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Sketches Of The History Of Man

In Two Volumes

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Sketch VI. Progress of the female Sex.

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S K E T C H VI.

Progress of the FEMALE SEX.

THE history of the female sex, a capital branch of the history of man, comprehends great variety of matter, curious and interesting. But sketches are my province, not complete histories; and I propose in the present sketch to trace the gradual progress of women, from their low state in savage tribes, to their elevated state in civilized nations.

With regard to the outlines, whether of internal disposition, or of external figure, men and women are precisely the same. Nature, however, intending them for mates, has given them characters different, but concordant, so as to produce together delicious harmony. The man, naturally more robust, is fitted for severe labour and for field-exercises: the woman for sedentary occupations; and particularly for nursing children. To that difference the mind also contributes. A boy is always running about; delights in a top or a ball; and rides upon a stick for want of a horse. A girl has less inclination to move: her first amusement is a baby; which she delights to dress and undress. The man, bold and vigorous, is qualified for being a protector: the woman, delicate and timid, requires protection. The man, as a protector, is directed by nature to govern: the woman, conscious of inferiority, is disposed to obedience. Their intellectual powers correspond to the destination of nature: men have penetration and solid judgement to fit them for governing:



governing : women have sufficient understanding to make a decent figure under good government ; a greater proportion would excite dangerous rivalship. Add another capital difference of character : the gentle and insinuating manners of the female sex tend to soften the roughness of the other sex ; and where-ever women are indulged with any freedom, they polish sooner than men.

These are not the only particulars that distinguish the sexes. With respect to matrimony, it is the privilege of the male, as superior and protector, to make a choice : the female preferred has no privilege but barely to consent or to refuse. Nature fits them for these different parts : the male is bold, the female bashful. Hence among all nations it is the practice for men to court, and for women to be courted : which holds also among many other animals, probably among all that pair.

Another distinction is equally visible : The master of a family is immediately connected with his country : his wife, his children, his servants, are immediately connected with him, and with their country through him only. Women accordingly have less patriotism than men ; and less bitterness against the enemies of their country.

The peculiar modesty of the female sex is also a distinguishing circumstance. Nature hath provided them with it as their chief defence against the artful solicitations of the other sex before marriage, and also as the chief support of conjugal fidelity. It is held to be their capital virtue ; and a woman who surrenders her chastity is universally despised ; tho' in a man chastity is scarce held to be a virtue, except in the married state. But of that more fully afterwards.

A fundamental article in the present sketch is matrimony ; and it has been much controverted, whether it be an appointment of nature, or only of municipal law. Many writers have exercised their talents in that controversy, but without giving any satif-



faction to a judicious enquirer. If I mistake not, it may be determined upon solid principles; and as it is of importance in the history of man, the reader, I am hopeful, will not be disgusted at the length of the argument.

Many writers hold, that women were originally common; that animal love was gratified as among horses and horned cattle; and that matrimony was not known till nations grew in some degree to be orderly and refined. I select Cicero as an author of authority: “*Nam fuit quoddam tempus, cum in agris homines passim, bestiarum more, vagabantur, et sibi victu ferino vitam propagabant: nec ratione animi quicquam sed pleraque viribus corporis administrabant. Nondum divinæ religionis non humani officii ratio colebatur. Nemo legitimas viderat nuptias, non certos quisquam inspexerat liberos*” * (a).” Pliny, in support of that doctrine, informs us, that the Garamantes, an African nation, lived promiscuously together, without any notion of matrimony. Among the Aufes, a people of Libya, as Herodotus says, matrimony was not known, and men cohabited with women indifferently, like other animals. A boy educated by his mother was at a certain age admitted to an assembly of the men, and the man he clung to was reputed his father. Justin and other authors report, that before Cecrops, who reigned in Attica about 1600 years before Christ, marriage was not known in Greece; and that the burden of children lay upon the mother.

* “For there was a time, when men, like the brutes, roamed abroad over the earth, and fed like wild beasts upon other animals. Then reason bore no sway, but all was ruled by superior strength. The ties of religion, and the obligations of morality, were then unfelt. Lawful marriage was unknown, and no father was certain of his offspring.”

(a) De Inventione, lib. 1.

