Philoſophy, obſerves, that "in countries "in which ſubſiſtence is become ſcarce, it behoves the ſtate to "watch over the publick morals with increaſed ſolicitude; for "nothing but the inſtinct of nature, under the reſtraint of chaſtity, "will induce men to undertake the labour, or conſent to the ſacri-"fice of perſonal liberty and indulgence, which the ſupport of a "family in ſuch circumſtances requires [a]." That it is always the duty of a ſtate to uſe every exertion, likely to be effectual, in diſcouraging vice and promoting virtue, and that no temporary circumſtances ought to cauſe any relaxation in theſe exertions, is certainly true. The means therefore propoſed, are always good; but the particular end in view, in this caſe, appears to be abſolutely criminal. We wiſh to force people into marriage, when, from the acknowledged ſcarcity of ſubſiſtence, they will have little chance of being able to ſupport their children. We might as well force people into the water who are unable to ſwim. In both caſes we raſhly tempt Providence. Nor have we more reaſon to believe, that a miracle will be worked to ſave us from the miſery and mortality reſulting from our conduct, in the one caſe, than in the other.

The object of thoſe who really wiſh to better the condition of the lower claſſes of ſociety, muſt be, to raiſe the relative proportion between the price of labour and the price of proviſions; ſo as to enable the labourer to command a larger ſhare of the neceſſaries and comforts of life. We have hitherto principally attempted to attain this end, by encouraging the married poor, and conſequently increaſ-

[a] Vol. ii. c. xi. p. 352.

ing

ing the number of labourers, and overſtocking the market with a commodity, which we ſtill ſay that we wiſh to be dear. It would ſeem to have required no great ſpirit of divination to foretell the certain failure of ſuch a plan of proceeding. There is nothing however, like experience. It has been tried in many different countries, and for many hundred years, and the ſucceſs has always been anſwerable to the nature of the ſcheme. It is really time now to try ſomething elſe.

When it was found, that oxygene, or pure vital air, would not cure conſumptions, as was expected, but rather aggravated their ſymptoms; a trial was made of an air of the moſt oppoſite kind. I wiſh we had acted with the ſame philoſophical ſpirit in our attempts to cure the diſeaſe of poverty; and having found that the pouring in of freſh ſupplies of labour, only tended to aggravate the ſymptoms, had tried what would be the effect of withholding a little theſe ſupplies.

In all old and fully-peopled ſtates, it is from this method, and this alone, that we can rationally expect any eſſential and permanent amelioration in the condition of the lower claſſes of people.

In an endeavour to raiſe the proportion of the quantity of proviſions to the number of conſumers, in any country, our attention would naturally be firſt directed to the increaſing of the abſolute quantity of proviſions; but finding that as faſt as we did this, the number of conſumers more than kept pace with it, and that, with all our exertions, we were ſtill as far as ever behind, we ſhould be convinced that our efforts, directed only in this way, would never ſucceed. It would appear to be ſetting the tortoiſe to catch the hare. Finding, therefore, that, from the laws of nature, we could not proportion the food to the population, our next attempt ſhould naturally be to proportion the population to the food. If we can perſuade the hare to go to ſleep, the tortoiſe may have ſome chance of overtaking her.

We are not, however, to relax our efforts in increaſing the

quantity

quantity of provisions; but to combine another effort with it, that of keeping the population, when once it has been overtaken, at such a distance behind, as to effect the relative proportion which we desire; and thus unite the two grand desiderata, a great actual population, and a state of society in which squalid poverty and dependence are comparatively but little known; two objects which are far from being incompatible.

If we be really serious in what appears to be the object of such general research, the mode of essentially and permanently bettering the condition of the poor, we must explain to them the true nature of their situation, and shew them, that the withholding of the supplies of labour is the only possible way of really raising its price; and that they themselves being the possessors of this commodity have alone the power to do this.

I cannot but consider this mode of diminishing poverty, as so perfectly clear in theory, and so invariably confirmed by the analogy of every other commodity that is brought to market, that nothing but its being shewn to be calculated to produce greater evils than it proposes to remedy, can justify us in not making the attempt to put it into execution.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Objections to this mode considered.

One objection, which perhaps will be made to this plan, is that, from which alone it derives its value—a market rather understocked with labour. This must undoubtedly take place in a certain degree; but by no means in such a degree as to affect the wealth and prosperity of the country. The way in which we are going on at present, and the enormous increase in the price of provisions, which seems to threaten us, will tend much more effectually to enable foreigners to undersell us in the markets of Europe, than the plan now proposed. If the population of this country were better proportioned to its food, the nominal price of labour might be lower than it is now, and yet be sufficient to maintain a wife and six children. But putting this subject of a market understocked with labour, in the most unfavourable point of view, if the rich will not submit to a slight inconvenience necessarily attendant on the attainment of what they profess to desire, they cannot really be in earnest in their professions. Their benevolence to the poor, must be either childish play, or hypocrisy; it must be either to amuse themselves, or to pacify the minds of the common people with a mere shew of attention to their wants. To wish to better the condition of the poor, by enabling them to command a greater quantity of the necessaries and comforts of life, and then to complain of high wages, is the act of a silly boy who gives away his cake and then cries for it. A market overstocked with labour, and an ample remuneration to

each labourer, are objects perfectly incompatible with each other. In the annals of the world they never existed together; and to couple them, even in imagination, betrays a gross ignorance of the simplest principles of political economy.

A second objection that may be made to this plan is, the diminution of population that it would cause. It is to be considered, however, that this diminution is merely relative; and when once this relative diminution had been effected, by keeping the population stationary, while the supply of food had increased, it might then start afresh, and continue increasing for ages, with the increase of food, maintaining always the same relative proportion to it. I can easily conceive, that this country with a proper direction of the national industry, might, in the course of some centuries, contain two or three times its present population, and yet, every man in the kingdom be much better fed and clothed than he is at present. While the springs of industry continue in vigour, and a sufficient part of that industry is directed to agriculture, we need be under no apprehensions of a deficient population; and nothing perhaps would tend so strongly to excite a spirit of industry and economy among the poor, as a thorough knowledge that their happiness must always depend principally upon themselves; and that if they obey their passions in opposition to their reason, or be not industrious and frugal while they are single men, to save a sum for the common contingencies of the married state, they must expect to suffer the natural evils which Providence has prepared for those who disobey its repeated admonitions.

A third objection which may be started to this plan, and the only one which appears to me to have any kind of plausibility, is, that, by endeavouring to urge the duty of moral restraint on the poor, we may increase the quantity of vice relating to the sex.

I should be most extremely sorry to say any thing which could either directly or remotely be construed unfavourably to the cause of virtue: but I certainly cannot think that the vices which relate to the

the sex, are the only vices which are to be considered in a moral question; or that they are even the greatest and most degrading to the human character. They can rarely or never be committed without producing unhappiness somewhere or other, and therefore ought always to be strongly reprobated; but there are other vices, the effects of which are still more pernicious; and there are other situations, which lead more certainly to moral offences than the refraining from marriage. Powerful as may be the temptations to a breach of chastity, I am inclined to think that they are impotent, in comparison of the temptations arising from continued distress. A large class of women, and many men, I have no doubt, pass a considerable part of their lives in moral restraint; but I believe there will be found very few, who pass through the ordeal of squalid and hopeless poverty, or even of long continued embarrassed circumstances, without a considerable moral degradation of character.

In the higher and middle classes of society, it is a melancholy and distressing sight to observe, not unfrequently, a man of a noble and ingenuous disposition, once feelingly alive to a sense of honour and integrity, gradually sinking under the pressure of circumstances, making his excuses at first, with a blush of conscious shame, afraid of seeing the faces of his friends from whom he may have borrowed money, reduced to the meanest tricks and subterfuges, to delay or avoid the payment of his just debts; till ultimately grown familar with falsehood, and at enmity with the world, he loses all the grace and dignity of man.

To the general prevalence of indigence, and the extraordinary encouragements which we afford in this country to a total want of foresight and prudence among the common people[a], is to be attributed

[a] Mr. Colquhoun, speaking of the poor laws, observes, that, "in spite of all the "ingenious arguments which have been used in favour of a system, admitted to be "wisely conceived in its origin, the effects it has produced incontestably prove, that, with "respect to the mass of the poor, there is something radically wrong in the execution.

buted the principal part of thoſe continual depredations on property, and other more atrocious crimes, which drive us to the painful reſource of ſuch a number of executions[a]. According to Mr. Colquhoun, above twenty thouſand miſerable individuals of various claſſes, riſe up every morning, without knowing how, or by what means, they are to be ſupported during the paſſing day; or where, in many inſtances, they are to lodge on the ſucceeding night[b]. It is by theſe unhappy perſons that the principal depredations on the public are committed; and, ſuppoſing but few of them to be married and driven to theſe acts, from the neceſſity of ſupporting their children; yet ſtill it will not ceaſe to be true, that the too great frequency of marriage among the pooreſt claſſes, is one of the principal cauſes of the temptations to theſe crimes. A conſiderable part of theſe unhappy wretches will probably be found to be the offspring of ſuch marriages, educated in workhouſes, where every vice is propagated, or bred up at home in filth and rags, and with an utter ignorance of every moral obligation[c]. A ſtill greater part, perhaps, conſiſts of perſons, who, being unable for ſome time to get employment, owing to the full ſupply of labour, have been urged to theſe extremities by their temporary wants, and having thus loſt their characters, are rejected, even when their labour may be wanted, by the well-founded caution of civil ſociety[d].

When

" If it were not ſo, it is impoſſible that there could exiſt in the metropolis ſuch an " inconceivable portion of human miſery amidſt examples of munificence and bene- " volence unparallelled in any age or country." Police of Metropolis, c. xiii. p. 359.

In the effects of the poor laws, I fully agree with Mr Colquhoun; but I cannot agree with him in admitting that the ſyſtem was well conceived in its origin. I attribute ſtill more evil to the original ill conception, than to the ſubſequent ill execution.

[a] Mr. Colquhoun obſerves, that, " Indigence, in the preſent ſtate of ſociety, may be " conſidered as a principal cauſe of the increaſe of crimes." Police of Metropolis, c. xiii. p. 352. [b] Id. c. xi. p. 313. [c] Ibid. and c. xii. p. 355, 370.

[d] Police of the Metropolis, c. xiii. p. 353. et ſeq. In ſo large a town as London, which muſt neceſſarily encourage a prodigious influx of ſtrangers from the country, there muſt

When indigence does not produce overt acts of vice, it palſies every virtue. Under the continued temptations to a breach of chaſtity, occaſional failures may take place, and the moral ſenſibility, in other reſpects, not be very ſtrikingly impaired; but the continued temptations which beſet hopeleſs poverty, and the ſtrong ſenſe of injuſtice that generally accompanies it from an ignorance of its true cauſe, tend ſo powerfully to ſour the diſpoſition, to harden the heart, and deaden the moral ſenſe, that, generally ſpeaking, virtue takes her flight clear away from the tainted ſpot, and does not often return.

Even with reſpect to the vices which relate to the ſex, marriage has been found to be by no means a complete remedy. Among the

muſt be always a great many perſons out of work; and it is poſſible that ſome publick inſtitution for the relief of the caſual poor, upon a plan ſimilar to that propoſed by Mr. Colquhoun, (c. xiii. p. 371.) might, under very judicious management, produce more good than evil. But, for this purpoſe, it would be abſolutely neceſſary, that if work were provided by the inſtitution, the ſum that a man could earn by it, ſhould be leſs than the worſt paid common labour; otherwiſe the claimants would rapidly increaſe, and the funds would ſoon be inadequate to their object. In the inſtitution at Hamburgh, which appears to have been the moſt ſucceſsful of any yet eſtabliſhed, the nature of the work was ſuch, that, though paid above the uſual price, a perſon could not eaſily earn by it, more than eighteen pence a week. It was the determined principle of the managers of the inſtitution to reduce the ſupport which they gave, lower than what any induſtrious man or woman in ſuch circumſtances could earn. (Account of the management of the poor in Hamburgh, by C. Voght, p. 18.) And it is to this principle that they attribute their ſucceſs. It ſhould be obſerved, however, that neither the inſtitution at Hamburgh, nor that planned by Count Rumford in Bavaria, has ſubſiſted long enough for us to be able to pronounce on their permanent good effects. It will not admit of a doubt that inſtitutions for the relief of the poor, on their firſt eſtabliſhment, remove a great quantity of diſtreſs. The only queſtion is, whether, as ſucceeding generations ariſe, the increaſing funds neceſſary for their ſupport, and the increaſing numbers that become dependent, are not greater evils, than that, which was to be remedied; and whether the country will not ultimately be left with as much mendicity as before, beſides all the poverty and dependence accumulated in the publick inſtitutions. This ſeems to be nearly the caſe in England at preſent. I do not believe that we ſhould have more beggars, if we had no poor laws.

higher claſſes, our Doctors Commons, and the lives that many married men are known to lead, ſufficiently prove this; and the ſame kind of vice, though not ſo much heard of among the lower claſſes of people, owing to their indifference and want of delicacy on theſe ſubjects, is probably not very much leſs frequent.

Add to this, that ſqualid poverty, particularly when joined with idleneſs, is a ſtate the moſt unfavourable to chaſtity that can well be conceived. The paſſion is as ſtrong, or nearly ſo, as in other ſituations, and every reſtraint on it, from perſonal reſpect, or a ſenſe of morality, is generally removed. There is a degree of ſqualid poverty, in which, if a girl was brought up, I ſhould ſay that her being really modeſt at twenty was an abſolute miracle. Thoſe perſons muſt have extraordinary minds indeed, and ſuch as are not uſually formed under ſimilar circumſtances, who can continue to reſpect themſelves, when no other perſon whatever reſpects them. If the children thus brought up were even to marry at twenty, it is probable that they would have paſſed ſome years in vicious habits, before that period.

If after all, however, theſe arguments ſhould appear inſufficient; if we reprobate the idea of endeavouring to encourage the virtues of moral reſtraint and prudence among the poor, from a fear of producing vice; and if we think that to facilitate marriage by all poſſible means is a point of the firſt conſequence to the morality and happineſs of the people; let us act conſiſtently, and, before we proceed, endeavour to make ourſelves acquainted with the mode by which alone we can effect our object.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Of the conſequences of purſuing the oppoſite mode.

It is an evident truth, that whatever is the rate of increaſe in the means of ſubſiſtence, the increaſe of population muſt be limited by it, at leaſt after the food has once been divided into the ſmalleſt ſhares that will ſupport life. All the children born, beyond what would be required to keep up the population to this level, muſt neceſſarily periſh, unleſs room be made for them by the deaths of grown perſons. It has appeared, indeed, clearly in the courſe of this work, that in all old ſtates, the marriages and births depend principally upon the deaths, and that there is no encouragement to early unions ſo powerful as a great mortality. To act conſiſtently, therefore, we ſhould facilitate, inſtead of fooliſhly and vainly endeavouring to impede, the operations of nature, in producing this mortality; and if we dread the too frequent viſitation of the horrid form of famine, we ſhould ſedulouſly encourage the other forms of deſtruction which we compel nature to uſe. Inſtead of recommending cleanlineſs to the poor, we ſhould encourage contrary habits. In our towns, we ſhould make the ſtreets narrower, crowd more people into the houſes, and court the return of the plague. In the country, we ſhould build our villages near ſtagnant pools, and particularly encourage ſettlements in all marſhy and unwholeſome ſituations[a]. But above all, we ſhould reprobate ſpecific remedies

[a] Necker, ſpeaking of the proportion of the births in France, makes uſe of a new and inſtructive expreſſion on this ſubject, though he hardly ſeems to be ſufficiently aware of it

remedies for ravaging diſeaſes, and thoſe benevolent, but much miſtaken men, who have thought they were doing a ſervice to mankind by projecting ſchemes for the total extirpation of particular diſorders. If by theſe, and ſimilar means, the annual mortality were increaſed from 1 in 36 or 40, to 1 in 18 or 20, we might, probably, every one of us marry at the age of puberty, and yet few be abſolutely ſtarved.

If however, we all marry at this age, and yet ſtill continue our exertions to impede the operations of nature, we may reſt aſſured that all our efforts will be vain. Nature will not, nor cannot be defeated in her purpoſes. The neceſſary mortality muſt come, in ſome form or other; and the extirpation of one diſeaſe will only be the ſignal for the birth of another, perhaps more fatal. We cannot lower the waters of miſery by preſſing them down in different places which muſt neceſſarily make them riſe ſomewhere elſe: the only way in which we can hope to effect our purpoſe is by drawing them off. To this courſe nature is conſtantly directing our attention by the chaſtiſements which await a contrary conduct. Theſe chaſtiſements are more or leſs ſevere, in proportion to the degree in which her admonitions produce their intended effect. In this country, at preſent, theſe admonitions are by no means entirely neglected. The preventive check to population prevails to a conſiderable degree, and her chaſtiſements are, in conſequence, moderate: but if we were all to marry at the age of puberty, they would be ſevere indeed. Political evils would probably be added to phyſical. A people goaded by conſtant diſtreſs, and viſited by frequent returns of famine, could not be kept down but by a cruel deſpotiſm. We ſhould approach to the ſtate of the people in Egypt or Abyſſinia; and I would aſk, whether, in that caſe, it is probable that we ſhould be more virtuous?

it himſelf. He ſays "Le nombre des naiſſances eſt a celui des habitans de un a vingt-" trois et vingt-quatre dans le lieux *contrariés par la nature, ou par des circonſtances morales:* " ce meme rapport dans la plus grande partie de la France, eſt de un a 25, 25 ½, & 26." Adminiſt. des Finances, tom. i. c. ix. p. 254. 12mo. It would appear, therefore, that we had nothing more to do, than to ſettle people in marſhy ſituations, and oppreſs them by a bad government, in order to attain what politicians have hitherto conſidered as ſo deſireable—a great proportion of marriages, and a great proportion of births.

Phyſicians have long remarked the great changes which take place in diſeaſes; and that, while ſome appear to yield to the efforts of human care and ſkill, others ſeem to become, in proportion, more malignant and fatal. Dr. William Heberden publiſhed not long ſince, ſome valuable obſervations on this ſubject deduced from the London bills of mortality. In his preface, ſpeaking of theſe bills, he ſays, "the gradual changes they exhibit in particular diſeaſes cor-" reſpond to the alterations which in time are known to take place, " in the channels through which the great ſtream of mortality is " conſtantly flowing [a]." In the body of his work afterwards, ſpeaking of ſome particular diſeaſes, he obſerves with that candour which always diſtinguiſhes true ſcience: "It is not eaſy to give a " ſatisfactory reaſon for all the changes which may be obſerved to " take place in the hiſtory of diſeaſes. Nor is it any diſgrace to " phyſicians, if their cauſes are often ſo gradual in their operation, " or ſo ſubtle, as to elude inveſtigation [b]."

I hope I ſhall not be accuſed of preſumption, in venturing to ſuggeſt, that, under certain circumſtances, ſuch changes muſt take place; and perhaps without any alteration in thoſe proximate cauſes which are uſually looked to on theſe occaſions. If this ſhould appear to be true, it will not ſeem extraordinary that the moſt ſkilful and ſcientific phyſicians, whoſe buſineſs it is principally to inveſtigate proximate cauſes, ſhould ſometimes ſearch for theſe cauſes in vain.

In a country which keeps its population at a certain ſtandard, if the average number of marriages and births be given, it is evident, that the average number of deaths will alſo be given; and, to uſe Dr. Heberden's metaphor, the channels through which the great

[a] Obſervations on the Increaſe and Decreaſe of different Diſeaſes. Preface, p. v. 4to. 1801. [b] Id. p. 43.

ſtream of mortality is conſtantly flowing, will always convey off a given quantity. Now if we ſtop up any of theſe channels, it is moſt perfectly clear, that the ſtream of mortality muſt run with greater force through ſome of the other channels; that is, if we eradicate ſome diſeaſes, others will become proportionally more fatal. In this caſe the only diſtinguiſhable cauſe is the damming up a neceſſary outlet of mortality [a]. Nature, in the attainment of her great purpoſes, ſeems always to ſeize upon the weakeſt part. If this part be made ſtrong by human ſkill, ſhe ſeizes upon the next weakeſt part, and ſo on in ſucceſſion; not like a capricious deity, with an intention to ſport with our ſufferings, and conſtantly to defeat our labours; but like a kind though ſometimes ſevere inſtructor, with the intention of teaching us to make all parts ſtrong, and to chace vice and miſery from the earth. In avoiding one fault we are too apt to run into ſome other; but we always find nature faithful to her great object, at every falſe ſtep we commit, ready to admoniſh us of our errors, by the infliction of ſome phyſical or moral evil. If the prevalence of the preventive check to population, in a ſufficient degree, were to remove many of thoſe diſeaſes which now afflict us, yet be accompanied by a conſiderable increaſe of the vice of promiſcuous intercourſe; it is probable that the diſorders and unhappineſs, the phyſical and moral evils ariſing from this vice, would increaſe in ſtrength and degree, and, admoniſhing us ſeverely of our error, would point to the only line of conduct approved by nature, reaſon, and religion, abſtinence from marriage till we can ſupport our children, and chaſtity till that period arrives.

In the caſe juſt ſtated, in which the population and the number of marriages are ſuppoſed to be fixed, the neceſſity of a change in the mortality of ſome diſeaſes, from the diminution or extinction of others, is capable of mathematical demonſtration. The only obſcurity which can poſſibly involve this ſubject, ariſes

[a] The way in which it operates is probably by increaſing poverty, in conſequence of a ſupply of labour too rapid for the demand.

from taking into conſideration the effect that might be produced by a diminution of mortality, in increaſing the population, or in decreaſing the number of marriages. That the removal of any of the particular cauſes of mortality can have no further effect upon population, than the means of ſubſiſtence will allow; and that it has little or no influence on theſe means of ſubſiſtence, is a fact, of which, I hope, the reader is already convinced. Of its operation in tending to prevent marriage, by diminiſhing the demand for freſh ſupplies of children, I have no doubt; and there is reaſon to think that it had this effect, in no inconſiderable degree, on the extinction of the plague, which had ſo long and ſo dreadfully ravaged this country. Dr. Heberden draws a ſtriking picture of the favourable change obſerved in the health of the people of England ſince this period; and juſtly attributes it to the improvements which have gradually taken place, not only in London, but in all great towns; and in the manner of living throughout the kingdom, particularly with reſpect to cleanlineſs and ventilation [a]. But theſe cauſes would not have been adequate to the effect obſerved, if they had not been accompanied by an increaſe of the preventive check; and, probably, the ſpirit of cleanlineſs, and better mode of living, which then began to prevail, by ſpreading more generally a decent and uſeful pride, principally contributed to this increaſe. The diminution in the number of marriages, however, was not ſufficient to make up for the great decreaſe of mortality, from the extinction of the plague, and the ſtriking reduction of the deaths in the dyſentery [b]. While theſe, and ſome other diſorders, became almoſt evaneſcent, conſumption, palſy, apoplexy, gout, lunacy, and the ſmall-pox, became more mortal [c]. The widening of theſe drains was neceſſary to carry off the population which ſtill remained redundant, notwithſtanding the increaſed operation of the preventive check, and the part which was annually diſpoſed of, and enabled to exiſt, by the increaſe of agriculture.

[a] Obſerv. on Inc. and Dec. of Diſeaſes, p. 35. [b] Id. p. 34.
[c] Id. p. 36. et ſeq.

Dr. Haygarth, in the ſketch of his benevolent plan for the extermination of the caſual ſmall-pox, draws a frightful picture of the mortality which has been occaſioned by this diſtemper; attributes to it the ſlow progreſs of population; and makes ſome curious calculations on the favourable effects which would be produced, in this reſpect, by its extermination [a]. His concluſions, however, I fear, would not follow from his premiſes. I am far from doubting that millions and millions of human beings have been deſtroyed by the ſmall-pox. But were its devaſtations, as Dr. Haygarth ſuppoſes, many thouſand degrees greater than the plague [b], I ſhould ſtill doubt, whether the average population of the earth had been diminiſhed by them a ſingle unit. The ſmall-pox is certainly one of the channels, and a very broad one, which nature has opened for the laſt thouſand years, to keep down the population to the level of the means of ſubſiſtence; but had this been cloſed, others would have become wider, or new ones would have been formed. In antient times the mortality from war and the plague, was incomparably greater than in modern. On the gradual diminution of this ſtream of mortality, the generation, and almoſt univerſal prevalence, of the ſmall-pox is a great and ſtriking inſtance, of one of thoſe changes in the channels of mortality, which ought to awaken our attention, and animate us to patient and perſevering inveſtigation. For my own part, I feel not the ſlighteſt doubt, that, if the introduction of the cow-pox ſhould extirpate the ſmall-pox, and yet the number of marriages continue the ſame, we ſhall find a very perceptible difference in the increaſed mortality of ſome other diſeaſes. Nothing could prevent this effect, but a ſudden ſtart in our agriculture; and ſhould this take place, which I fear we have not much reaſon to expect, it will not be owing to the number of children ſaved from death by the cow-pox inocalation, but to the alarms occaſioned among the people of property by the late ſcarcities, and to the increaſed gains of farmers,

[a] Vol. i. part ii. ſect. v. and vi.

[b] Id. ſ. viii. p 164.

farmers, which have been ſo abſurdly reprobated. I am ſtrongly, however, inclined to believe, that the number of marriages will not, in this caſe, remain the ſame; but that the gradual light which may be expected to be thrown, on this intereſting topic of human inquiry, will teach us how to make the extinction of a mortal diſorder, a real bleſſing to us, a real improvement in the general health and happineſs of the ſociety.

If, on contemplating the increaſe of vice which might contingently follow an attempt to inculcate the duty of moral reſtraint, and the increaſe of miſery that muſt neceſſarily follow the attempts to encourage marriage and population, we come to the concluſion, not to interfere in any reſpect, but to leave every man to his own free choice, and reſponſible only to God for the evil which he does, in either way; this is all I contend for; I would on no account do more; but I contend that at preſent we are very far from doing this.

Among the lower claſſes, where the point is of the greateſt importance, the poor laws afford a direct, conſtant, and ſyſtematical encouragement to marriage, by removing from each individual that heavy reſponſibility, which he would incur by the laws of nature, for bringing beings into the world which he could not ſupport. Our private benevolence has the ſame direction as the poor laws, and almoſt invariably tends to facilitate the rearing of families, and to equalize, as much poſſible, the circumſtances of married and ſingle men.

Among the higher claſſes of people, the ſuperior diſtinctions which married women receive, and the marked inattentions to which ſingle women of advanced age are expoſed, enable many men, who are neither agreeable in mind or perſon, and are beſides in the wane of life, to chooſe a partner among the young and fair inſtead of being confined, as nature ſeems to dictate, to perſons of nearly their own age and accompliſhments. It is ſcarcely to be doubted, that the fear of being an old maid, and of that ſilly and

unjuſt ridicule, which folly ſometimes attaches to this name, drives many women into the marriage union, with men whom they diſlike, or, at beſt, to whom they are perfectly indifferent. Such marriages muſt to every delicate mind appear little better than legal proſtitutions; and they often burden the earth with unneceſſary children, without compenſating for it by any acceſſion of happineſs and virtue to the parties themſelves.

Throughout all the ranks of ſociety, the prevailing opinions reſpecting the duty and obligation of marriage, cannot but have a very powerful influence. The man who thinks that in going out of the world without leaving repreſentatives behind him, he ſhall have failed in an important duty to ſociety, will be diſpoſed to force, rather than to repreſs, his inclinations on this ſubject; and when his reaſon repreſents to him the difficulties attending a family, he will endeavour not to attend to theſe ſuggeſtions, will ſtill determine to venture, and will hope that, in the diſcharge of what he conceives to be his duty, he ſhall not be deſerted by Providence.

In a civilized country, ſuch as England, where a taſte for the decencies and comforts of life prevail among a very large claſs of people, it is not poſſible that the encouragements to marriage from poſitive inſtitutions and prevailing opinions, ſhould entirely obſcure the light of nature and reaſon on this ſubject; but ſtill they contribute to make it comparatively weak and indiſtinct. And till this obſcurity is entirely removed, and the poor are undeceived with reſpect to the principal cauſe of their paſt poverty, and taught to know that their future happineſs or miſery muſt depend chiefly upon themſelves, it cannot be ſaid, that, with regard to the great queſtion of marriage, or celibacy, we leave every man to his own free and fair choice.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Effect of the knowledge of the principal cauſe of poverty on Civil Liberty.

It may appear, perhaps, that a doctrine, which attributes the greateſt part of the ſufferings of the lower claſſes of ſociety excluſively to themſelves, is unfavourable to the cauſe of liberty; as affording a tempting opportunity to governments of oppreſſing their ſubjects at pleaſure, and laying the whole blame on the laws of nature and the imprudence of the poor. We are not, however, to truſt to firſt appearances; and I am ſtrongly diſpoſed to believe, that thoſe who will be at the pains to conſider this ſubject deeply, will be convinced, that nothing would ſo powerfully contribute to the advancement of rational freedom, as a thorough knowledge generally circulated, of the principal cauſe of poverty; and that the ignorance of this cauſe, and the natural conſequences of this ignorance, form, at preſent, one of the chief obſtacles to its progreſs.

The preſſure of diſtreſs on the lower claſſes of people, with the habit of attributing this diſtreſs to their rulers, appears to me to be the rock of defence, the caſtle, the guardian ſpirit, of deſpotiſm. It affords to the tyrant the fatal and unanſwerable plea of neceſſity. It is the reaſon that every free government tends conſtantly to its deſtruction; and that its appointed guardians become daily leſs jealous of the encroachments of power. It is the reaſon that ſo many noble efforts in the cauſe of freedom have failed, and that almoſt every revolution, after long and painful ſacrifices, has terminated in a military deſpotiſm. While any diſſatisfied man of talents

has power to perſuade the lower claſſes of people, that all their poverty and diſtreſs ariſe ſolely from the iniquity of the government, though perhaps the greateſt part of what they ſuffer is totally unconnected with this cauſe, it is evident that the ſeeds of freſh diſcontents, and freſh revolutions, are continually ſowing. When an eſtabliſhed government has been deſtroyed, finding that their poverty is not removed, their reſentment naturally falls upon the ſucceſſors to power; and when theſe have been immolated without producing the deſired effect, other ſacrifices are called for, and ſo on without end. Are we to be ſurpriſed, that, under ſuch circumſtances, the majority of well-diſpoſed people, finding that a government, with proper reſtrictions, was unable to ſupport itſelf againſt the revolutionary ſpirit, and weary and exhauſted with perpetual change, to which they could ſee no end, ſhould give up the ſtruggle in deſpair, and throw themſelves into the arms of the firſt power which could afford them protection againſt the horrors of anarchy.

A mob, which is generally the growth of a redundant population, goaded by reſentment for real ſufferings, but totally ignorant of the quarter from which they originate, is, of all monſters, the moſt fatal to freedom. It foſters a prevailing tyranny, and engenders one where it was not; and though, in its dreadful fits of reſentment, it appears occaſionally to devour its unſightly offſpring; yet no ſooner is the horrid deed committed, than, however unwilling it may be to propagate ſuch a breed, it immediately groans with the pangs of a new birth.

Of the tendency of mobs to produce tyranny, we may not be long without an example in this country. As a friend to freedom, and an enemy to large ſtanding armies, it is with extreme reluctance that I am compelled to acknowledge, that, had it not been for the organized force in the country, the diſtreſſes of the people during the late ſcarcities, encouraged by the extreme ignorance and folly of many among the higher claſſes, might have driven them to commit the moſt dreadful outrages, and ultimately to involve the country in all the

the horrors of famine. Should ſuch periods often recur, a recurrence which we have too much reaſon to apprehend from the preſent ſtate of the country, the proſpect which opens to our view is melancholy in the extreme. The Engliſh conſtitution will be ſeen haſtening with rapid ſtrides to the *Euthanaſia* foretold by Hume; unleſs its progreſs be interrupted by ſome popular commotion; and this alternative preſents a picture ſtill more appalling to the imagination. If political diſcontents were blended with the cries of hunger, and a revolution were to take place by the inſtrumentality of a mob, clamouring for want of food, the conſequences would be unceaſing change, and unceaſing carnage, the bloody career of which, nothing but the eſtabliſhment of ſome complete deſpotiſm could arreſt.

We can ſcarcely believe that the appointed guardians of Britiſh liberty ſhould quietly have acquieſced in thoſe gradual encroachments of power, which have taken place of late years, but from the apprehenſion of theſe ſtill more dreadful evils. Great as has been the influence of corruption, I cannot yet think ſo meanly of the country gentlemen of England, as to believe that they would thus have given up a part of their birthright of liberty, if they had not been actuated by a real and genuine fear, that it was then in greater danger from the people, than from the crown. They appeared to ſurrender themſelves to government on condition of being protected from the mob; but they never would have made this melancholy and diſheartening ſurrender, if ſuch a mob had not exiſted either in reality or in imagination. That the fears on this ſubject were artfully exaggerated, and increaſed beyond the limits of juſt apprehenſion, is undeniable; but I think it is alſo undeniable, that the frequent declamation which was heard againſt the unjuſt inſtitutions of ſociety, and the deluſive arguments on equality which were circulated among the lower claſſes, gave us juſt reaſon to ſuppoſe, that if the *vox populi* had been allowed to ſpeak, it would have appeared to be the voice of error and abſurdity, inſtead of the *vox Dei*.

To ſay that our conduct is not to be regulated by circumſtances, is

is to betray an ignorance of the moſt ſolid and incontrovertible principles of morality. Though the admiſſion of this principle may ſometimes afford a cloke to changes of opinion that do not reſult from the pureſt motives; yet the admiſſion of a contrary principle would be productive of infinitely worſe conſequences. The phraſe of exiſting circumſtances has, I believe, not unfrequently created a ſmile in the Engliſh Houſe of Commons; but the ſmile ſhould have been reſerved for the application of the phraſe, and not have been excited by the phraſe itſelf. A very frequent repetition of it, has indeed, of itſelf, rather a ſuſpicious air; and its application ſhould always be watched with the moſt jealous and anxious attention; but no man ought to be judged *in limine* for ſaying, that exiſting circumſtances had obliged him to alter his opinions and conduct. The country gentlemen were perhaps too eaſily convinced that exiſting circumſtances called upon them to give up ſome of the moſt valuable privileges of Engliſhmen; but, as far as they were really convinced of this obligation, they acted conſiſtently with the cleareſt rule of morality.

The degree of power to be given to the civil government, and the meaſure of our ſubmiſſion to it, muſt be determined by general expediency; and in judging of this expediency, every circumſtance is to be taken into conſideration; particularly, the ſtate of publick opinion, and the degree of ignorance and deluſion prevailing among the common people. The patriot, who might be called upon by the love of his country, to join with heart and hand in a riſing of the people for ſome ſpecifick attainable object or reform, if he knew that they were enlightened reſpecting their own ſituation, and would ſtop ſhort when they had attained their demand; would be called upon by the ſame motive, to ſubmit to very great oppreſſion, rather than give the ſlighteſt countenance to a popular tumult, the members of which, at leaſt the greater number of them, were perſuaded, that the deſtruction of the Parliament, the Lord Mayor, and the monopolizers, would make bread cheap, and that a revolution would enable them all to ſupport

ſupport their families. In this caſe, it is more the ignorance and deluſion of the lower claſſes of people that occaſions the oppreſſion, than the actual diſpoſition of the government to tyranny.

That there is, however, in all power a conſtant tendency to encroach is an incontrovertible truth, and cannot be too ſtrongly inculcated. The checks which are neceſſary to ſecure the liberty of the ſubject, will always, in ſome degree, embarraſs and delay the operations of the executive government. The members of this government feeling theſe inconveniences, while they are exerting themſelves, as they conceive, in the ſervice of their country, and conſcious, perhaps, of no ill intention towards the people, will naturally be diſpoſed, on every occaſion, to demand the ſuſpenſion or abolition of theſe checks; but if once the convenience of miniſters be put into competition with the liberties of the people, and we get into a habit of relying on fair aſſurances, and perſonal character, inſtead of examining, with the moſt ſcrupulous and jealous care, the merits of each particular caſe, there is an end of Britiſh freedom. If we once admit the principle that the government muſt know better with regard to the quantity of power which it wants, than we can poſſibly do with our limited means of information, and that therefore it is our duty to ſurrender up our private judgments, we may juſt as well, at the ſame time, ſurrender up the whole of our conſtitution. Government is a quarter in which liberty is not, nor cannot be, very faithfully preſerved. If we are wanting to ourſelves, and inattentive to our great intereſts in this reſpect, it is the height of folly and unreaſonableneſs, to expect that government will attend to them for us. Should the Britiſh conſtitution ultimately lapſe into a deſpotiſm, as has been propheſied, I ſhall think that the country gentlemen of England will have really much more to anſwer for than the miniſters.

To do the country gentlemen juſtice, however, I ſhould readily acknowledge, that, in the partial deſertion of their poſts as guardians of Britiſh freedom, which has already taken place, they have been actuated more by fear than treachery. And the principal

reaſon of this fear was, I conceive, the ignorance and deluſions of the common people, and the proſpective horrors which were contemplated, if, in ſuch a ſtate of mind, they ſhould, by any revolutionary movement, obtain an aſcendant.

The circulation of Paine's Rights of Man, it is ſuppoſed, has done great miſchief among the lower and middling claſſes of people in this country. This is probably true; but not becauſe man is without rights, or that theſe rights ought not to be known; but becauſe Mr. Paine has fallen into ſome fundamental errors reſpecting the principles of government, and in many important points has ſhewn himſelf totally unacquainted with the ſtructure of ſociety, and the different moral effects to be expected from the phyſical difference between this country and America. Mobs, of the ſame deſcription as thoſe collections of people known by this name in Europe, could not exiſt in America. The number of people without property, is, there, from the phyſical ſtate of the country, comparatively ſmall; and therefore the civil power which is to protect property, cannot require the ſame degree of ſtrength. Mr. Paine very juſtly obſerves, that whatever the apparent cauſe of any riots may be, the real one is always want of happineſs; but when he goes on to ſay, it ſhews that ſomething is wrong in the ſyſtem of government, that injures the felicity by which ſociety is to be preſerved, he falls into the common error of attributing all want of happineſs to government. It is evident, that this want of happineſs might have exiſted, and from ignorance might have been the principal cauſe of the riots, and yet be almoſt wholly unconnected with any of the proceedings of government. The redundant population of an old ſtate furniſhes materials of unhappineſs, unknown to ſuch a ſtate as that of America; and if an attempt were to be made to remedy this unhappineſs, by diſtributing the produce of the taxes to the poorer claſſes of ſociety, according to the plan propoſed by Mr. Paine, the evil would be aggravated a hundred fold, and, in a very ſhort time, no ſum that

the ſociety could poſſibly raiſe, would be adequate to the propoſed object.

Nothing would ſo effectually counteract the miſchiefs occaſioned by Mr. Paine's Rights of Man, as a general knowledge of the real rights of man. What theſe rights are, it is not my buſineſs at preſent to explain; but there is one right, which man has generally been thought to poſſeſs, which I am confident he neither does, nor can, poſſeſs, a right to ſubſiſtence when his labour will not fairly purchaſe it. Our laws indeed ſay, that he has this right, and bind the ſociety to furniſh employment and food to thoſe who cannot get them in the regular market; but in ſo doing, they attempt to reverſe the laws of nature; and it is, in conſequence, to be expected, not only that they ſhould fail in their object, but that the poor who were intended to be benefited, ſhould ſuffer moſt cruelly from this inhuman deceit which is practiſed upon them.

A man who is born into a world already poſſeſſed, if he cannot get ſubſiſtence from his parents on whom he has a juſt demand, and if the ſociety do not want his labour, has no claim of *right* to the ſmalleſt portion of food, and, in fact, has no buſineſs to be where he is. At nature's mighty feaſt there is no vacant cover for him. She tells him to be gone, and will quickly execute her own orders, if he do not work upon the compaſſion of ſome of her gueſts. If theſe gueſts get up and make room for him, other intruders immediately appear demanding the ſame favour. The report of a proviſion for all that come, fills the hall with numerous claimants. The order and harmony of the feaſt is diſturbed, the plenty that before reigned is changed into ſcarcity; and the happineſs of the gueſts is deſtroyed by the ſpectacle of miſery and dependence in every part of the hall, and by the clamorous importunity of thoſe, who are juſtly enraged at not finding the proviſion which they had been taught to expect. The gueſts learn too late their error, in counteracting thoſe ſtrict orders to all intruders, iſſued by the great miſtreſs of the feaſt, who, wiſhing that all her gueſts ſhould have plenty, and knowing that ſhe could

not provide for unlimited numbers, humanely refuſed to admit freſh comers when her table was already full.

The Abbé Raynal has ſaid, that "Avant toutes les loix ſociales "l'homme avoit le droit de ſubſiſter[a]." He might with juſt as much propriety have ſaid, that, before the inſtitution of ſocial laws, every man had a right to live a hundred years. Undoubtedly he had then, and has ſtill, a good right to live a hundred years, nay, a thouſand, *if he can*, without interfering with the right of others to live; but the affair, in both caſes, is principally an affair of power, not of right. Social laws very greatly increaſe this power, by enabling a much greater number to ſubſiſt, than could ſubſiſt without them, and ſo far very greatly enlarge *le droit de ſubſiſter*; but neither before nor after the inſtitution of ſocial laws, could an unlimited number ſubſiſt; and before, as well as ſince, he who ceaſed to have the power, ceaſed to have the right.

If the great truths on theſe ſubjects were more generally circulated, and the lower claſſes of people could be convinced, that, by the laws of nature, independently of any particular inſtitutions, except the great one of property which is abſolutely neceſſary in order to attain any conſiderable produce, no perſon has any claim of right on ſociety for ſubſiſtence, if his labour will not purchaſe it, the greateſt part of the miſchievous declamation on the unjuſt inſtitutions of ſociety would fall powerleſs to the ground. The poor are by no means inclined to be viſionary. Their diſtreſſes are always real, though they are not attributed to the real cauſes. If theſe real cauſes were properly explained to them, and they were taught to know how ſmall a part of their preſent diſtreſs was attributable to government, and how great a part to cauſes totally unconnected with it, diſcontent and irritation among the lower claſſes of people would ſhew themſelves much leſs frequently than at preſent; and when they did ſhew themſelves, would be much leſs to be dreaded. The efforts

[a] Raynal, Hiſt. des Indes, vol. x. ſ. x. p. 322. 8vo.

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of turbulent and diſcontented men in the middle claſſes of ſociety, might ſafely be diſregarded, if the poor were ſo far enlightened reſpecting the real nature of their ſituation, as to be aware, that by aiding them in their ſchemes of renovation, they would probably be promoting the ambitious views of others, without, in any reſpect, benefiting themſelves. And the country gentlemen, and men of property in England, might ſecurely return to a wholeſome jealouſy of the encroachments of power; and, inſtead of daily ſacrificing the liberties of the ſubject, on the altar of publick ſafety, might, without any juſt apprehenſion from the people, not only tread back all their late ſteps, but firmly inſiſt upon thoſe gradual reforms, which the lapſe of time, and the ſtorms of circumſtances, have rendered neceſſary, to prevent the gradual deſtruction of the Britiſh conſtitution.

All improvements in government muſt neceſſarily originate with perſons of ſome education, and theſe will of courſe be found among the people of property. Whatever may be ſaid of a few, it is impoſſible to ſuppoſe that the great maſs of the people of property ſhould be really intereſted in the abuſes of government. They merely ſubmit to them, from the fear, that an endeavour to remove them, might be productive of greater evils. Could we but take away this fear, reform and improvement would proceed with as much facility, as the removal of nuiſances, or the paving and lighting the ſtreets. In human life we are continually called upon, to ſubmit to a leſſer evil, in order to avoid a greater; and it is the part of a wiſe man to do this readily and cheerfully; but no wiſe man will ſubmit to any evil, if he can get rid of it, without danger. Remove all apprehenſion from the tyranny or folly of the people, and the tyranny of government could not ſtand a moment. It would then appear in its proper deformity, without palliation, without pretext, without protector. Naturally feeble in itſelf, when it was once ſtripped naked, and deprived of the ſupport of publick opinion, and of the great plea of neceſſity, it would fall without a ſtruggle. Its few intereſted defenders would hide their heads abaſhed; and would be aſhamed

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any longer to advocate a cauſe for which no human ingenuity could invent a plauſible argument.

The moſt ſucceſsful ſupporters of tyranny are without doubt thoſe general declaimers, who attribute the diſtreſſes of the poor, and almoſt all the evils to which ſociety is ſubject, to human inſtitutions and the iniquity of governments. The falſity of theſe accuſations, and the dreadful conſequences that would reſult from their being generally admitted and acted upon, make it abſolutely neceſſary that they ſhould at all events be reſiſted; not only on account of the immediate revolutionary horrors to be expected from a movement of the people acting under ſuch impreſſions, a conſideration which muſt at all times have very great weight; but on account of the extreme probability that ſuch a revolution would terminate in a much worſe deſpotiſm, than that which it had deſtroyed. On theſe grounds, a genuine friend of freedom, a zealous advocate for the real rights of man, might be found among the defenders of a conſiderable degree of tyranny. A cauſe bad in itſelf, might be ſupported by the good and the virtuous, merely becauſe that which was oppoſed to it was much worſe; and at the moment it was abſolutely neceſſary to make a choice between the two. Whatever therefore may be the intention of thoſe indiſcriminate and wholeſale accuſations againſt governments, their real effect undoubtedly is, to add a weight of talents and principles to the prevailing power which it never would have received otherwiſe.

It is a truth, which I truſt has been ſufficiently proved in the courſe of this work, that, under a government conſtructed upon the beſt and pureſt principles, and executed by men of the higheſt talents and integrity, the moſt ſqualid poverty and wretchedneſs might univerſally prevail from the principle of population alone. And as this cauſe of unhappineſs has hitherto been ſo little underſtood, that the efforts of ſociety have always tended rather to aggravate than to leſſen it, we have the ſtrongeſt reaſons for ſuppoſing, that, in all the governments with which we are acquainted, a very great

great part of the miſery to be obſerved among the lower claſſes of the people, ariſes from this cauſe.

The inference, therefore, which Mr. Paine and others have drawn againſt governments from the unhappineſs of the people, is palpably unfair; and before we give a ſanction to ſuch accuſations, it is a debt we owe to truth and juſtice, to aſcertain how much of this unhappineſs ariſes from the principle of population, and how much is fairly to be attributed to government. When this diſtinction has been properly made, and all the vague, indefinite, and falſe accuſations removed, government would remain, as it ought to be, clearly reſponſible for the reſt. A tenfold weight would be immediately given to the cauſe of the people, and every man of principle would join in aſſerting and enforcing, if neceſſary, their rights.

I may be deceived; but I confeſs that if I were called to name the cauſe, which, in my conception, had more than any other contributed to the very ſlow progreſs of freedom, ſo diſheartening to every liberal mind, I ſhould ſay that it was the confuſion that had exiſted, reſpecting the cauſes of the unhappineſs and diſcontents which prevail in ſociety; and the advantage which governments had been able to take, and indeed had been compelled to take, of this confuſion, to confirm and ſtrengthen their power. I cannot help thinking, therefore, that a knowledge generally circulated, that the principal cauſe of want and unhappineſs is unconnected with government, and totally beyond its power to remove; and that it depends upon the conduct of the poor themſelves; would, inſtead of giving any advantage to governments, give a great additional weight to the popular ſide of the queſtion, by removing the dangers with which, from ignorance, it is at preſent accompanied; and thus tend, in a very powerful manner, to promote the cauſe of rational freedom.

CHAP. VII.

Plan of the gradual abolition of the Poor Laws propoſed.

If the principles in the preceding chapters ſhould ſtand the teſt of examination, and we ſhould ever feel the obligation of endeavouring to act upon them, the next inquiry would be, in what way we ought practically to proceed. The firſt grand obſtacle which preſents itſelf in this country, is the ſyſtem of the poor laws, which has been juſtly ſtated to be an evil, in compariſon of which, the national debt, with all its magnitude of terror, is of little moment[a]. The extraordinary rapidity with which the poors rates have increaſed of late years, preſents us, indeed, with the proſpect of a monſtrous deformity in ſociety, which, if it did not really exiſt to a great degree at preſent, and were not daily advancing in growth, would be conſidered as perfectly incredible. It preſents us with the proſpect of a great nation, flouriſhing in arts, and arms, and commerce, and with a government, which has generally been allowed to be the beſt, which has hitherto ſtood the teſt of experience, in any country, and yet the larger half of the people reduced to the condition of paupers[b].

Greatly as we may be ſhocked at ſuch a proſpect, and ardently as we may wiſh to remove it, the evil is now ſo deeply ſeated, and the

[a] Reports of the Society for bettering the condition of the poor, vol. iii. p. 21.

[b] It has been ſaid, that, during the late ſcarcities, half of the population of the country received relief. If the poors rates continue increaſing as rapidly as they have done on the average of the laſt ten years, how melancholy are our future proſpects? The ſyſtem of the poor laws has been juſtly ſtated by the French to be *la plaie politique de l'Angleterre la plus dévorante.* (Comitè de Mendicitè.)

relief

relief given by the poor laws ſo widely extended, that no man of humanity could venture to propoſe their immediate abolition. To mitigate their effects, however, and ſtop their future increaſe, to which, if left to continue upon their preſent plan, we can ſee no probable termination, it has been propoſed to fix the whole ſum to be raiſed, at its preſent rate, or any other that might be determined upon; and to make a law that on no account this ſum ſhould be exceeded. The objection to this plan is, that a very large ſum would be ſtill to be raiſed, and a great number of people to be ſupported; the conſequence of which would be, that the poor would not be eaſily able to diſtinguiſh the alteration that had been made. Each individual would think that he had as good a right to be ſupported when he was in want, as any other perſon; and thoſe who unfortunately chanced to be in diſtreſs when the fixed ſum had been collected, would think themſelves particularly ill uſed on being excluded from all aſſiſtance, while ſo many others were enjoying this advantage. If the ſum collected, were divided among all that were in want, however their numbers might increaſe; though ſuch a plan would be perfectly fair, with regard to thoſe who became dependent, after the ſum had been fixed, it would undoubtedly be rather hard upon thoſe, who had been in the habit of receiving a more liberal ſupply, and had done nothing to juſtify its being taken from them.

I have reflected much on the ſubject of the poor laws, and hope, therefore, that I ſhall be excuſed, in venturing to ſuggeſt a mode of their gradual abolition, to which, I confeſs, that at preſent I can ſee no material objection. Of this, indeed, I feel nearly convinced, that, ſhould we ever become ſufficiently ſenſible of the wide-ſpreading tyranny, dependence, indolence, and unhappineſs, which they create, as ſeriouſly to make an effort to aboliſh them, we ſhall be compelled to adopt the principle, if not the plan, which I ſhall mention. It ſeems impoſſible to get rid of ſo extenſive a ſyſtem of ſupport, conſiſtently with humanity, without applying ourſelves directly to its

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vital principle, and endeavouring to counteract that deeply-ſeated cauſe, which occaſions the rapid growth of all ſuch eſtabliſhments, and invariably renders them inadequate to their object.

To this end, I ſhould propoſe a regulation to be made, declaring, that no child born from any marriage, taking place after the expiration of a year from the date of the law; and no illegitimate child born two years from the ſame date, ſhould ever be entitled to pariſh aſſiſtance. And to give a more general knowledge of this law, and to enforce it more ſtrongly on the minds of the lower claſſes of people, the clergyman of each pariſh ſhould, previouſly to the ſolemnization of a marriage, read a ſhort addreſs to the parties, ſtating the ſtrong obligation on every man to ſupport his own children; the impropriety, and even immorality, of marrying without a fair proſpect of being able to do this; the evils which had reſulted to the poor themſelves, from the attempt which had been made to aſſiſt, by publick inſtitutions, in a duty which ought to be excluſively appropriated to parents; and the abſolute neceſſity which had at length appeared, of abandoning all ſuch inſtitutions, on account of their producing effects totally oppoſite to thoſe which were intended.

This would operate as a fair, diſtinct, and preciſe notice, which no man could well miſtake; and, without preſſing hard on any particular individuals, would at once throw off the riſing generation from that miſerable and helpleſs dependence upon the government and the rich, the moral as well as phyſical conſequences of which are almoſt incalculable. When the poor are in the habit of conſtantly looking to theſe ſources, for all the good or evil they enjoy or ſuffer, their minds muſt almoſt neceſſarily be under a continual ſtate of irritation againſt the higher claſſes of ſociety, whenever they feel diſtreſſed from the preſſure of circumſtances.

I have often heard great ſurpriſe expreſſed that the poor in this country ſhould be with ſuch difficulty perſuaded to take to any ſubſtitutes during a period of ſcarcity; but I confeſs, that this fact never ſurpriſed me in the leaſt. The poor are told that the pariſh

is obliged to provide for them. This, they naturally conceive, is a rich ſource of ſupply; and when they are offered any kind of food to which they are not accuſtomed, they conſider it as a breach of obligation in the pariſh, and as proceeding, not from the hard law of neceſſity from which there is no appeal; but from the injuſtice and hardheartedneſs of the higher claſſes of ſociety, againſt which they would wiſh to appeal to the right of the ſtrongeſt. The language which they generally make uſe of upon theſe occaſions, is, "See "what ſtuff *they* want to make us eat, I wonder how *they* would "like it *themſelves*. I ſhould like to ſee ſome of *them* do a day's "work upon it." The words *they* and *them* generally refer to the Parliament, the Lord Mayor, the Juſtices, the Pariſh, and in general to all the higher claſſes of ſociety. Both the irritation of mind and the helpleſſneſs in expedients, during the preſſure of want, ariſe in this inſtance from the wretched ſyſtem of governing too much. When the poor were once taught, by the abolition of the poor laws, and a proper knowledge of their real ſituation, to depend more upon themſelves, we might reſt ſecure, that they would be fruitful enough in reſources, and that the evils which were abſolutely irremediable, they would bear with the fortitude of men, and the reſignation of Chriſtians.

After the publick notice which I have propoſed had been given, and the ſyſtem of poor laws had ceaſed with regard to the riſing generation, if any man choſe to marry, without a proſpect of being able to ſupport a family, he ſhould have the moſt perfect liberty ſo to do. Though to marry, in this caſe, is in my opinion clearly an immoral act, yet it is not one, which ſociety can juſtly take upon itſelf to prevent or puniſh; becauſe the puniſhment provided for it by the laws of nature, falls directly and moſt ſeverely upon the individual who commits the act, and, through him, only more remotely and feebly on the ſociety. When nature will govern and puniſh for us, it is a very miſerable ambition, to wiſh to ſnatch the rod from her hands, and draw upon ourſelves the odium of

executioner. To the puniſhment, therefore, of nature he ſhould be left, the puniſhment of ſevere want. He has erred in the face of a moſt clear and preciſe warning, and can have no juſt reaſon to complain of any perſon but himſelf, when he feels the conſequences of his error. All pariſh aſſiſtance ſhould be moſt rigidly denied him: and if the hand of private charity be ſtretched forth in his relief, the intereſts of humanity imperiouſly require that it ſhould be adminiſtered very ſparingly. He ſhould be taught to know that the laws of nature, which are the laws of God, had doomed him and his family to ſtarve for diſobeying their repeated admonitions; that he had no claim of right on ſociety for the ſmalleſt portion of food, beyond that which his labour would fairly purchaſe; and that, if he and his family were ſaved from ſuffering the utmoſt extremities of hunger, he would owe it to the pity of ſome kind benefactor, to whom, therefore, he ought to be bound by the ſtrongeſt ties of gratitude.

If this ſyſtem were purſued, we need be under no apprehenſions whatever, that the number of perſons in extreme want would be beyond the power and the will of the benevolent to ſupply. The ſphere for the exerciſe of private charity would, I am confident, be leſs than it is preſent; and the only difficulty would be, to reſtrain the hand of benevolence from aſſiſting thoſe in diſtreſs in ſo liberal a manner as to encourage indolence and want of foreſight in others.

With regard to illegitimate children, after the proper notice had been given, they ſhould on no account whatever be allowed to have any claim to pariſh aſſiſtance. If the parents deſert their child, they ought to be made anſwerable for the crime. The infant is, comparatively ſpeaking, of no value to the ſociety, as others will immediately ſupply its place. Its principal value is on account of its being the object of one of the moſt delightful paſſions in human nature—parental affection. But if this value be diſregarded, by thoſe who are alone in a capacity to feel it, the ſociety cannot be called upon to put itſelf in their place; and has no further buſineſs in

in its protection, than in the caſe of its murder or intentional ill-treatment to follow the general rules in puniſhing ſuch crimes; which rules, for the intereſts of morality, it is bound to purſue, whether the object, in the particular inſtance, be of value to the ſtate or not.

At preſent the child is taken under the protection of the pariſh [a], and generally dies, at leaſt in London, within the firſt year. The loſs to the ſociety, if it be one, is the ſame; but the crime is diluted by the number of people concerned, and the death paſſes as a viſitation of Providence, inſtead of being conſidered as the neceſſary conſequence of the conduct of its parents, for which they ought to be held reſponſible to God and to ſociety.

The deſertion of both parents, however, is not ſo common as the deſertion of one. When a ſervant or labouring man has an illegitimate child, his running away is perfectly a matter of courſe; and it is by no means uncommon for a man with a wife and large family to withdraw into a diſtant county, and leave them to the pariſh; indeed, I once heard a hard-working good ſort of man propoſe to do this, as the beſt mode of providing for a wife and ſix children [b]. If the ſimple fact of theſe frequent deſertions were related in ſome countries, a ſtrange inference would be drawn againſt the Engliſh character; but the wonder would ceaſe when our publick inſtitutions were explained.

By the laws of nature, a child is confided directly and excluſively to the protection of its parents. By the laws of nature, the mother of a child is confided almoſt as ſtrongly and excluſively to the man who is the father of it. If theſe ties were ſuffered to remain in the

[a] I fully agree with Sir F. M. Eden, in thinking that the conſtant publick ſupport which deſerted children receive, is the cauſe of their very great numbers in the two moſt opulent countries of Europe, France and England. State of the Poor, vol. i. p. 339.

[b] "That many of the poorer claſſes of the community avail themſelves of the libe-
"rality of the law, and leave their wives and children on the pariſh, the reader will
"find abundant proof in the ſubſequent part of this work." Sir F. M. Eden on the State of the Poor, vol. i. p. 339.

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ſtate in which nature has left them, and the man were convinced, that the woman and the child depended ſolely upon him for ſupport, I ſcarcely believe that there are ten men breathing ſo atrocious as to deſert them. But our laws, in oppoſition to the laws of nature, ſay, that if the parents forſake their child, other perſons will undertake to ſupport it; or, if the man forſake the woman, ſhe ſhall ſtill meet with protection elſewhere; that is, we take all poſſible pains to weaken and render null the ties of nature, and then ſay, that men are unnatural. But the fact is, that the ſociety itſelf, in its body politick, is the unnatural character, for framing laws that thus counteract the laws of nature, and give premiums to the violation of the beſt and moſt honourable feelings of the human heart.

It is a common thing, in moſt pariſhes, when the father of an illegitimate child can be ſeized, to endeavour to frighten him into marriage by the terrors of a jail; but ſuch a proceeding cannot ſurely be too ſtrongly reprobated. In the firſt place, it is a moſt ſhallow policy in the pariſh officers; for, if they ſucceed, the effect, upon the preſent ſyſtem, will generally be, the having three or four children to provide for, inſtead of one. And, in the next place, it is difficult to conceive a more groſs and ſcandalous profanation of a religious ceremony. Thoſe who believe that the character of the woman is ſalved by ſuch a forced engagement, or that the moral worth of the man is enhanced by affirming a lie before God, have, I confeſs, very different ideas of delicacy and morality, from thoſe which I have been taught to conſider as juſt. If a man deceive a woman into a connexion with him under a promiſe of marriage, he has undoubtedly been guilty of a moſt atrocious act; and there are few crimes which merit a more ſevere puniſhment: but the laſt that I ſhould chooſe is that which will oblige him to affirm another falſehood, which will probably render the woman that he is to be joined to miſerable, and will burden the ſociety with a family of paupers.

The obligation on every man to ſupport his children, whether legitimate

legitimate or illegitimate, is ſo clear and ſtrong, that it would be juſt to arm ſociety with any power to enforce it, which would be likely to anſwer the purpoſe. But I am inclined to believe, that no exerciſe of the civil power, however rigorous, would be half ſo effectual, as a knowledge generally circulated, that children were in future to depend ſolely for ſupport upon their parents, and would perhaps ſtarve if they were deſerted.

It may appear to be hard, that a mother and her children, who had been guilty of no particular crime themſelves, ſhould ſuffer for the ill-conduct of the father; but this is one of the invariable laws of nature; and knowing this, we ſhould think twice upon the ſubject, and be very ſure of the ground on which we go, before we preſume *ſyſtematically* to counteract it.

I have often heard the goodneſs of the Deity impeached on account of that part of the decalogue, in which he declares, that he will viſit the ſins of the father upon the children; but the objection has not perhaps been ſufficiently conſidered. Without a moſt complete and fundamental change in the whole conſtitution of human nature; without making man an angel, or at leaſt ſomething totally different from what he is at preſent; it ſeems abſolutely neceſſary that ſuch a law ſhould prevail. Would it not require a perpetual miracle, which is, perhaps, a contradiction in terms, to prevent children from being affected in their moral and civil condition by the conduct of their parents? What man is there that has been brought up by his parents, who is not, at the preſent moment, enjoying ſomething from their virtues, or ſuffering ſomething from their vices; who, in his moral character, has not been elevated, in ſome degree, by their prudence, their juſtice, their benevolence, their temperance, or depreſſed by the contraries; who, in his civil condition, has not been raiſed by their reputation, their foreſight, their induſtry, their good fortune; or lowered by their want of character, their imprudence, their indolence, and their adverſity? And how much does a knowledge of this tranſmiſſion of bleſſings contribute

to

to excite and invigorate virtuous exertion? Proceeding upon this certainty, how ardent and inceſſant are the efforts of parents to give their children a good education, and to provide for their future ſituation in the world. If a man could neglect or deſert his wife and children, without their ſuffering any injury, how many individuals there are, who, not being very fond of their wives, or being tired of the ſhackles of matrimony, would withdraw from houſehold cares and difficulties, and reſume their liberty and independence as ſingle men. But the conſideration that children may ſuffer for the faults of their parents has a ſtrong hold even upon vice, and many who are in ſuch a ſtate of mind, as to diſregard the conſequences of their habitual courſe of life, as far as relates to themſelves, are yet greatly anxious that their children ſhould not ſuffer from their vices and follies. In the moral government of the world, it ſeems evidently neceſſary, that the ſins of the fathers ſhould be viſited upon the children; and if in our overweening vanity we imagine that we can govern a private ſociety better by endeavouring *ſyſtematically* to counteract this law, I am inclined to believe that we ſhall find ourſelves very greatly miſtaken.

If the plan, which I have propoſed, were adopted, the poors rates in a few years would begin very rapidly to decreaſe, and in no great length of time would be completely extinguiſhed; and yet, as far as it appears to me at preſent, no individual would be either deceived or injured, and conſequently no perſon could have a juſt right to complain.

The abolition of the poor laws, however, is not of itſelf ſufficient; and the obvious anſwer to thoſe who lay too much ſtreſs upon this ſyſtem, is, to deſire them to look at the ſtate of the poor in ſome other countries, where ſuch laws do not prevail, and to compare it with their condition in England. But this compariſon, it muſt be acknowledged, is in many reſpects unfair; and would by no means decide the queſtion of the utility, or inutility, of ſuch a ſyſtem. England poſſeſſes very great natural and political advantages, in which

which, perhaps, the countries that we ſhould, in this caſe, compare with her, would be found to be palpably deficient. The nature of her ſoil and climate is ſuch, that thoſe almoſt univerſal failures in the crops of grain, which are known in ſome countries, never occur in England. Her inſular ſituation and extended commerce are peculiarly favourable for importation. Her numerous manufactures employ all the hands that are not engaged in agriculture, and afford the means of a regular diſtribution of the annual produce of the land and labour to the whole of her inhabitants. But above all, throughout a very large claſs of the people, a decided taſte for the conveniencies and comforts of life, a ſtrong deſire of bettering their condition, that maſter-ſpring of publick proſperity, and, in conſequence, a moſt laudable ſpirit of induſtry and foreſight, are obſerved to prevail. Theſe diſpoſitions, ſo contrary to the hopeleſs indolence remarked in deſpotick countries, are probably generated, in great meaſure, by the conſtitution of the Engliſh government, and the excellence of its laws, which ſecure to every individual the produce of his induſtry. When, therefore, on a compariſon with other countries, England appears to have the advantage in the ſtate of her poor, the ſuperiority is entirely to be attributed to theſe favourable circumſtances, and not to the poor laws. A woman with one bad feature may greatly excel in beauty ſome other who may have this individual feature tolerably good; but it would be rather ſtrange, to aſſert, in conſequence, that the ſuperior beauty of the former was occaſioned by this particular deformity. The poor laws have conſtantly tended, in the moſt powerful manner, to counteract the natural and acquired advantages of this country. Fortunately, theſe advantages have been ſo conſiderable, that, though greatly weakened, they could not be entirely overcome; and to theſe advantages, and theſe alone, it is owing, that England has been able to bear up ſo long againſt this pernicious ſyſtem. I am ſo ſtrongly of this opinion, that I do not think that any other country in the world, except

perhaps Holland before the revolution, could have acted upon it so completely, for the same period of time, without utter ruin.

It has been proposed by some, to establish poor laws in Ireland; but, from the wretched and degraded state of the common people, and the total want of that decent pride, which in England prevents so many from having recourse to parish assistance, there is little reason to doubt, that, on the establishment of such laws, the whole of the landed property would very soon be absorbed, or the system be given up in despair.

In Sweden, from the dearths which are not unfrequent, owing to the general failure of crops in an unpropitious climate, and the impossibility of great importations in a poor country, an attempt to establish a system of parochial relief such as that in England, if it were not speedily abandoned from the physical impossibility of executing it, would level the property of the kingdom from one end to the other, and convulse the social system in such a manner, as absolutely to prevent it from recovering its former state on the return of plenty.

Even in France, with all her advantages of situation and climate, the tendency to population is so great, and the want of foresight among the lower classes of the people so conspicuous, that if poor laws were established, the landed property would soon sink under the burden, and the wretchedness of the people at the same time be increased. On these considerations the committee *de Mendicitè*, at the beginning of the revolution, very properly and judiciously rejected the establishment of such a system which had been proposed.

The exception of Holland, if it were an exception, would arise from very particular circumstances—her extensive foreign trade, and her numerous colonial emigrations, compared with the smallness of her territory; and the extreme unhealthiness of a great part of the country, which occasions a much greater average mortality than is common in other states. These, I conceive, were the unobserved

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causes which principally contributed to render Holland so famous for the management of her poor, and able to employ and support all who applied for relief.

No part of Germany is sufficiently rich to support an extensive system of parochial relief; but I am inclined to think, that, from the absence of it, the lower classes of the people in some parts of Germany, are in a better situation than those of the same class in England. In Switzerland, for the same reason, their condition, before the late troubles, was perhaps universally superior. And in a journey through the dutchies of Holstein and Sleswick belonging to Denmark, the houses of the lower classes of people appeared to me to be neater and better, and, in general, there were fewer indications of poverty and wretchedness among them, than among the same ranks in this country.

Even in Norway, notwithstanding the disadvantage of a severe and uncertain climate, from the little that I saw in a few weeks residence in the country, and the information that I could collect from others, I am inclined to think, that the poor were, on the average, better off than in England. Their houses and clothing were superior, and, though they had no white bread, they had much more meat, fish, and milk, than our labourers; and I particularly remarked, that the farmers' boys were much stouter and healthier looking lads than those of the same description in England. This degree of happiness, superior to what could be expected from the soil and climate, arises almost exclusively from the degree in which the preventive check to population operates; and the establishment of a system of poor laws which would destroy this check, would at once sink the lower classes of the people into a state of the most miserable poverty and wretchedness; would diminish their industry, and consequently the produce of the land and labour of the country; would weaken the resources of ingenuity in times of scarcity; and ultimately involve the country in all the horrors of continual famines.

If,

If, as in Ireland, and in Spain, and many of the ſouthern countries, the people be in ſo degraded a ſtate, as to propagate their ſpecies like brutes, totally regardleſs of conſequences, it matters little, whether they have poor laws or not. Miſery in all its various forms muſt be the predominant check to their increaſe. Poor laws, indeed, will always tend to aggravate the evil, by diminiſhing the general reſources of the country, and, in ſuch a ſtate of things, could exiſt only for a very ſhort time; but with, or without them, no ſtretch of human ingenuity and exertion could reſcue the people from the moſt extreme poverty and wretchedneſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the modes of correcting the prevailing opinions on the ſubject of Population.

It is not enough to aboliſh all the poſitive inſtitutions which encourage population; but we muſt endeavour, at the ſame time, to correct the prevailing opinions, which have the ſame, or perhaps even a more powerful, effect. This muſt neceſſarily be a work of time; and can only be done, by circulating juſter notions on theſe ſubjects, in writings and converſation; and by endeavouring to impreſs as ſtrongly as poſſible on the publick mind, that it is not the duty of man ſimply to propagate his ſpecies, but to propagate virtue and happineſs; and that, if he has not a tolerably fair proſpect of doing this, he is by no means called upon to leave deſcendants.

The merits of the childleſs, and of thoſe who have brought up large families, ſhould be compared without prejudice, and their different influence on the general happineſs of ſociety juſtly appreciated.

The matron who has reared a family of ten or twelve children, and whoſe ſons, perhaps, may be fighting the battles of their country, is apt to think that ſociety owes her much; and this imaginary debt, ſociety is, in general, fully inclined to acknowledge. But if the ſubject be fairly conſidered, and the reſpected matron weighed in the ſcales of juſtice againſt the neglected old maid, it is poſſible that the matron might kick the beam. She will appear rather in the character of a monopoliſt, than of a great benefactor to the ſtate. If ſhe had not married and had

had ſo many children, other members of the ſociety might have enjoyed this ſatisfaction; and there is no particular reaſon for ſuppoſing that her ſons would fight better for their country than the ſons of other women. She has therefore rather ſubtracted from, than added to, the happineſs of the other parts of ſociety. The old maid, on the contrary, has exalted others by depreſſing herſelf. Her ſelf-denial has made room for another marriage, without any additional diſtreſs; and ſhe has not, like the generality of men, in avoiding one error, fallen into its oppoſite. She has really and truly contributed more to the happineſs of the reſt of the ſociety ariſing from the pleaſures of marriage, than if ſhe had entered in this union herſelf, and had beſides portioned twenty maidens with a hundred pounds each; whoſe particular happineſs would have been balanced, either by an increaſe in the general difficulties of rearing children and getting employment, or by the neceſſity of celibacy in twenty other maidens ſomewhere elſe. Like the truly benevolent man in an irremediable ſcarcity, ſhe has diminiſhed her own conſumption, inſtead of raiſing up a few particular people, by preſſing down the reſt. On a fair compariſon, therefore, ſhe ſeems to have a better founded claim to the gratitude of ſociety than the matron. Whether we could always completely ſympathize with the motives of her conduct, has not much to do with the queſtion. The particular motive which influenced the matron to marry, was certainly not the good of her country. To refuſe a proper tribute of reſpect to the old maid, becauſe ſhe was not directly influenced in her conduct by the deſire of conferring on ſociety a certain benefit, which, though it muſt undoubtedly exiſt, muſt neceſſarily be ſo diffuſed as to be inviſible to her, is in the higheſt degree impolitick and unjuſt. It is expecting a ſtrain of virtue beyond humanity. If we never reward any perſons with our approbation, but thoſe who are excluſively influenced by motives of general benevolence, this powerful encouragement to good actions will not be very often called into exerciſe.

There

There are very few women who might not have married in ſome way or other. The old maid, who has either never formed an attachment, or has been diſappointed in the object of it, has, under the circumſtances in which ſhe has been placed, conducted herſelf with the moſt perfect propriety; and has acted a much more virtuous and honourable part in ſociety, than thoſe women who marry without a proper degree of love, or at leaſt of eſteem, for their huſbands; a ſpecies of immorality which is not reprobated as it deſerves.

If, in compariſons of this kind, we ſhould be compelled to acknowledge that, in conſidering the general tendency of population to increaſe beyond the means of ſubſiſtence, the conduct of the old maid had contributed more to the happineſs of the ſociety than that of the matron; it will ſurely appear, not only unjuſt, but ſtrikingly impolitick, not to proportion our tribute of honour and eſtimation more fairly according to their reſpective merits. Though we ſhould not go ſo far as to reward ſingle women with particular diſtinctions; yet the plaineſt principles of equity and policy require, that the reſpect which they might claim from their perſonal character, ſhould, in no way whatever, be impeded by their particular ſituation; and that, with regard to rank, precedence, and the ceremonial attentions of ſociety, they ſhould be completely on a level with married women.

It is ſtill however true, that the life of a married perſon with a family, is of more conſequence to ſociety than that of a ſingle perſon; becauſe, when there is a family of children already born, it is of the utmoſt importance, that they ſhould be well taken care off, and well educated; and of this there is very ſeldom ſo fair a probability when they have loſt their parents. Our object ſhould be merely to correct the prevailing opinions with regard to the duty of marriage; and, without poſitively diſcouraging it, to prevent any perſons from being attracted, or driven into this ſtate by the reſpect and honour which await the married dame, and the neglect and inconveniences attendant on the ſingle woman.

It is perfectly abſurd as well as unjuſt, that a giddy girl of ſixteen

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ſhould, becauſe ſhe is married, be conſidered by the forms of ſociety as the protector of women of thirty, ſhould come firſt into the room, ſhould be aſſigned the higheſt place at table, and be the prominent figure to whom the attentions of the company are more particularly addreſſed. Thoſe who believe that theſe diſtinctions, added to the very long confinement of ſingle women to the parental roof, and their being compelled, on all occaſions, to occupy the back ground of the picture, have not an influence in impelling many young women into the married ſtate againſt their natural inclinations, and without a proper degree of regard for their intended huſbands, do not, as I conceive, reaſon with much knowledge of human nature. And till theſe cuſtoms are changed, as far as circumſtances will admit, and the reſpect and liberty which women enjoy, are made to depend more upon perſonal character and propriety of conduct, than upon their ſituation as married or ſingle; it muſt be acknowledged, that among the higher ranks of life we encourage marriage by conſiderable premiums.

It is not, however, among the higher ranks of ſociety, that we have moſt reaſon to apprehend the too great frequency of marriage. Though the circulation of juſter notions on this ſubject might, even in this part of the community, do much good, and prevent many unhappy marriages; yet, whether we make particular exertions for this purpoſe, or not, we may reſt aſſured, that the degree of proper pride, and ſpirit of independence, almoſt invariably connected with education and a certain rank in life, will ſecure the operation of the preventive check to a conſiderable extent. All that the ſociety can reaſonably require of its members is, that they ſhould not have families without being able to ſupport them. This may be fairly enjoined as a ſolemn duty. Every reſtraint beyond this, though in many points of view highly deſirable, muſt be conſidered as a matter of choice and taſte; but, from what we already know of the habits which prevail among the higher ranks of life, we have reaſon

reaſon to think, that little more is wanted to attain the object required than to award a greater degree of reſpect and of perſonal liberty to ſingle women, and to remove the diſtinctions in favour of married women, ſo as to place them exactly upon a level; a change which, independently of any particular purpoſe in view, the plaineſt principles of equity ſeem to demand.

If, among the higher claſſes of ſociety, the object of ſecuring the operation of the preventive check to population to a ſufficient degree, appear to be attainable without much difficulty; the obvious mode of proceeding with the lower claſſes of ſociety, where the point is of the principal importance, is, to endeavour to infuſe into them a portion of that knowledge and foreſight, which ſo much facilitates the attainment of this object in the educated part of the community.

The faireſt chance of accompliſhing this end, would probably be by the eſtabliſhment of a ſyſtem of parochial education upon a plan ſimilar to that propoſed by Dr. Smith[a]. In addition to the uſual ſubjects of inſtruction, and thoſe which he has mentioned, I ſhould be diſpoſed to lay conſiderable ſtreſs on the frequent explanation of the real ſtate of the lower claſſes of ſociety, as affected by the principle of population, and their conſequent dependence on themſelves, for the chief part of their happineſs, or miſery. If, in the courſe of time, a few of the ſimpleſt principles of political economy could be added to theſe inſtructions, the benefit to ſociety would be almoſt incalculable[b]. In ſome converſations with labouring men, during the

[a] Wealth of Nations, vol. iii. b. v. c. i. p. 187.

[b] Dr. Smith propoſes that the elementary parts of geometry and mechanics ſhould be taught in theſe pariſh ſchools; and I cannot help thinking that the common principles by which markets are regulated might be made ſufficiently clear, to be of conſiderable uſe. It is certainly a ſubject, that, as it intereſts the lower claſſes of people nearly, would be likely to attract their attention. At the ſame time, it muſt be confeſſed, that it is impoſſible to be in any degree ſanguine on this point, recollecting how very ignorant in general the educated part of the community is of theſe principles. If, however, political economy cannot be taught to the common people, I really think that it ought to form a branch of a univerſity education. Scotland has ſet us an example in

the late ſcarcities, I confeſs that I was to the laſt degree diſheartened, at obſerving their inveterate prejudices on the ſubject of grain; and I felt very ſtrongly the almoſt abſolute incompatibility of a government really free, with ſuch a degree of ignorance. The deluſions are of ſuch a nature, that, if acted upon, they muſt, at all events, be repreſſed by force; and it is extremely difficult to give ſuch a power to the government as will be ſufficient at all times for this purpoſe, without the riſk of its being employed improperly, and endangering the liberty of the ſubject. And this reflection cannot but be diſheartening to every friend to freedom.

We have laviſhed immenſe ſums on the poor, which we have every reaſon to think have conſtantly tended to aggravate their miſery. But in their education, and in the circulation of thoſe important political truths that moſt nearly concern them, which are perhaps the only means in our power of really raiſing their condition, and of making them happier men and more peaceable ſubjects, we have been miſerably deficient. It is ſurely a great national diſgrace, that the education of the lower claſſes of people in England ſhould be left merely to a few ſunday ſchools, ſupported by a ſubſcription from individuals, who of courſe can give to the courſe of inſtruction in them, any kind of bias which they pleaſe. And even the improve-

this reſpect, which we ought not to be ſo ſlow to imitate. It is of the very utmoſt importance, that the gentlemen of the country, and particularly the clergy, ſhould not, from ignorance, aggravate the evils of ſcarcity every time that it unfortunately occurs. During the late dearths, half of the gentlemen and clergymen in the kingdom richly deſerved to have been proſecuted for ſedition. After inflaming the minds of the common people againſt the farmers and corn-dealers, by the manner in which they talked of them, or preached about them, it was but a feeble antidote to the poiſon which they had infuſed, coldly to obſerve, that however the poor might be oppreſſed or cheated, it was their duty to keep the peace. It was little better than Anthony's repeated declaration, that the conſpirators were all honourable men; which did not ſave either their houſes or their perſons from the attacks of the mob. Political economy is perhaps the only ſcience of which it may be ſaid, that the ignorance of it is not merely a deprivation of good, but produces great poſitive evil.

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ment of ſunday ſchools, for objectionable as they are in ſome points of view, and imperfect in all, I cannot but conſider them as an improvement, is of very late date.

The arguments which have been urged againſt inſtructing the people, appear to me to be not only illiberal, but to the laſt degree feeble; and they ought, on the contrary, to be extremely forcible, and to be ſupported by the moſt obvious and ſtriking neceſſity, to warrant us in withholding the means of raiſing the condition of the lower claſſes of people, when they are in our power. Thoſe who will not liſten to any anſwer to theſe arguments drawn from theory, cannot, I think, refuſe the teſtimony of experience; and I would aſk, whether the advantage of ſuperior inſtruction which the lower claſſes of people in Scotland are known to poſſeſs, has appeared to have any tendency towards creating a ſpirit of tumult and diſcontent amongſt them. And yet from the natural inferiority of its ſoil and climate, the preſſure of want is more conſtant, and the dearths are not only more frequent, but more dreadful than in England. In the caſe of Scotland, the knowledge circulated among the common people, though not ſufficient eſſentially to better their condition by increaſing, in an adequate degree, their habits of prudence and foreſight; has yet the effect of making them bear with patience the evils which they ſuffer, from being aware of the folly and inefficacy of turbulence. The quiet and peaceable habits of the inſtructed Scotch peaſant, compared with the turbulent diſpoſition of the ignorant Iriſhman, ought not to be without effect upon every impartial reaſoner.

The principal argument that I have heard advanced againſt a ſyſtem of national education in England, is, that the common people would be put in a capacity to read ſuch works as thoſe of Paine, and that the conſequences would probably be fatal to government. But, on this ſubject, I agree moſt cordially with Dr. Smith[a] in thinking,

[a] Wealth o Nations, vol. iii. b. v. c. i. p. 192.

that an inſtructed and well-informed people, would be much leſs likely to be led away by inflammatory writings, and would be much better able to detect the falſe declamation of intereſted and ambitious demagogues, than an ignorant people. One or two readers in a pariſh are ſufficient to circulate any quantity of ſedition; and if theſe be gained to the democratic ſide, they will probably have the power of doing much more miſchief, by ſelecting the paſſages beſt ſuited to their hearers, and chooſing the moments when their oratory is likely to have the moſt effect; than if each individual in the pariſh had been in a capacity to read and judge of the whole work himſelf; and, at the ſame time, to read and judge of the oppoſing arguments, which we may ſuppoſe would alſo reach him.

But in addition to this, a double weight would undoubtedly be added to the obſervation of Dr. Smith, if theſe ſchools were made the means of inſtructing the people in the real nature of their ſituation; if they were taught, what is really true, that, without an increaſe of their own induſtry and prudence, no change of government could eſſentially better their condition; that though they might get rid of ſome particular grievance, yet that, in the great point of ſupporting their families, they would be but little, or perhaps not at all benefited; that a revolution would not alter in their favour the proportion of the ſupply of labour to the demand, or the quantity of food to the number of the conſumers; and that, if the ſupply of labour were greater than the demand, and the demand for food greater than the ſupply, they might ſuffer the utmoſt ſeverity of want, under the freeſt, the moſt perfect, and beſt executed government that the human imagination could conceive.

A knowledge of theſe truths, ſo obviouſly tends to promote peace and quietneſs, to weaken the effect of inflammatory writings, and to prevent all unreaſonable and ill-directed oppoſition to the conſtituted authorities, that thoſe, who would ſtill object to the inſtruction of the people, may fairly be ſuſpected of a wiſh to encourage their ignorance,

ignorance, as a pretext for tyranny, and an opportunity of increaſing the power and the influence of the executive government.

Beſides correcting the prevailing opinions reſpecting marriage, and explaining the real ſituation of the lower claſſes of ſociety, as depending almoſt entirely upon themſelves for their happineſs or miſery; the parochial ſchools would, by early inſtruction and the judicious diſtribution of rewards, have the faireſt chance of training up the riſing generation in habits of ſobriety, induſtry, independence, and prudence, and in a proper diſcharge of their religious duties; which would raiſe them from their preſent degraded ſtate, and approximate them, in ſome degree, to the middle claſſes of ſociety, whoſe habits, generally ſpeaking, are certainly ſuperior.

In moſt countries, among the lower claſſes of people, there appears to be ſomething like a ſtandard of wretchedneſs, a point below which, they will not continue to marry and propagate their ſpecies. This ſtandard is different in different countries, and is formed by various concurring circumſtances of ſoil, climate, government, degree of knowledge, and civilization, &c. The principal circumſtances which contribute to raiſe it, are, liberty, ſecurity of property, the ſpread of knowledge, and a taſte for the conveniences and the comforts of life. Thoſe which contribute principally to lower it are deſpotiſm and ignorance.

In an attempt to better the condition of the lower claſſes of ſociety, our object ſhould be to raiſe this ſtandard as high as poſſible, by cultivating a ſpirit of independence, a decent pride, and a taſte for cleanlineſs and comfort among the poor. Theſe habits would be beſt inculcated by a ſyſtem of general education and, when ſtrongly fixed, would be the moſt powerful means of preventing their marrying with the proſpect of being obliged to forfeit ſuch advantages; and would conſequently raiſe them nearer to the middle claſſes of ſociety.

CHAP. IX.

Of the direction of our charity.

An important and intereſting inquiry yet remains, relating to the mode, by which we could direct our private charity, ſo as not to interfere with the great object in view, of ameliorating the condition of the lower claſſes of people, by preventing the population from preſſing too hard againſt the limits of the means of ſubſiſtence.

The emotion which prompts us to relieve our fellow-creatures in diſtreſs, is like all our other natural paſſions, general, and in ſome degree indiſcriminate and blind. Our feelings of compaſſion may be worked up to a higher pitch by a well-wrought ſcene in a play, or a fictitious tale in a novel, than by almoſt any events in real life; and if, among ten petitioners, we were to liſten only to the firſt impulſes of our feelings, without making further inquiries, we ſhould undoubtedly give our aſſiſtance to the beſt actor of the party. It is evident, therefore, that the impulſe of benevolence, like the impulſes of love, of anger, of ambition, of eating and drinking, or any other of our natural propenſities, muſt be regulated by experience, and frequently brought to the teſt of utility, or it will defeat its intended purpoſe.

The apparent object of the paſſion between the ſexes is, the continuation of the ſpecies, and the formation of ſuch an intimate union of views and intereſts between two perſons, as will beſt promote their happineſs, and at the ſame time ſecure the proper degree of attention to the helpleſsneſs of infancy and the education of the riſing generation; but if every man were to obey at all times the impulſes

impulſes of nature in the gratification of this paſſion, without regard to conſequences, the principal part of the important objects would not be attained, and even the continuation of the ſpecies might be defeated by a promiſcuous intercourſe.

The apparent end of the impulſe of benevolence, is to draw the whole human race together, but more particularly that part of it which is of our own nation and kindred, in the bonds of brotherly love; and by giving men an intereſt in the happineſs and miſery of their fellow-creatures, to prompt them, as they have power, to mitigate ſome of the partial evils ariſing from general laws, and thus to increaſe the ſum of human happineſs; but if our benevolence be indiſcriminate, and the degree of apparent diſtreſs be made the ſole meaſure of our liberality, it is evident, that it will be exerciſed almoſt excluſively upon common beggars, while modeſt unobtruſive merit, ſtruggling with unavoidable difficulties, yet ſtill maintaining ſome ſlight appearances of decency and cleanlineſs, will be totally neglected. We ſhall raiſe the worthleſs above the worthy; we ſhall encourage indolence and check induſtry; and, in the moſt marked manner, ſubtract from the ſum of human happineſs.

Our experience has, indeed, informed us, that the impulſe of benevolence is not ſo ſtrong as the paſſion between the ſexes, and that, generally ſpeaking, there is much leſs danger to be apprehended from the indulgence of the former than of the latter; but, independently of this experience, and of the moral codes founded upon it, a youth of eighteen would be as completely juſtified in indulging the ſexual paſſion with every object capable of exciting it, as in following indiſcriminately every impulſe of his benevolence. They are both natural paſſions which are excited by their appropriate objects, and to the gratification of which, we are prompted by the pleaſurable ſenſations which accompany them. As animals, or till we know their conſequences, our only buſineſs is to follow theſe dictates of nature; but, as reaſonable beings, we are under the ſtrongeſt obligations to attend to their conſequences; and if they be evil to our-

ſelves or others, we may juſtly conſider it as an indication that ſuch a mode of indulging theſe paſſions is not ſuited to our ſtate, or conformable to the will of God. As moral agents, therefore, it is clearly our duty to reſtrain their indulgence in theſe particular directions; and by thus carefully examining the conſequences of our natural paſſions, and frequently bringing them to the teſt of utility, gradually to acquire a habit of gratifying them, only in that way, which, being unattended with evil, will clearly add to the ſum of human happineſs, and fulfil the apparent purpoſe of the Creator.

Though utility, therefore, can never be the immediate excitement to the gratification of any paſſion, it is the teſt by which alone we can know, whether it ought, or ought not, to be indulged; and is, therefore, the ſureſt foundation of all morality which can be collected from the light of nature. All the moral codes which have inculcated the ſubjection of the paſſions to reaſon, have been, as I conceive, really built upon this foundation, whether the promulgators of them were aware of it or not.

I remind the reader of theſe truths, in order to apply them to the habitual direction of our charity; and, if we keep the criterion of utility conſtantly in view, we may find ample room for the exerciſe of our benevolence, without interfering with the great purpoſe which we have to accompliſh.

One of the moſt valuable parts of charity, is its effect upon the giver. It is more bleſſed to give than to receive. Suppoſing it to be allowed, that the exerciſe of our benevolence in acts of charity is not, upon the whole, really beneficial to the poor, yet we could never ſanction any endeavour to extinguiſh an impulſe, the proper gratification of which has ſo evident a tendency to purify and exalt the human mind. But it is particularly ſatisfactory and pleaſing to find, that the mode of exerciſing our charity, which, when brought to the teſt of utility, will appear to be moſt beneficial to the poor, is preciſely that, which will have the beſt and moſt improving effect on the mind of the donor.

The

The quality of charity like that of mercy,

> " is not ſtrained;
> " It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
> " Upon the earth beneath."

The immenſe ſums diſtributed to the poor, in this country, by the parochial laws, are improperly called charity. They want its moſt diſtinguiſhing attribute; and, as it might be expected, from an attempt to force that which loſes its eſſence the moment that it ceaſes to be voluntary, their effect upon thoſe from whom they are collected are as prejudicial, as on thoſe to whom they are diſtributed. On the ſide of the receivers of this miſcalled charity, inſtead of real relief, we find accumulated diſtreſs and more extended poverty; on the ſide of the givers, inſtead of pleaſurable ſenſations, unceaſing diſcontent and irritation.

In the great charitable inſtitutions ſupported by voluntary contributions, many of which are certainly of a prejudicial tendency, the ſubſcriptions, I am inclined to fear, are ſometimes given grudgingly, and rather becauſe they are expected by the world from certain ſtations, and certain fortunes, than becauſe they are prompted by motives of genuine benevolence; and as the greater part of the ſubſcribers do not intereſt themſelves in the management of the funds, or in the fate of the particular objects relieved, it is not to be expected that this kind of charity ſhould have any ſtrikingly beneficial influence on the minds of the majority who exerciſe it.

Even in the relief of common beggars, we ſhall find that we are more frequently influenced by the deſire of getting rid of the importunities of a diſguſting object, than by the pleaſure of relieving it. We wiſh that it had not fallen in our way, rather than rejoice in the opportunity given us of aſſiſting a fellow-creature. We feel a painful emotion at the ſight of ſo much apparent miſery; but the pittance we give does not relieve it. We know that it is totally inadequate to produce any eſſential effect. We know, beſides, that we ſhall be

addreſſed in the ſame manner at the corner of the next ſtreet; and we know that we are liable to the groſſeſt impoſtures. We hurry, therefore, ſometimes by them, and ſhut our ears to their importunate demands. We give no more than we can help giving without doing actual violence to our feelings. Our charity is in ſome degree forced, and, like forced charity, it leaves no ſatisfactory impreſſion on the mind, and cannot, therefore, have any very beneficial and improving effect on the heart and affections.

But it is far otherwiſe with that voluntary and active charity, which makes itſelf acquainted with the objects which it relieves; which ſeems to feel, and to be proud of, the bond which unites the rich with the poor; which enters into their houſes; informs itſelf not only of their wants, but of their habits and diſpoſitions; checks the hopes of clamorous and obtruſive poverty, with no other recommendation but rags; and encourages with adequate relief the ſilent and retiring ſufferer, labouring under unmerited difficulties. This mode of exerciſing our charity preſents a very different picture from that of any other; and its contraſt with the common mode of pariſh relief, cannot be better deſcribed than in the words of Mr. Townſend, in the concluſion of his admirable diſſertation on the Poor Laws: "Nothing in nature can be more diſguſting than a pariſh pay-table, "attendant upon which, in the ſame objects of miſery, are too often "found combined, ſnuff, gin, rags, vermin, inſolence, and abuſive "language; nor in nature, can any thing be more beautiful than "the mild complacency of benevolence haſtening to the humble "cottage to relieve the wants of induſtry and virtue, to feed the "hungry, to clothe the naked, and to ſoothe the ſorrows of the "widow with her tender orphans; nothing can be more pleaſing, "unleſs it be their ſparkling eyes, their burſting tears, and their "uplifted hands, the artleſs expreſſions of unfeigned gratitude for "unexpected favours. Such ſcenes will frequently occur whenever "men ſhall have power to diſpoſe of their own property."

I conceive it to be almoſt impoſſible, that any perſon could be much engaged in ſuch ſcenes without daily making advances in virtue. No exerciſe of our affections can have a more evident tendency to purify and exalt the human mind. It is almoſt excluſively this ſpecies of charity that bleſſeth him that gives; and, in a general view, it is almoſt excluſively this ſpecies of charity which bleſſeth him that takes; at leaſt it may be aſſerted, that there is no other mode of exerciſing our charity, in which large ſums can be diſtributed without a greater chance of producing evil than good.

The diſcretionary power of giving or withholding relief, which is, to a certain extent, veſted in pariſh officers and juſtices, is of a very different nature, and will have a very different effect, from the diſcrimination which may be exerciſed by voluntary charity. Every man in this country, under certain circumſtances, is entitled by law to pariſh aſſiſtance; and unleſs his diſqualification be clearly proved, has a right to complain if it be withheld. The inquiries neceſſary to ſettle this point, and alſo the extent of the relief to be granted, too often produce evaſion and lying on the part of the petitioner, and afford an opening to partiality and oppreſſion in the overſeer. If the propoſed relief be given, it is of courſe received with unthankfulneſs; and if it be denied, the party generally thinks himſelf ſeverely aggrieved, and feels reſentment and indignation at his treatment.

In the diſtribution of voluntary charity, nothing of this kind can take place. The perſon who receives it, is made the proper ſubject of the pleaſurable ſenſation of gratitude; and thoſe who do not receive it, cannot poſſibly conceive themſelves, in the ſlighteſt degree, injured. Every man has a right to do what he will with his own; and cannot, in juſtice, be called upon to render a reaſon why he gives in the one caſe, and abſtains from it in the other. This kind of deſpotic power, eſſential to voluntary charity, gives the greateſt facility to the ſelection of worthy objects of relief, without being accompanied by any ill conſequences; and has further a moſt beneficial

beneficial effect from the degree of uncertainty which muſt neceſſarily be attached to it. It is, in the higheſt degree, important to the general happineſs of the poor, that no man ſhould look to charity, as a fund on which he may confidently depend. He ſhould be taught that his own exertions, his own induſtry and foreſight, were his only juſt ground of dependence; that if theſe failed, aſſiſtance in his diſtreſſes could only be the ſubject of rational hope; and that even the foundation of this hope muſt be in his own good conduct, and the conſciouſneſs that he had not involved himſelf in theſe difficulties by his indolence or imprudence.

That, in the diſtribution of our charity, we are under a ſtrong moral obligation to inculcate this leſſon on the poor, by a proper diſcrimination, is a truth, of which I cannot feel a doubt. If all could be completely relieved, and poverty baniſhed from the country, even at the expence of three-fourths of the fortunes of the rich, I would be the laſt to ſay a ſingle ſyllable againſt relieving all, and making the degree of diſtreſs alone the meaſure of our bounty. But as experience has proved, I believe without a ſingle exception, that poverty and miſery have always increaſed in proportion to the quantity of indiſcriminate charity; are we not bound to infer, reaſoning as we uſually do from the laws of nature, that it is an intimation, that ſuch a mode of diſtribution is not the proper office of benevolence.

The laws of nature ſay, with St. Paul, "If a man will not work, "neither ſhall he eat." They alſo ſay, that he is not raſhly to truſt to Providence. They appear indeed to be conſtant and uniform for the expreſs purpoſe of telling him what he is to truſt to, and that if he marry, without being able to ſupport a family, he muſt expect ſevere want. Theſe intimations appear from the conſtitution of human nature to be abſolutely neceſſary, and to have a ſtrikingly beneficial tendency. If in the direction either of our publick or our private charity, we ſay, that though a man will not work, yet he ſhall eat; and though he marry, without being able to ſupport a family, yet

yet his family ſhall be ſupported; it is evident that we do not merely endeavour to mitigate ſome of the partial evils ariſing from general laws, but regularly and ſyſtematically to counteract the obviouſly beneficial effects of theſe general laws themſelves. And we cannot eaſily conceive, that the Deity ſhould implant any paſſion in the human breaſt for ſuch a purpoſe.

In the great courſe of human events, the beſt-founded expectations will ſometimes be diſappointed; and induſtry, prudence, and virtue, not only fail of their juſt reward, but be involved in unmerited calamities. Thoſe who are thus ſuffering in ſpite of the beſt-directed endeavours to avoid it, and from cauſes which they could not be expected to foreſee, are the genuine objects of charity. In relieving theſe, we exerciſe the appropriate office of benevolence, that of mitigating ſome of the partial evils ariſing from general laws; and in this direction of our charity, therefore, we need not apprehend any ill conſequences. Such objects ought to be relieved according to our means liberally and adequately, even though the worthleſs were ſtarving.

When indeed, this firſt claim on our benevolence was ſatisfied, we might then turn our attention to the idle and improvident: but the intereſts of human happineſs moſt clearly require, that the relief which we afford them ſhould be very ſcanty. We may perhaps take upon ourſelves, with great caution, to mitigate, in ſome degree, the puniſhments which they are ſuffering from the laws of nature; but on no account to remove them entirely. They are deſervedly at the bottom, in the ſcale of ſociety; and, if we raiſe them from this ſituation, we not only palpably defeat the end of benevolence, but commit a moſt glaring injuſtice to thoſe who are above them. They ſhould on no account be enabled to command ſo much of the neceſſaries of life, as can be obtained by the worſt-paid common labour. The browneſt bread, with the coarſeſt and ſcantieſt apparel, is the utmoſt which they ſhould have the means of purchaſing.

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It is evident that theſe reaſonings do not apply to thoſe caſes of urgent diſtreſs ariſing from diſaſtrous accidents, unconnected with habits of indolence and improvidence. If a man break a leg or an arm, we are not to ſtop to inquire into his moral character before we lend him our aſſiſtance; but in this caſe we are perfectly conſiſtent, and the touchſtone of utility completely juſtifies our conduct. By affording the moſt indiſcriminate aſſiſtance in this way, we are in little danger of encouraging people to break their arms and legs. According to the touchſtone of utility, the high approbation which Chriſt gave to the conduct of the good Samaritan, who followed the immediate impulſe of his benevolence in relieving a ſtranger, in the urgent diſtreſs of an accident, does not, in the ſmalleſt degree, contradict the expreſſions of St. Paul, "If a man will not work, "neither ſhall he eat."

We are not, however, in any caſe, to loſe a preſent opportunity of doing good, from the mere ſuppoſition that we may poſſibly meet with a worthier object. In all doubtful caſes, it may ſafely be laid down as our duty, to follow the natural impulſe of our benevolence; but when, in fulfilling our obligation as reaſonable beings, to attend to the conſequences of our actions, we have, from our own experience and that of others, drawn the concluſion, that the exerciſe of our benevolence in one mode is prejudicial, and in another is beneficial, in its effects, we are certainly bound, as moral agents, to check our natural propenſities in the one direction, and to encourage them, and acquire the habits of exerciſing them, in the other.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Of the errors in different plans which have been propoſed, to improve the condition of the Poor.

In the diſtribution of our charity, or in any efforts which we may make to better the condition of the lower claſſes of ſociety, there is another point relating to the main argument of this work, to which we muſt be particularly attentive. We muſt on no account do any thing, which tends directly to encourage marriage; or to remove, in any regular and ſyſtematic manner, that inequality of circumſtances, which ought always to exiſt between the ſingle man and the man with a family. The writers who have beſt underſtood the principle of population, appear to me all to have fallen into very important errors on this point.

Sir James Steuart, who is fully aware of what he calls vicious procreation, and of the miſery that attends a redundant population, recommends, notwithſtanding, the general eſtabliſhment of foundling hoſpitals; the taking of children, under certain circumſtances, from their parents, and ſupporting them at the expence of the ſtate; and particularly laments the inequality of condition between the married and ſingle man, ſo ill-proportioned to their reſpective wants[a]. He forgets, in theſe inſtances, that if, without the encouragement to multiplication, of foundling hoſpitals, or of publick ſupport for the children of ſome married perſons; and under the diſcouragement

[a] Political Œconomy, vol. i. b. i. c. xii.

of

of great pecuniary diſadvantages on the ſide of the married man, population be ſtill redundant; which is evinced by the inability of the poor to maintain all their children; it is a clear proof, that the funds deſtined for the maintenance of labour cannot properly ſupport a greater population; and that, if further encouragements to multiplication be given, and diſcouragements removed, the reſult muſt be, an increaſe, ſomewhere or other, of that vicious procreation which he ſo juſtly reprobates.

Mr. Townſend, who, in his diſſertation on the Poor Laws, has treated this ſubject with great ſkill and perſpicuity, appears to me to conclude with a propoſal, which violates the principles on which he had reaſoned ſo well. He wiſhes to make the benefit clubs, or friendly ſocieties, which are now voluntarily eſtabliſhed in many pariſhes, compulſory and univerſal; and propoſes, as a regulation, that an unmarried man ſhould pay a fourth part of his wages, and a married man with four children, not more than a thirtieth part [a].

I muſt firſt remark, that the moment theſe ſubſcriptions are made compulſory, they will neceſſarily operate exactly like a direct tax upon labour, which, as Dr. Smith juſtly ſtates, will always be paid, and in a more expenſive manner, by the conſumer. The landed intereſt, therefore, would receive no relief from this plan, but would pay the ſame ſum as at preſent, only in the advanced price of labour and of commodities, inſtead of in the pariſh rates. A compulſory ſubſcription of this kind, would have almoſt all the ill effects of the preſent ſyſtem of relief, and, though altered in name, would ſtill poſſeſs the eſſential ſpirit of the poor laws.

Dean Tucker, in ſome remarks on a plan of the ſame kind, propoſed by Mr. Pew, obſerved, that, after much talk and reflection on the ſubject, he had come to the concluſion, that they muſt be voluntary aſſociations, and not compulſory aſſemblies. A voluntary ſubſcription is like a tax upon a luxury, and does not neceſſarily raiſe the price of labour.

[a] Diſſertation on the Poor Laws, p. 89. 2d edit. 1787.

It ſhould be recollected alſo, that in a voluntary aſſociation of a ſmall extent, over which each individual member can exerciſe a ſuperintendence, it is highly probable, that the original agreements will all be ſtrictly fulfilled, or if they be not, every man may, at leaſt, have the redreſs of withdrawing himſelf from the club. But in an univerſal compulſory ſubſcription, which muſt neceſſarily become a national concern, there would be no ſecurity whatever for the fulfilment of the original agreements; and when the funds failed, which they certainly would do, when all the idle and diſſolute were included, inſtead of ſome of the moſt induſtrious and provident, as at preſent, a larger ſubſcription would probably be demanded, and no man would have the right to refuſe it. The evil would thus go on increaſing as the poor rates do now. If, indeed, the aſſiſtance given were always ſpecific, and on no account to be increaſed, as in the preſent voluntary aſſociations, this would certainly be a ſtriking advantage; but the ſame advantage might be completely attained by a ſimilar diſtribution of the ſums collected by the pariſh rates. On the whole, therefore, it appears to me, that, if the friendly ſocieties were made univerſal and compulſory, it would be merely a different mode of collecting pariſh rates; and any particular mode of diſtribution, might be as well adopted upon one ſyſtem as upon the other.

With regard to the propoſal of making ſingle men pay a fourth part of their earnings weekly, and married men with families only a thirtieth part, it would evidently operate as a heavy fine upon bachelors, and a high bounty upon children; and is therefore directly adverſe to the general ſpirit in which Mr. Townſend's excellent diſſertation is written. Before he introduces this propoſal, he lays it down as a general principle, that no ſyſtem for the relief of the poor can be good, which does not regulate population by the demand for labour [a]; but this propoſal clearly tends to encourage population without any reference to the demand for labour, and

[a] P. 84.

puniſhes a young man for his prudence in refraining from marriage at a time, perhaps, when this demand is ſo ſmall, that the wages of labour are totally inadequate to the ſupport of a family. I ſhould be averſe to any compulſory ſyſtem whatever for the poor; but, certainly, if ſingle men were compelled to pay a contribution for the future contingencies of the married ſtate, they ought, in juſtice, to receive a benefit, proportioned to the period of their privation; and the man who had contributed a fourth of his earnings for merely one year, ought not to be put upon a level with him who has contributed this proportion for ten years.

Arthur Young, in moſt of his works, appears clearly to underſtand the principle of population, and is fully aware of the evils which muſt neceſſarily reſult from an increaſe of people beyond the demand of labour, and the means of comfortable ſubſiſtence. In his tour through France, he has particularly laboured this point, and ſhewn moſt forcibly the miſery, which reſults, in that country, from the exceſs of population occaſioned by the too great diviſion of property. Such an increaſe, he juſtly calls, merely a multiplication of wretchedneſs. "Couples marry and procreate on the idea, not the reality, "of a maintenance; they increaſe beyond the demand of towns and "manufactures; and the conſequence is, diſtreſs, and numbers "dying of diſeaſes ariſing from inſufficient nouriſhment [a]."

In another place he quotes a very ſenſible paſſage from the report of the committee of mendicity, which, alluding to the evils of over-population, concludes thus, "Il faudroit enfin neceſſairement que "le prix de travail baiſſat par la plus grand concurrence de travail-"leurs, d'ou reſulteroit un indigence complette pour ceux qui ne "trouveroient pas de travail, et une ſubſiſtence incomplette pour "ceux mêmes aux quels il ne ſeroit pas refuſé." And in remarking upon this paſſage, he obſerves, "France itſelf affords an irrefragable "proof of the truth of theſe ſentiments; for, I am clearly of opinion,

[a] Travels in France, vol. i. c. xii. p. 408.

"from

"from the obſervations I made in every province of the kingdom, "that her population is ſo much beyond the proportion of her "induſtry and labour, that ſhe would be much more powerful and "infinitely more flouriſhing, if ſhe had five or ſix millions leſs of "inhabitants. From her too great population, ſhe preſents, in "every quarter, ſuch ſpectacles of wretchedneſs, as are abſolutely "inconſiſtent with that degree of national felicity, which ſhe was "capable of attaining, even under the old government. A traveller, "much leſs attentive than I was to objects of this kind, muſt ſee "at every turn moſt unequivocal ſigns of diſtreſs. That theſe "ſhould exiſt, no one can wonder, who conſiders the price of "labour and of proviſions, and the miſery into which a ſmall riſe "in the price of wheat throws the lower claſſes [a]."

"If you would ſee," he ſays, "a diſtrict with as little diſtreſs "in it as is conſiſtent with the political ſyſtem of the old govern-"ment of France, you muſt aſſuredly go where there are no little "properties at all. You muſt viſit the great farms in Beauce, "Picardy, part of Normandy, and Artois, and there you will "find no more population than what is regularly employed and "regularly paid; and if in ſuch diſtricts, you ſhould, contrary to "this rule, meet with much diſtreſs, it is twenty to one, but that "it is in a pariſh which has ſome commons, which tempt the "poor to have cattle—to have property—and in conſequence miſery. "When you are engaged in this political tour, finiſh it by ſeeing "England, and I will ſhew you a ſet of peaſants well clothed, "well nouriſhed, tolerably drunken from ſuperfluity, well lodged, "and at their eaſe; and yet, amongſt them, not one in a thouſand "has either land or cattle [b]." A little further on, alluding to encouragements to marriage, he ſays of France; "the predominant "evil of the kingdom is the having ſo great a population, that ſhe "can neither employ nor feed it; why then encourage marriage?

[a] Travels in France, vol. i. c. xvii. p. 469.

[b] Id. p. 471.

" would you breed more people, becauſe you have more already
" than you know what to do with? you have ſo great a competition
" for food, that your people are ſtarving or in miſery; and you
" would encourage the production of more to encreaſe that com-
" petition. It may almoſt be queſtioned whether the contrary
" policy ought not to be embraced? whether difficulties ſhould not
" be laid on the marriage of thoſe who cannot make it appear that
" they have the proſpect of maintaining the children that ſhall be
" the fruit of it? But why encourage marriages which are ſure to
" take place in all ſituations in which they ought to take place?
" There is no inſtance to be found of plenty of regular employment
" being firſt eſtabliſhed where marriages have not followed in a
" proportionate degree. The policy therefore, at beſt, is uſeleſs,
" and may be pernicious."

After having once ſo clearly underſtood the principle of population as to expreſs theſe and many other ſentiments on the ſubject, equally juſt and important, it is not a little ſurpriſing to find Mr. Young in a pamphlet, intitled, *The Queſtion of Scarcity plainly ſtated, and Remedies conſidered, (publiſhed in* 1800), obſerving, that " the means
" which would of all others perhaps tend moſt ſurely to prevent
" future ſcarcities ſo oppreſſive to the poor as the preſent, would be
" to ſecure to every country labourer in the kingdom, that has three
" children and upwards, half an acre of land for potatoes, and
" graſs enough to feed one or two cows[a]. * * * * If each had
" his ample potatoe ground and a cow, the price of wheat would be
" of little more conſequence to them, than it is to their brethren in
" Ireland."

" Every one admits the ſyſtem to be good, but the queſtion is,
" how to enforce it."

I was by no means aware, that the excellence of the ſyſtem had been ſo generally admitted. For myſelf I ſtrongly proteſt againſt being included in the general term of *every one*, as I ſhould conſider

[a] P. 77.

the

the adoption of this ſyſtem, as the moſt cruel and fatal blow to the happineſs of the lower claſſes of people in this country, that they had ever received.

Mr. Young, however, goes on to ſay, that, " The magnitude of
" the object ſhould make us diſregard any difficulties, but ſuch as
" are inſuperable: none ſuch would probably occur if ſomething
" like the following means were reſorted to:

" I. Where there are common paſtures, to give to a labouring
" man having children, a right to demand an allotment pro-
" portioned to the family, to be ſet out by the pariſh officers, &c.
" * * * and a cow bought. Such labourer to have both for life,
" paying 4os. a year till the price of the cow, &c. was reimburſed:
" at his death to go to the labourer having the moſt numerous
" family, for life, paying ſhillings a week to the widow of his
" predeceſſor.

" II. Labourers thus demanding allotments by reaſon of their
" families to have land aſſigned, and cows bought, till the proportion
" ſo allotted amounts to one of the extent of the common.

" III. In pariſhes where there are no commons, and the quality
" of the land adequate, every cottager having children, to
" whoſe cottage there is not within a given time land ſufficient for
" a cow, and half an acre of potatoes, aſſigned at a fair average
" rent, ſubject to appeal to the ſeſſions, to have a right to demand
" ſhillings per week of the pariſh for every child, till ſuch
" land be aſſigned; leaving to landlords and tenants the means of
" doing it. Cows to be found by the pariſh, under an annual
" reimburſement[a]."

" The great object is, by means of milk and potatoes, to take the
" maſs of the country poor from the conſumption of wheat, and to
" give them ſubſtitutes equally wholeſome and nouriſhing, and as
" independent of ſcarcities, natural and artificial, as the providence
" of the Almighty will admit[b]."

[a] P. 78. [b] P. 79.

Would

Would not this plan operate, in the moſt direct manner, as an encouragement to marriage and bounty on children, which Mr. Young has with ſo much juſtice reprobated in his travels in France? and does he ſeriouſly think that it would be an eligible thing, to feed the maſs of the people in this country on milk and potatoes, and make them as independent of the price of corn, and of the demand for labour, as their brethren in Ireland?

The ſpecifick cauſe of the poverty and miſery of the lower claſſes of people in France and Ireland, is, that, from the extreme ſubdiviſion of property in the one country, and the facility of obtaining a potatoe ground in the other, a population is brought into exiſtence, which is not demanded by the quantity of capital and employment in the country; and the conſequence of which muſt, therefore, neceſſarily be, as is very juſtly expreſſed in the report of the committee of mendicity before mentioned, to lower in general the price of labour by too great competition; from which muſt reſult complete indigence to thoſe who cannot find employment, and an incomplete ſubſiſtence even to thoſe who can.

The obvious tendency of Mr. Young's plan, is, by encouraging marriage and furniſhing a cheap food, independent of the price of corn, and, of courſe, of the demand for labour, to place the lower claſſes of people exactly in this ſituation.

It may perhaps be ſaid, that our poor laws, at preſent, regularly encourage marriage and children, by diſtributing relief in proportion to the ſize of families; and that this plan, which is propoſed as a ſubſtitute, would merely do the ſame thing in a leſs objectionable manner. But ſurely, in endeavouring to get rid of the evil of the poor laws, we ought not to retain their moſt pernicious quality: and Mr. Young muſt know, as well as I do, that the principal reaſon why poor laws have invariably been found ineffectual in the relief of the poor, is, that they tend to encourage a population which is not regulated by the demand for labour. Mr. Young himſelf, indeed, expreſsly takes notice of this effect in England, and obſerves, that

that notwithſtanding the unrivalled proſperity of her manufactures, "population is ſometimes too active, as we ſee clearly by the "dangerous increaſe of poor's rates in country villages [a]."

But the fact is, that Mr. Young's plan would be incomparably more powerful in encouraging a population beyond the demand for labour, than our preſent poor laws. A laudable repugnance to the receiving of pariſh relief, ariſing partly from a ſpirit of independence not yet extinct, and partly, from the diſagreeable mode in which the relief is given, undoubtedly deters many from marrying with a certainty of falling on the pariſh; and the proportion of marriages to the whole population, which has before been noticed, clearly proves that the poor laws, though they have undoubtedly a conſiderable influence in this reſpect, do not encourage marriage ſo much as might be expected from theory. But the caſe would be very different, if, when a labourer had an early marriage in contemplation, the terrific forms of workhouſes and pariſh officers, which might diſturb his reſolution, were to be exchanged for the faſcinating viſions of land and cows. If the love of property, as Mr. Young has repeatedly ſaid, will make a man do much, it would be rather ſtrange if it would not make him marry; an action to which, it appears from experience, that he is by no means diſinclined.

The population which would be thus called into being, would be ſupported by the extended cultivation of potatoes, and would of courſe go on without any reference to the demand for labour. In the preſent ſtate of things, notwithſtanding the flouriſhing condition of our manufactures, and the numerous checks to our population, there is no practical problem ſo difficult as to find employment for the poor; but this difficulty would evidently be aggravated a hundred fold, under the circumſtances here ſuppoſed.

In Ireland, or in any other country, where the common food is

[a] Travels in France, vol. i. c. xvii. p. 470.

potatoes, and every man who wiſhes to marry may obtain a piece of ground, ſufficient, when planted with this root, to ſupport a family, prizes may be given till the treaſury is exhauſted, for eſſays on the beſt means of employing the poor; but till ſome ſtop to the progreſs of population, naturally ariſing from this ſtate of things, take place, the object in view is really a phyſical impoſſibility[a].

Mr. Young has intimated, that if the people were fed upon milk and potatoes, they would be more independent of ſcarcities than at preſent; but why this ſhould be the caſe I really cannot comprehend. Undoubtedly, people who live upon potatoes will not be much affected by a ſcarcity of wheat; but is there any contradiction in the ſuppoſition of a failure in the crops of potatoes? I believe it is generally underſtood, that they are more liable to ſuffer damage during the winter than grain. From the much greater quantity of food, yielded by a given piece of land, when planted with potatoes, than under any other kind of cultivation, it would naturally happen, that, for ſome time after the introduction of this root, as the general food of the lower claſſes of people, a greater quantity would be grown than was demanded, and they would live in plenty. Mr. Young, in his travels through France, obſerves, that, "In diſtricts which contain immenſe "quantities of waſte land of a certain degree of fertility, as in the "roots of the Pyrenees, belonging to communities ready to ſell them, "economy and induſtry, animated with the views of ſettling and "marrying, flouriſh greatly; in ſuch neighbourhoods ſomething "like an American increaſe takes place, and, if the land be cheap, "little diſtreſs is found. But as procreation goes on rapidly under "ſuch circumſtances, the leaſt check to ſubſiſtence is attended with

[a] Dr. Crumpe's prize eſſay on the beſt means of finding employment for the people, is an excellent treatiſe, and contains much valuable information; but, till the capital of the country is better proportioned to its population, it is perfectly chimerical to expect ſucceſs in any project of the kind. I am alſo ſtrongly diſpoſed to believe that the indolent and turbulent habits of the lower Iriſh can never be corrected, while the potatoe ſyſtem enables them to increaſe ſo much beyond the regular demand for labour.

"great

"great miſery; as waſtes becoming dearer, or the beſt portions being "ſold, or difficulties ariſing in the acquiſition; all which circum- "ſtances I met with in thoſe mountains. The moment that any "impediment happens the diſtreſs of ſuch people will be propor- "tioned to the activity and vigour which had animated population[a]."

This deſcription will apply exactly to what would take place in this country, on the diſtribution of ſmall portions of land to the common people, and the introduction of potatoes as their general food. For a time, the change might appear beneficial, and, of courſe, the idea of property would make it, at firſt, highly acceptable to the poor; but as Mr. Young, in another place, ſays, "You preſently "arrive at the limit, beyond which, the earth, cultivate it as you "pleaſe, will feed no more mouths; yet thoſe ſimple manners which "inſtigate to marriage ſtill continue; what then is the conſequence "but the moſt dreadful miſery imaginable[b]?"

When the commons were all divided and difficulties began to occur in procuring potatoe grounds, the habit of early marriages which had been introduced, would occaſion the moſt complicated diſtreſs; and when, from the increaſing population, and diminiſhing ſources of ſubſiſtence, the average growth of potatoes was not more than the average conſumption, a ſcarcity of potatoes would be, in every reſpect, as probable, as a ſcarcity of wheat at preſent, and when it did arrive, it would be, beyond all compariſon, more dreadful.

When the common people of a country live principally upon the deareſt grain, as they do in England on wheat, they have great reſources in a ſcarcity; and barley, oats, rice, cheap ſoups, and potatoes, all preſent themſelves as leſs expenſive, yet, at the ſame time, wholeſome means of nouriſhment; but when their habitual food is the loweſt in this ſcale, they appear to be abſolutely without reſource, except in the bark of trees, like the poor Swedes; and a

[a] Travels in France, vol. i. c. xvii. p. 409. [b] Ibid.

great portion of them muſt neceſſarily be ſtarved. Wheaten bread, roaſt beef, and turbot, which might not fail at the ſame time, are indeed, in themſelves, unexceptionable ſubſtitutes for potatoes, and would probably be accepted as ſuch, without murmuring by the common people; but the misfortune is, that a large population which had been habitually ſupported by milk and potatoes, would find it difficult to obtain theſe ſubſtitutes in ſufficient quantities, even if the whole benevolence of the kingdom were called into action for the purpoſe.

The wages of labour will always be regulated by the proportion of the ſupply to the demand. And as, upon the potatoe ſyſtem, a ſupply more than adequate to the demand would very ſoon take place, and this ſupply might be continued at a very cheap rate, on account of the cheapneſs of the food which would furniſh it, the common price of labour would ſoon be regulated principally by the price of potatoes, inſtead of the price of wheat, as at preſent; and the rags and wretched cabins of Ireland would follow of courſe.

When the demand for labour occaſionally exceeds the ſupply, and wages are regulated by the price of the deareſt grain, they will generally be ſuch as to yield ſomething beſides mere food, and the common people may be able to obtain decent houſes and decent clothing. If the contraſt between the ſtate of the French and Engliſh labourers which Mr. Young has drawn, be in any degree near the truth, the advantage on the ſide of England has been occaſioned, preciſely and excluſively, by theſe two circumſtances; and if, by the adoption of milk and potatoes as the general food of the common people, theſe circumſtances were totally altered, ſo as to make the ſupply of labour conſtantly in a great exceſs above the demand for it, and regulate wages by the price of the cheapeſt food, the advantage would be immediately loſt, and no efforts of benevolence could prevent the moſt general and abject poverty.

Upon the ſame principle, it would by no means be eligible that the cheap ſoups of Count Rumford ſhould be adopted as the general

general food of the common people. They are excellent inventions for publick inſtitutions, and as occaſional reſources; but if they were once univerſally adopted by the poor, it would be impoſſible to prevent the price of labour from being regulated by them; and the labourer, though at firſt he might have more to ſpare for other expences, beſides food, would ultimately have much leſs to ſpare than before.

The deſirable thing, with a view to the happineſs of the common people, ſeems to be, that their habitual food ſhould be dear, and their wages regulated by it; but that, in a ſcarcity, or other occaſional diſtreſs, the cheaper food ſhould be readily and cheerfully adopted[a]. With a view of rendering this tranſition eaſier, and at the ſame time of making a uſeful diſtinction between theſe who are dependent on pariſh relief, and thoſe who are not, I ſhould think that one plan which Mr. Young propoſes, would be extremely eligible. This is "to paſs an act prohibiting relief, ſo far as ſub-"ſiſtence is concerned, in any other manner than by potatoes, rice, "and ſoup, not merely as a meaſure of the moment, but perma-"nently[b]." I do not think that this plan would neceſſarily introduce theſe articles as the common food of the lower claſſes; and if it merely made the tranſition to them in periods of diſtreſs eaſier, and, at the ſame time, drew a more marked line than at preſent, between dependence and independence, it would have a very beneficial effect.

As it is acknowledged that the introduction of milk and potatoes, or of cheap ſoups, as the general food of the lower claſſes of people,

[a] It is certainly to be wiſhed, that every cottage in England ſhould have a garden to it, well ſtocked with vegetables. A little variety of food is in every point of view highly uſeful. Potatoes are undoubtedly a moſt valuable ſubſidiary, though I ſhould be very ſorry ever to ſee them the principal dependence of our labourers.

[b] Queſtion of Scarcity, &c. p. 80. This might be done, at leaſt, with regard to workhouſes. In aſſiſting the poor at their own homes, it might be ſubject to ſome practical difficulties.

would lower the price of labour, perhaps ſome cold politician might propoſe to adopt the ſyſtem, with a view of underſelling foreigners in the markets of Europe. I ſhould not envy the feelings which could ſuggeſt ſuch a propoſal. I really cannot conceive any thing much more deteſtable than the idea of knowingly condemning the labourers of this country to the rags and wretched cabins of Ireland, for the purpoſe of ſelling a few more broadcloths and calicoes[a]. The wealth and power of nations are, after all, only deſirable as they contribute to happineſs. In this point of view, I ſhould be very far from undervaluing them, conſidering them, in general, as abſolutely neceſſary means to attain the end; but if any

[a] In this obſervation I have not the leaſt idea of alluding to Mr. Young, who, I firmly believe, ardently wiſhes to ameliorate the condition of the lower claſſes of people, though I do not think that his plan would effect the object in view. He either did not ſee thoſe conſequences which I apprehend from it; or he has a better opinion of the happineſs of the common people in Ireland, than I have. In his Iriſh tour he ſeemed much ſtruck with the plenty of potatoes which they poſſeſſed, and the abſence of all apprehenſion of want. Had he travelled in 1800 and 1801, his impreſſions would by all accounts have been very different. From the facility which has hitherto prevailed in Ireland of procuring potatoe grounds, ſcarcities have certainly been rare, and all the effects of the ſyſtem have not yet been felt, though certainly enough to make it appear very far from deſirable.

Mr. Young has ſince purſued his idea more in detail, in a pamphlet, entitled, *An Inquiry into the Propriety of applying Waſtes to the better Maintenance and Support of the Poor.* But the impreſſion on my mind is ſtill the ſame; and it appears to me calculated to aſſimilate the condition of the labourers of this country to that of the lower claſſes of the Iriſh. Mr. Young ſeems, in a moſt unaccountable manner, to have forgotten all his general principles on this ſubject. He has treated the queſtion of a proviſion for the poor, as if it was merely, How to provide in the cheapeſt and beſt manner for a *given number* of people? If this had been the ſole queſtion, it would never have taken ſo many hundred years to reſolve. But the real queſtion is, How to provide for thoſe who are in want, in ſuch a manner, as to prevent a continual accumulation of their numbers? and it will readily occur to the reader, that a plan of giving them land and cows cannot promiſe much ſucceſs in this reſpect. If, after all the commons had been divided, the poor laws were ſtill to continue in force, no good reaſon can be aſſigned, why the rates ſhould not in a few years be as high as they are at preſent, independently of all that had been expended in the purchaſe of land and ſtock.

particular

particular caſe ſhould occur, in which they appeared to be in direct oppoſition to each other, we cannot rationally doubt which ought to be poſtponed.

Fortunately, however, even on the narroweſt political principles, the adoption of ſuch a ſyſtem would not anſwer. It has always been obſerved, that thoſe who work chiefly on their own property, work very indolently and unwillingly when employed for others; and it muſt neceſſarily happen, when, from the general adoption of a very cheap food, the population of a country increaſes conſiderably beyond the demand for labour, that habits of idleneſs and turbulence will be generated, moſt peculiarly unfavourable to a flouriſhing ſtate of manufactures. In ſpite of the cheapneſs of labour in Ireland, there are few manufactures which can be prepared in that country for foreign ſale ſo cheap as in England: and this is evidently owing to the want of thoſe induſtrious habits which can only be produced by regular employment.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Of the neceſſity of general principles on this ſubject.

It has been obſerved by Hume, that of all ſciences, there is none, where firſt appearances are more deceitful than in politicks[a]. The remark is undoubtedly very juſt, and is moſt peculiarly applicable to that department of the ſcience, which relates to the modes of improving the condition of the lower claſſes of ſociety.

We are continually hearing declamations againſt theory and theoriſts, by men who pride themſelves upon the diſtinction of being practical. It muſt be acknowledged that bad theories are very bad things, and the authors of them uſeleſs, and ſometimes pernicious members of ſociety. But theſe advocates of practice do not ſeem to be aware, that they themſelves very often come under this deſcription, and that a great part of them may be claſſed among the moſt miſchievous theoriſts of their time. When a man faithfully relates any facts which have come within the ſcope of his own obſervation, however confined it may have been, he undoubtedly adds to the ſum of general knowledge, and confers a benefit on ſociety. But when, from this confined experience, from the management of his own little farm, or the details of the workhouſe in his neighbourhood, he draws a general inference, as is very frequently the caſe, he then at once erects himſelf into a theoriſt; and is the more dangerous; becauſe experience being the only juſt

[a] Eſſay xi. vol. i. p. 431. 8vo.

foundation

foundation for theory, people are often caught merely by the ſound of the word, and do not ſtop to make the diſtinction between that partial experience which, on ſuch ſubjects, is no foundation whatever for a juſt theory, and that general experience, on which alone a juſt theory can be founded.

There are, perhaps, few ſubjects, on which human ingenuity has been more exerted, than in the endeavour to ameliorate the condition of the poor; and there is certainly no ſubject in which it has ſo completely failed. The queſtion between the theoriſt who calls himſelf practical, and the genuine theoriſt, is, whether this ſhould prompt us to look into all the holes and corners of workhouſes, and content ourſelves with mulcting the pariſh officers for their waſte of cheeſe parings and candle ends, and with diſtributing more ſoups and potatoes; or to recur to general principles, which ſhew us at once the cauſe of the failure, and prove that the ſyſtem has been from the beginning radically erroneous. There is no ſubject to which general principles have been ſo ſeldom applied; and yet, in the whole compaſs of human knowledge, I doubt if there be one, in which it is ſo dangerous to loſe ſight of them; becauſe the partial and immediate effects of a particular mode of giving aſſiſtance are ſo often directly oppoſite to the general and permanent effects.

It has been obſerved in particular diſtricts, where cottagers are poſſeſſed of ſmall pieces of land, and are in the habit of keeping cows, that, during the late ſcarcities, ſome of them were able to ſupport themſelves without pariſh aſſiſtance, and others with comparatively little[a].

According to the partial view in which this ſubject has been always contemplated, a general inference has been drawn from ſuch inſtances, that, if we could place all our labourers in a ſimilar ſituation, they would all be equally comfortable, and equally inde-

[a] See an Inquiry into the State of Cottagers in the Counties of Lincoln and Rutland by Robert Gourlay. Annals of Agriculture, vol. xxxvii. p. 514.

pendent

pendent of the pariſh. This is an inference, however, that by no means follows. The advantage which cottagers, who at preſent keep cows, enjoy, ariſes in a great meaſure from its being peculiar; and would be deſtroyed if it were made general.

A farmer or gentleman living in a grazing country has, we will ſuppoſe, a certain number of cottages on his farm. Being a liberal man, and liking to ſee all the people about him comfortable, he may join a piece of land to his cottages ſufficient to keep one or two cows, and give, beſides, high wages. His labourers will of courſe live in plenty, and be able to rear up large families; but a grazing farm requires few hands; and though the maſter may chooſe to pay thoſe that he employs well, he will not probably wiſh to have more labourers on his farm than his work requires. He does not therefore build more houſes; and the children of the labourers whom he employs muſt evidently emigrate and ſettle in other countries. While ſuch a ſyſtem continues peculiar to certain families, or certain diſtricts, no great inconveniencies ariſe from it to the community in general; and it cannot be doubted, that the individual labourers employed on theſe farms are in an enviable ſituation, and ſuch as we might naturally wiſh was the lot of all our labourers. But it is perfectly clear, that ſuch a ſyſtem could not, in the nature of things, poſſeſs the ſame advantages, if it were made general; becauſe there would then be no countries to which the children could emigrate with any proſpect of finding work. Population would evidently increaſe beyond the demand of towns and manufactories, and univerſal poverty muſt neceſſarily enſue.

It ſhould be obſerved alſo, that one of the reaſons, why the labourers who at preſent keep cows, are ſo comfortable, is, that they are able to make a conſiderable profit of the milk which they do not uſe themſelves; an advantage which would evidently be very much diminiſhed if the ſyſtem were univerſal. And though they were certainly able to ſtruggle through the late ſcarcities with leſs aſſiſtance than their neighbours,

neighbours, as might naturally be expected, from their having other reſources beſides the article which in thoſe individual years was ſcarce; yet if the ſyſtem were univerſal, there can be no reaſon aſſigned, why they would not be ſubject to ſuffer as much from a ſcarcity of graſs and a mortality among cows, as our common labourers do now from a ſcarcity of wheat. We ſhould be extremely cautious therefore of truſting to ſuch appearances, and of drawing a general inference from this kind of partial experience.

The main principle on which the ſociety for increaſing the comforts, and bettering the condition of the poor, profeſſes to proceed, is excellent. To give effect to that maſterſpring of induſtry, the deſire of bettering our condition [a], is the true mode of improving the ſtate of the lower claſſes; and we may ſafely agree with Mr. Bernard, in one of his able prefaces, that whatever encourages and promotes habits of induſtry, prudence, foreſight, virtue, and cleanlineſs, among the poor, is beneficial to them and to the country; and whatever removes or diminiſhes the incitements to any of theſe qualities, is detrimental to the ſtate, and pernicious to the individual [b].

Mr. Bernard, indeed, himſelf, ſeems in general to be fully aware of the difficulties which the ſociety has to contend with in the accompliſhment of its object. But ſtill it appears to be in ſome danger of falling into the error before alluded to, of drawing general inferences from inſufficient experience. Without adverting to the plans, reſpecting cheaper foods and pariſh ſhops, recommended by individuals, the beneficial effects of which depend entirely upon their being peculiar to certain families or certain pariſhes, and would be loſt if they were general, by lowering the wages of labour; I ſhall only notice one obſervation of a more comprehenſive nature, which occurs in the preface to the ſecond volume of the Reports. It is there remarked, that the experience of the ſociety ſeemed to

[a] Preface to vol. ii. of the Reports. [b] Preface to vol. iii. of the Reports.

warrant the concluſion, that the beſt mode of relieving the poor, was, by aſſiſting them at their own homes, and placing out their children as ſoon as poſſible in different employments, apprentice-ſhips, &c. I really believe that this is the beſt, and it is certainly the moſt agreeable mode, in which occaſional and diſcriminate aſſiſtance can be given. But it is evident, that it muſt be done with caution, and cannot be adopted as a general principle, and made the foundation of univerſal practice. It is open exactly to the ſame objection as the cow ſyſtem in paſture countries which has juſt been noticed, and that part of the act of the 43d of Elizabeth which directs the overſeers to employ and provide for the children of the poor. A particular pariſh, where all the children, as ſoon as they were of a proper age, were taken from their parents, and placed out in proper ſituations, might be very comfortable; but if the ſyſtem were general, and the poor ſaw that all their children would be thus provided for, every employment would preſently be overſtocked with hands, and the conſequence need not be again repeated.

Nothing can be more clear, than that it is within the power of money, and of the exertions of the rich, adequately to relieve a particular family, a particular pariſh, and even a particular diſtrict. But it will be equally clear, if we reflect a moment on the ſubject, that it is totally out of their power to relieve the whole country in the ſame way; at leaſt, without providing a regular vent for the overflowing numbers in emigration, or without the prevalence of a particular virtue among the poor, which the diſtribution of this aſſiſtance tends obviouſly to diſcourage.

Even induſtry itſelf, is, in this reſpect, not very different from money. A man who poſſeſſes a certain portion of it, above what is uſually poſſeſſed by his neighbours, will, in the actual ſtate of things, be almoſt ſure of a competent livelihood; but if all his neighbours were to become at once as induſtrious as himſelf, the abſolute portion of induſtry which he before poſſeſſed would no longer be a ſecurity

ſecurity againſt want. Hume fell into a very great error, when he aſſerted that "almoſt all the moral, as well as natural evils of "human life, ariſe from idleneſs;" and for the cure of theſe ills, required only that the whole ſpecies ſhould poſſeſs naturally an equal diligence, with that which many individuals are able to attain by habit and reflection[a]. It is evident that this given degree of induſtry poſſeſſed by the whole ſpecies, if not combined with another virtue of which he takes no notice, would totally fail of reſcuing ſociety from want and miſery, and would ſcarcely remove a ſingle moral or phyſical evil, of all thoſe to which he alludes.

I am aware of an objection, which will, with great appearance of juſtice, be urged againſt the general tenour of theſe reaſonings. It will be ſaid, that to argue thus, is at once to object to every mode of aſſiſting the poor, as it is impoſſible, in the nature of things, to aſſiſt people individually, without altering their relative ſituation in ſociety, and proportionally depreſſing others; and that as thoſe who have families, are the perſons naturally moſt ſubject to diſtreſs, and as we are certainly not called upon to aſſiſt thoſe who do not want our aid, we muſt neceſſarily, if we act at all, relieve thoſe who have children, and thus encourage marriage and population.

I have already obſerved, however, and I here repeat it again, that the general principles on theſe ſubjects ought not to be puſhed too far, though they ſhould always be kept in view; and that many caſes may occur, in which the good reſulting from the relief of the preſent diſtreſs, may more than overbalance the evil to be apprehended from the remote conſequence.

All relief in inſtances of diſtreſs, not ariſing from idle and improvident habits, clearly comes under this deſcription; and in general it may be obſerved, that it is only that kind of ſyſtematic and certain relief, on which the poor can confidently depend, whatever may be their conduct, that violates general principles, in ſuch

[a] Dialogues on Natural Religion, Part xi. p. 212.

a manner, as to make it clear that the general conſequence is worſe than the particular evil.

Independently of this diſcriminate and occaſional aſſiſtance, the beneficial effects of which I have fully allowed in a preceding chapter, I have before endeavoured to ſhew, that much might be expected from a better and more general ſyſtem of education. Every thing that can be done in this way, has indeed a very peculiar value; becauſe education is one of thoſe advantages, which not only all may ſhare without interfering with each other, but the raiſing of one perſon may actually contribute to the raiſing of others. If, for inſtance, a man by education acquires that decent kind of pride, and thoſe juſter habits of thinking, which will prevent him from burdening ſociety with a family of children, which he cannot ſupport, his conduct, as far as an individual inſtance can go, tends evidently to improve the condition of his fellow labourers; and a contrary conduct from ignorance, would tend as evidently to depreſs it.

I cannot help thinking alſo, that ſomething might be done towards bettering the ſituation of the poor, by a general improvement of their cottages; if care were taken, at the ſame time, not to make them ſo large, as to allow of two families ſettling in them; and not to increaſe their number faſter than the demand for labour required. Perhaps one of the moſt ſalutary, and leaſt pernicious checks, to the frequency of early marriages in this country, is the difficulty of procuring a cottage, and the laudable habits which prompt a labourer rather to defer his marriage ſome years, in the expectation of a vacancy, than to content himſelf with a wretched mud cabin, like thoſe in Ireland [a].

Even

[a] Perhaps, however, this is not often left to his choice, on account of the fear which every pariſh has of increaſing its poor. There are many ways by which our poor laws operate in counteracting their firſt obvious tendency to increaſe population, and this is one

Even the cow ſyſtem, upon a more confined plan, might not be open to objection. With any view of making it a ſubſtitute for the Poor Laws, and of giving labourers a right to demand land and cows in proportion to their families; or of taking the common people from the conſumption of wheat, and feeding them on milk and potatoes; it appears to me, I confeſs, truly prepoſterous: but if it were ſo ordered as merely to provide a comfortable ſituation for the better and more induſtrious claſs of labourers, and to ſupply, at the ſame time, a very important want among the poor in general, that of milk for their children, I think that it would be extremely beneficial, and might be made a very powerful incitement to habits of induſtry, economy, and prudence. With this view, however, it is evident, that only a certain portion of the labourers in each pariſh could be embraced in the plan; that good conduct, and not mere diſtreſs, ſhould have the moſt valid claim to preference; that too much attention ſhould not be paid to the number of children; and that, univerſally, thoſe who had ſaved money enough for the purchaſe of a cow, ſhould be preferred, to thoſe who required to be furniſhed with one by the pariſh [a].

To facilitate the ſaving of ſmall ſums of money for this purpoſe, and encourage young labourers to economize their earnings with a view to a proviſion for marriage; it might be extremely uſeful to have country banks, where the ſmalleſt ſums would be received, and a fair intereſt paid for them. At preſent, the few labourers who ſave a little money, are often greatly at a loſs to know what to do

one of them. I have little doubt that it is almoſt excluſively owing to theſe counteracting cauſes, that we have been able to perſevere in this ſyſtem ſo long, and that the condition of the poor has not been ſo much injured by it as might have been expected.

[a] The act of Elizabeth which prohibited the building of cottages, unleſs four acres of land were annexed to them, is probably impracticable in a manufacturing country like England; but upon this principle, certainly the greateſt part of the poor might poſſeſs land; becauſe the difficulty of procuring ſuch cottages would always operate as a powerful check to their increaſe. The effect of ſuch a plan would be very different from that of Mr. Young's.

with

with it; and under ſuch circumſtances we cannot be much ſurpriſed that it ſhould ſometimes be ill employed, and laſt but a ſhort time. It would probably be eſſential to the ſucceſs of any plan of this kind, that the labourer ſhould be able to draw out his money whenever he wanted it, and have the moſt perfect liberty of diſpoſing of it in every reſpect as he pleaſed. Though we may regret, that money ſo hardly earned ſhould ſometimes be ſpent to little purpoſe; yet it ſeems to be a caſe in which we have no right to interfere; nor if we had, would it, in a general view, be advantageous; becauſe the knowledge of poſſeſſing this liberty would be of more uſe in encouraging the practice of ſaving, than any reſtriction of it, in preventing the miſuſe of money ſo ſaved.

One ſhould undoubtedly be extremely unwilling, not to make as much uſe as poſſible of that known ſtimulus to induſtry and economy, the deſire of, and the attachment to, property: but it ſhould be recollected, that the good effects of this ſtimulus, ſhow themſelves principally, when this property is to be procured, or preſerved, by perſonal exertions; and that they are by no means ſo general, under other circumſtances. If any idle man with a family could demand, and obtain, a cow and ſome land, I ſhould expect to ſee both very often neglected.

It has been obſerved, that thoſe cottagers who keep cows, are more induſtrious and more regular in their conduct than thoſe who do not. This is probably true, and what might naturally be expected; but the inference that the way to make all people induſtrious, is to give them cows, may by no means be quite ſo certain. Moſt of thoſe who keep cows at preſent have purchaſed them with the fruits of their own induſtry. It is therefore more juſt to ſay, that their induſtry has given them a cow, than that a cow has given them their induſtry; though I would by no means be underſtood to imply, that the ſudden poſſeſſion of property never generates induſtrious habits.

The practical good effects which have been already experienced, from

from cottagers keeping cows[a], ariſe in fact from the ſyſtem being nearly ſuch as the confined plan which I have mentioned. In the diſtricts where cottagers of this deſcription moſt abound, they do not bear a very large proportion to the population of the whole pariſh: they conſiſt in general of the better ſort of labourers, who have been able to purchaſe their own cows; and the peculiar comforts of their ſituation ariſe, more from the relative, than the poſitive advantages which they poſſeſs.

From obſerving, therefore, their induſtry and comforts, we ſhould be very cautious of inferring that we could give the ſame induſtry and comforts to all the lower claſſes of people, by giving them the ſame poſſeſſions. There is nothing that has given riſe to ſuch a cloud of errors, as a confuſion between relative and poſitive, and between cauſe and effect.

It may be ſaid, however, that any plan of generally improving the cottages of the poor, or of enabling more of them to keep cows, would evidently give them the power of rearing a greater number of children, and, by thus encouraging population, violate the principles which I have endeavoured to eſtabliſh. But if I have been ſucceſsful in making the reader comprehend the principal bent of this work, he will be aware, that the preciſe reaſon why I think that more children ought not to be born than the country can ſupport, is, that the greateſt poſſible number of thoſe that are born may be ſupported. We cannot, in the nature of things, aſſiſt the poor, in any way, without enabling them to rear up to manhood a greater number of their children. But this is, of all other things, the moſt deſirable, both with regard to individuals and the publick. Every loſs of a child from the conſequences of poverty, muſt evidently be preceded and accompanied by great miſery to individuals; and, in a publick view, every child that dies under ten years of age, is a loſs to the nation of all that had been expended in its ſubſiſt-

[a] Inquiry into the State of Cottagers in the Counties of Lincoln and Rutland, by Robert Gourlay. Annals of Agriculture, vol. xxxvii. p. 514.

ence

ence till that period. Conſequently, in every point of view, a decreaſe of mortality, at all ages, is what we ought to aim at. We cannot, however, effect this object, without firſt crowding the population in ſome degree by making more children grow up to manhood; but we ſhall do no harm in this reſpect, if, at the ſame time, we can impreſs theſe children with the idea that to poſſeſs the ſame advantages as their parents, they muſt defer marriage till they have a fair proſpect of being able to maintain a family. And it muſt be candidly confeſſed that, if we cannot do this, all our former efforts will have been thrown away. It is not in the nature of things that any permanent and general improvement in the condition of the poor can be effected, without an increaſe in the preventive check: and unleſs this take place, either with, or without our efforts, every thing that is done for the poor muſt be temporary and partial: a diminution of mortality at preſent, will be balanced by an increaſed mortality in future; and the improvement of their condition in one place, will proportionally depreſs it in another. This is a truth ſo important, and ſo little underſtood, that it can ſcarcely be too often inſiſted on. The generality of charitable people and of the encouragers of marriage, are not in the ſmalleſt degree aware of the real effects of what they do.

Dr. Paley, in a chapter on population, proviſion, &c. in his Moral Philoſophy, obſerves, that the condition moſt favourable to the population of a country, and, at the ſame time, to its general happineſs, is, "that of a laborious frugal people miniſtering to the "demands of an opulent, luxurious nation[a]." Such a form of

[a] Vol. ii. c. xi. p. 359. From a paſſage in Dr. Paley's late work on Natural Theology, I am inclined to think, that ſubſequent reflection has induced him to modify ſome of his former ideas on the ſubject of population. He has ſtated moſt juſtly, (chap. xxv. p. 539.) that mankind will in every country breed up to a certain point of diſtreſs. If this be allowed, that country will evidently be the happieſt, where the degree of diſtreſs at this point is the leaſt, and conſequently, if the ſpread of luxury, by producing the check ſooner, tend to diminiſh this degree of diſtreſs, it is certainly deſirable.

ſociety

ſociety has not, it muſt be confeſſed, an inviting aſpect. Nothing but the conviction of its being abſolutely neceſſary, could reconcile us to the idea of ten millions of people condemned to inceſſant toil, and to the privation of every thing but abſolute neceſſaries, in order to miniſter to the exceſſive luxuries of the other million. But the fact is, that ſuch a form of ſociety is by no means neceſſary. It is by no means neceſſary, that the rich ſhould be exceſſively luxurious, in order to ſupport the manufactures of a country, or that the poor ſhould be deprived of all luxuries, in order to make them ſufficiently numerous. The beſt, and in every point of view the moſt advantageous, manufactures in this country, are thoſe which are conſumed by the great body of the people. The manufactures which are confined excluſively to the rich, are not only trivial on account of the comparative ſmallneſs of their quantity; but are further liable to the great diſadvantage of producing much occaſional miſery among thoſe employed in them, from changes of faſhion. It is the ſpread of luxury, therefore, among the maſs of the people, and not an exceſs of it in a few, that ſeems to be moſt advantageous, both with regard to national wealth and national happineſs; and what Dr. Paley conſiders as the true evil and proper danger of luxury, I ſhould be diſpoſed to conſider as its true good, and peculiar advantage. If, indeed, it be allowed that in every ſociety, not in the ſtate of a new colony, ſome powerful check to population muſt prevail; and if it be obſerved, that a taſte for the comforts and conveniencies of life will prevent people from marrying under the certainty of being deprived of theſe advantages; it muſt be allowed that we can hardly expect to find any check to marriage ſo little prejudicial to the happineſs and virtue of ſociety as the general prevalence of ſuch a taſte; and conſequently that the ſpread of luxury[a] in this ſenſe of the

[a] In a note to the tenth chapter of the laſt book, I have mentioned the point at which, alone, it is probable that luxury becomes really prejudicial to a country. But this point

 does

the term, is particularly deſirable; and one of the beſt means of raiſing that ſtandard of wretchedneſs, alluded to in the eighth chapter of this book.

It has been generally found that the middle parts of ſociety are moſt favourable to virtuous and induſtrious habits, and to the growth of all kinds of talents. But it is evident, that all cannot be in the middle. Superior and inferior parts are, in the nature of things, abſolutely neceſſary; and not only neceſſary, but ſtrikingly beneficial. If no man could hope to riſe, or fear to fall in ſociety; if induſtry did not bring with it its reward, and indolence its puniſhment; we could not expect to ſee that animated activity in bettering our condition, which now forms the maſter-ſpring of publick proſperity. But in contemplating the different ſtates of Europe, we obſerve a very conſiderable difference in the relative proportions of the ſuperior, the middle, and the inferior parts; and from the effect of theſe differences, it ſeems probable, that our beſt grounded expectations of an increaſe in the happineſs of the maſs of human ſociety, are founded in the proſpect of an increaſe in the relative proportions of the middle parts. And if the lower claſſes of people had acquired the habit of proportioning the ſupplies of labour to a ſtationary, or even decreaſing demand, without an increaſe of miſery and mortality, as at preſent; we might even venture to indulge a hope, that at ſome future period, the proceſſes for abridging human labour, the progreſs of which has of late years been ſo rapid, might ultimately ſupply all the wants of the moſt wealthy ſociety with leſs perſonal labour than at preſent; and if they did not diminiſh the ſeverity of individual exertion, might, at leaſt, diminiſh the number of thoſe employed in ſevere toil. If the loweſt claſſes of ſociety were thus diminiſhed, and the middle claſſes increaſed, each labourer might indulge a more rational hope of riſing by diligence and exertion into a better

does not depend upon the ſpread of luxury, as diminiſhing the frequency of marriage among the poor, but upon the proportion which thoſe employed in preparing or procuring luxuries, bears to the funds which are to ſupport them.

a better ſtation; the rewards of induſtry and virtue would be increaſed in number; human ſociety would appear to conſiſt of fewer blanks and more prizes; and the ſum of ſocial happineſs would be evidently augmented.

To indulge, however, in any diſtant views of this kind, unaccompanied by the evils uſually attendant on a ſtationary, or decreaſing demand for labour, we muſt ſuppoſe the general prevalence of ſuch prudential habits among the poor, as would prevent them from marrying, when the actual price of labour, joined to what they might have ſaved in their ſingle ſtate, would not give them the proſpect of being able to ſupport a wife and ſix children without aſſiſtance. And, in every point of view, ſuch a degree of prudential reſtraint would be extremely beneficial; and would produce a very ſtriking amelioration in the condition of the lower claſſes of people.

It may be ſaid, perhaps, that even this degree of prudence might not always avail, as when a man marries he cannot tell what number of children he ſhall have, and many have more than ſix. This is certainly true; and in this caſe I do not think that any evil would reſult from making a certain allowance to every child above this number; not with a view of rewarding a man for his large family, but merely, of relieving him from a ſpecies of diſtreſs, which it would be unreaſonable in us to expect that he ſhould calculate upon. And with this view, the relief ſhould be merely ſuch, as to place him exactly in the ſame ſituation as if he had had ſix children. Monteſquieu diſapproves of an edict of Lewis the fourteenth, which gave certain penſions to thoſe who had ten and twelve children, as being of no uſe in encouraging population[a]. For the very reaſon that he diſapproves of it, I ſhould think that ſome law of the kind might be adopted without danger, and might relieve particular individuals from a very preſſing and unlooked-for diſtreſs, without operating in any reſpect as an encouragement to marriage.

[a] Eſprit des Loix, liv. xxiii. c. xxvii.

If at ſome future period, any approach ſhould be made towards the more general prevalence of prudential habits with reſpect to marriage among the poor, from which alone any permanent and general improvement of their condition can ariſe; I do not think that the narroweſt politician need be alarmed at it, from the fear of its occaſioning ſuch an advance in the price of labour as will enable our commercial competitors to underſell us in foreign markets. There are four circumſtances that might be expected to accompany it, which would probably either prevent, or fully counterbalance, any effect of this kind. Theſe are, 1ſt, The more equable and lower price of proviſions, from the demand being leſs frequently above the ſupply. 2dly, The removal of that heavy burden on agriculture, and that great addition to the preſent wages of labour, the poors rates. 3dly, The national ſaving of a great part of that ſum, which is expended without return, in the ſupport of thoſe children who die prematurely, from the conſequences of poverty. And, laſtly, The more general prevalence of economical and induſtrious habits, particularly among unmarried men, which would prevent that indolence, drunkenneſs, and waſte of labour, which at preſent are too frequently a conſequence of high wages.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Of our rational expectations reſpecting the future improvement of Society.

In taking a general and concluding view of our rational expectations reſpecting the mitigation of the evils ariſing from the principle of population, it may be obſerved, that though the increaſe of population in a geometrical ratio be incontrovertible, and the period of doubling, when unchecked, has been uniformly ſtated in this work, rather below than above the truth; yet there are ſome natural conſequences of the progreſs of ſociety and civilization, which neceſſarily repreſs its full effects. There are, more particularly, great towns and manufactures, in which we can ſcarcely hope, and certainly not expect, to ſee any very material change. It is undoubtedly our duty, and in every point of view highly deſirable, to make towns and manufacturing employments as little injurious as poſſible to the duration of human life; but, after all our efforts, it is probable that they will always remain leſs healthy than country ſituations and country employments; and conſequently, operating as poſitive checks, will diminiſh in ſome degree the neceſſity of the preventive check.

In every old ſtate it is obſerved, that a conſiderable number of grown-up people, remain for a time unmarried. The duty of practiſing the common and acknowledged rules of morality during this period, has never been controverted in theory, however it may have been oppoſed in practice. This branch of the duty of moral reſtraint has ſcarcely been touched by the reaſonings of this work.

It

It reſts on the ſame foundation as before, neither ſtronger nor weaker. And knowing how incompletely this duty has hitherto been fulfilled, it would certainly be viſionary to expect any very material change for the better, in future.

The part which has been affected by the reaſonings of this work is not, therefore, that which relates to our conduct during the period of celibacy, but to the duty of extending this period till we have a proſpect of being able to maintain our children. And it is by no means viſionary to indulge a hope of ſome favourable change in this reſpect; becauſe it is found by experience, that the prevalence of this kind of prudential reſtraint is extremely different in different countries, and in the ſame countries at different periods.

It cannot be doubted, that throughout Europe in general, and moſt particularly in the northern ſtates, a decided change has taken place in the operation of this prudential reſtraint, ſince the prevalence of thoſe warlike and enterpriſing habits which deſtroyed ſo many people. In later times, the gradual diminution, and almoſt total extinction, of the plagues which ſo frequently viſited Europe in the ſeventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, produced a change of the ſame kind. And in this country it is not to be doubted that the proportion of marriages has become ſmaller, ſince the improvement of our towns, the leſs frequent returns of epidemicks, and the adoption of habits of greater cleanlineſs. During the late ſcarcities, it appears that the number of marriages diminiſhed; and the ſame motives which prevented many people from marrying during ſuch a period, would operate preciſely in the ſame way, if, in future, the additional number of children reared to manhood from the introduction of the cow-pox, were to be ſuch, as to crowd all employments, lower the price of labour, and make it more difficult to ſupport a family.

Univerſally, the practice of mankind on the ſubject of marriage has been much ſuperior to their theories; and however frequent may have been the declamations on the duty of entering into this

ſtate, and the advantage of early unions to prevent vice, each individual has practically found it neceſſary to conſider of the means of ſupporting a family, before he ventured to take ſo important a ſtep. That great *vis medicatrix reipublicæ*, the deſire of bettering our condition, and the fear of making it worſe, has been conſtantly in action, and has been conſtantly directing people into the right road in ſpite of all the declamations which tended to lead them aſide. Owing to this powerful ſpring of health in every ſtate, which is nothing more than an inference from the general courſe of the laws of nature, irreſiſtibly forced on each man's attention, the prudential check to marriage has increaſed in Europe; and it cannot be unreaſonable to conclude, that it will ſtill make further advances. If this take place, without any marked and decided increaſe of a vicious intercourſe with the ſex, the happineſs of ſociety will evidently be promoted by it; and with regard to the danger of ſuch increaſe, it is conſolatory to remark, that thoſe countries in Europe where marriages are the leaſt frequent, are by no means particularly diſtinguiſhed by vices of this kind. It has appeared that Norway, Switzerland, England, and Scotland, are above all the reſt in the prevalence of the preventive check; and though I do not mean to inſiſt particularly on the virtuous habits of theſe countries, yet I think that no perſon would ſelect them as the countries moſt marked for profligacy of manners. Indeed, from the little that I know of the continent, I ſhould have been inclined to ſelect them as moſt diſtinguiſhed for contrary habits, and as rather above than below their neighbours in the chaſtity of their women, and conſequently in the virtuous habits of their men. Experience therefore ſeems to teach us, that it is poſſible for moral and phyſical cauſes to counteract the effects that might at firſt be expected from an increaſe of the preventive check; but allowing all the weight to theſe effects which is in any degree probable, it may be ſafely aſſerted, that the diminution of the vices ariſing from indigence, would fully counterbalance them; and that all the advantages of diminiſhed mortality, and ſuperior comforts, which would certainly

certainly result from an increase of the preventive check, may be placed entirely on the side of the gains to the cause of happiness and virtue.

It is less the object of the present work to propose new plans of improving society, than to inculcate the necessity of resting contented with that mode of improvement, which is dictated by the course of nature, and of not obstructing the advances which would otherwise be made in this way.

It would be undoubtedly highly advantageous, that all our positive institutions, and the whole tenour of our conduct to the poor, should be such as actively to co-operate with that lesson of prudence inculcated by the common course of human events; and if we take upon ourselves, sometimes, to mitigate the natural punishments of imprudence, that we should balance it by increasing the rewards of an opposite conduct. But much would be done, if merely the institutions which directly tend to encourage marriage were gradually changed, and we ceased to circulate opinions, and inculcate doctrines, which positively counteract the lessons of nature.

The limited good which it is sometimes in our power to effect, is often lost by attempting too much, and by making the adoption of some particular plan essentially necessary even to a partial degree of success. In the practical application of the reasonings of this work, I hope that I have avoided this error. I wish to press on the recollection of the reader, that, though I may have given some new views of old facts, and may have indulged in the contemplation of a considerable degree of *possible* improvement, that I might not absolutely shut out that prime cheerer hope; yet in my expectations of probable improvement, and in suggesting the means of accomplishing it, I have been very cautious. The gradual abolition of the poor laws has already often been proposed, in consequence of the practical evils which have been found to flow from them, and the danger of their becoming a weight absolutely intolerable on the landed property of the kingdom. The establishment of a more extensive system of national

national education, has neither the advantage of novelty with some, nor its disadvantage with others, to recommend it. The practical good effects of education have long been experienced in Scotland; and almost every person who has been placed in a situation to judge, has given his testimony, that education appears to have a considerable effect in the prevention of crimes[a], and the promotion of industry, morality, and regular conduct. Yet these are the only plans which have been offered; and though the adoption of them in the modes suggested, would very powerfully contribute to forward the object of this work, and better the condition of the poor; yet if nothing be done in this way, I shall not absolutely despair of some partial good effects from the general tenour of the reasoning.

If the principles which I have endeavoured to establish be false, I most sincerely hope to see them completely refuted; but if they be true, the subject is so important, and interests the question of human happiness so nearly, that it is impossible that they should not in time be more fully known, and more generally circulated, whether any particular efforts be made for the purpose or not.

Among the higher and middle classes of society, the effect of this knowledge would, I hope, be to direct without relaxing their efforts in bettering the condition of the poor; to shew them what they can, and what they cannot do; and that, although much may be done by advice and instruction, by encouraging habits of prudence and cleanliness, by occasional and discriminate charity, and by any mode of bettering the present condition of the poor, which is followed by an increase of the preventive check; yet that, without this last effect, all the former efforts would be futile; and that, in any old and well-peopled state, to assist the poor in such a manner as to enable

[a] Mr. Howard found fewer prisoners in Switzerland and Scotland, than in other countries, which he attributed to a more regular education among the lower classes of the Swiss and the Scotch. During the number of years which the late Mr. Fielding presided at Bow-street, only six Scotchmen were brought before him. He used to say that of the persons committed the greater part were Irish. Preface to vol. iii. of the Reports of the Society for bettering the condition of the poor, p. 32.

them to marry as early as they please, and rear up large families, is a physical impossibility. This knowledge, by tending to prevent the rich from destroying the good effects of their own exertions, and wasting their efforts in a direction where success is unattainable, would confine their attention to the proper objects, and thus enable them to do more good.

Among the poor themselves, its effects would be still more important. That the principal and most permanent cause of poverty, has little or no relation to forms of government, or the unequal division of property; and that, as the rich do not in reality possess the power of finding employment and maintenance for the poor, the poor cannot, in the nature of things, possess the right to demand them, are important truths flowing from the principle of population, which, when properly explained, would by no means be above the most ordinary comprehensions. And it is evident, that every man in the lower classes of society, who became acquainted with these truths, would be disposed to bear the distresses in which he might be involved with more patience; would feel less discontent and irritation at the government and the higher classes of society on account of his poverty; would be on all occasions less disposed to insubordination and turbulence; and if he received assistance, either from any publick institution, or from the hand of private charity, he would receive it with more thankfulness, and more justly appreciate its value.

If these truths were by degrees more generally known, which in the course of time does not seem to be improbable, from the natural effects of the mutual interchange of opinions, the lower classes of people, as a body, would become more peaceable and orderly; would be less inclined to tumultuous proceedings in seasons of scarcity, and would at all times be less influenced by inflammatory and seditious publications, from knowing how little the price of labour, and the means of supporting a family, depend upon a revolution. The mere knowledge of these truths, even if they did not operate sufficiently to produce any marked change in the prudential habits of the poor, with

with regard to marriage, would still have a most beneficial effect on their conduct in a political light; and undoubtedly one of the most valuable of these effects would be, the power that would result to the higher and middle classes of society of gradually improving governments[a], without the apprehension of those revolutionary excesses, the fear of which, at present, threatens to deprive Europe even of that degree of liberty, which she had before experienced to be practicable, and the salutary effects of which she had long enjoyed.

From a review of the state of society in former periods, compared with the present, I should certainly say, that the evils resulting from the principle of population have rather diminished, than increased, even under the disadvantage of an almost total ignorance of their real cause. And if we can indulge the hope that this ignorance will be gradually dissipated, it does not seem unreasonable to expect, that they will be still further diminished. The increase of absolute population which will of course take place, will evidently tend but little to weaken this expectation, as every thing depends upon the relative proportions between population and food, and not on the absolute number of people. In the former part of this work, it appeared, that the countries which possessed the fewest people, often suffered the most from the effects of the principle of population; and it can scarcely be doubted, that taking Europe throughout, fewer famines, and fewer diseases arising from want, have prevailed in the last century, than in those which preceded it.

On the whole, therefore, though our future prospects respecting the mitigation of the evils arising from the principle of population, may not be so bright as we could wish, yet they are far from being

[a] I cannot believe that the removal of all unjust grounds of discontent against constituted authorities would render the people torpid and indifferent to advantages which are really attainable. The blessings of civil liberty are so great, that they surely cannot need the aid of false colouring to make them desireable. I should be sorry to think that the lower classes of people could never be animated to assert their rights but by means of such illusory promises, as will generally make the remedy of resistance much worse than the disease that it was intended to cure.

entirely diſheartening, and by no means preclude that gradual and progreſſive improvement in human ſociety, which, before the late wild ſpeculations on the ſubject, was the object of rational expectation. To the laws of property and marriage, and to the apparently narrow principle of ſelf-love, which prompts each individual to exert himſelf in bettering his condition, we are indebted for all the nobleſt exertions of human genius, for every thing that diſtinguiſhes the civilized from the ſavage ſtate. A ſtrict inquiry into the principle of population leads us ſtrongly to the concluſion, that we ſhall never be able to throw down the ladder by which we have riſen to this eminence; but it by no means proves that we may not riſe higher by the ſame means. The ſtructure of ſociety, in its great features, will probably always remain unchanged. We have every reaſon to believe, that it will always conſiſt of a claſs of proprietors, and a claſs of labourers; but the condition of each, and the proportion which they bear to each other, may be ſo altered as greatly to improve the harmony and beauty of the whole. It would, indeed, be a melancholy reflection, that, while the views of phyſical ſcience are daily enlarging, ſo as ſcarcely to be bounded by the moſt diſtant horizon, the ſcience of moral and political philoſophy ſhould be confined within ſuch narrow limits, or at beſt be ſo feeble in its influence, as to be unable to counteract the increaſing obſtacles to human happineſs ariſing from the progreſs of population. But however formidable theſe obſtacles may have appeared in ſome parts of this work, it is hoped that the general reſult of the inquiry is ſuch, as not to make us give up the cauſe of the improvement of human ſociety in deſpair. The partial good which ſeems to be attainable, is worthy of all our exertions; is ſufficient to direct our efforts and animate our proſpects. And although we cannot expect that the virtue and happineſs of mankind will keep pace with the brilliant career of phyſical diſcovery, yet if we are not wanting to ourſelves, we may confidently indulge the hope, that, to no unimportant extent, they will be influenced by its progreſs, and will partake in its ſucceſs.

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