Before



Before entering directly into the matter, it is proper to remove, if possible, the bias of these great names. The practice of the Garamantes and of the Aufes is mentioned by Pliny and Herodotus as singular; and were it better vouched than it is, it would avail very little against the practice of all other nations. Little weight can be laid upon Pliny's evidence in particular, considering what he reports in the same chapter of the Blemmyans, that they had no head, and that the mouth and eyes were in the breast. Pliny at the same time, as well as Herodotus, being very deficient in natural knowledge, were grossly credulous; and cannot be rely'd on with respect to any thing strange or uncommon. As to what is reported of ancient Greece, Cecrops possibly prohibited polygamy, or introduced some other matrimonial regulation, which by writers might be mistaken for a law appointing matrimony. However that be, one part of the report is undoubtedly false; for it will be made evident afterward, that in the hunter-state, or even in that of shepherds, it is impracticable for any woman, by her own industry alone, to rear a numerous issue. If this be at all possible, it can only be in the torrid zone, where people live on fruits and roots, which are produced in plenty with very little labour. Upon that account Diodorus Siculus is less blameable for listening to a report, that the inhabitants of Taprobana, supposed to be the island of Ceylon, never marry, but that women are used promiscuously. But as there is no such practice known at present in the East Indies, there is no just ground to believe, that it ever was the practice; and the East Indies were so little known to the ancient Greeks, that their authors cannot be much rely'd on in the accounts they give of that distant region. The opinion of Cicero may seem to have more weight at first view; and yet a single observation will reduce it to nothing. The notions of that author upon the primitive state of man must confessedly be exceedingly crude, when he denies to savages any sense of religion or of moral



duty. Ought we to rely more on him, when he denies, that they have any notion of matrimony? Cæsar's account of the ancient Britons approaches the nearest to a loose commerce with women, tho' in the main it is good evidence against the opinion of Cicero. It was common, he says, for a number of brothers, or other near relations, to use their wives promiscuously. The offspring however were not common; for each man maintained the children that were produced by his own wife. Herodotus reports the same of the Massagetæ.

Laying thus aside the great names of Cicero, Herodotus, and Pliny, the field lies open to a fair and impartial investigation. And as the means provided by nature for continuing the race of other animals may probably throw light upon the œconomy of nature with respect to man, I begin with that article, which has not engaged the attention of naturalists so much as it ought to do. With respect to animals whose nourishment is grass, pairing would be of no use: the female feeds herself and her young at the same instant, and the male has nothing to do. On the other hand, all brute animals whose young require the nursing care of both parents, are directed by nature to pair; nor is that connection dissolved till the young can provide for themselves. Pairing is indispensable to wild birds that build on trees; because the male must provide food for his mate while she is hatching the eggs. And as they have commonly a numerous issue, it requires the labour of both to pick up food for themselves and for their young. Upon that account it is so ordered, that the young are sufficiently vigorous to provide for themselves, before a new brood is produced.

What I have now opened suggests the following question, Whether, according to the animal œconomy above display'd, are we to presume, or not, that man is directed by nature to matrimony? If analogy can be rely'd on, the affirmative must be held, as there is

no



no other creature in the known world to which pairing is so necessary. Man is a long-lived animal, and is proportionally slow in growing to maturity: he is a helpless being before the age of fifteen or sixteen, and there may be in a family ten or twelve children of different births before the eldest can shift for itself. Now in the original state of hunting and fishing, which are laborious occupations, and not always successful, a woman suckling her infant is not able to provide food even for herself, far less for ten or twelve voracious children. Matrimony therefore, or pairing, is so necessary to the human race, that it must be natural and instinctive. When such ample means are provided for continuing every other animal race, is it supposable that the chief race would be neglected? Providential care descends even to vegetable life: every plant bears a profusion of seed; and in order to cover the earth with vegetables, some seeds have wings, some are scattered by means of a spring, and some are so light as to be carried about by the wind. Brute animals which do not pair, have grass and other food in plenty, enabling the female to feed her young without needing any help from the male. But where the young require the nursing care of both parents, pairing is a law of nature. When other races are so amply provided for, can it be seriously thought, that Providence is less attentive to the human race? If men and women were not impelled by nature to matrimony, they would be less fitted for continuing their species than even the humblest plant. Have we not reason fairly to conclude, that matrimony in the human race is an appointment of nature? Can that conclusion be resisted by any one who believes in Providence, and in final causes*.

To

* It appears a wise appointment of Providence, that women give over child-bearing at fifty, while they are still in vigour of mind and body to take care of their offspring. Did the power of procreation continue in women to old age as in men, children



To confirm this doctrine, let the consequences of a loose commerce between the sexes be examined. The carnal appetite, when confined to one object, seldom transgresses the bounds of temperance. But were it encouraged to roam like a bee sucking honey from every flower, every new object would inflame the imagination; and satiety with respect to one, would give new vigour with respect to others: a generic habit would be formed of intemperance in fruition (*a*); and animal love would become the ruling passion. Men, like the hart in rutting-time, would all the year round fly with impetuosity from object to object, giving no quarter even to women suckling their infants: and women, abandoning themselves to the same passion, would become altogether regardless of their offspring. In that state, the continuance of the human race would be a miracle. In the savage state, as mentioned above, it is beyond the power of any woman to provide food for a family of children; and now it appears, that intemperance in animal love would render a woman careless of her family, however easy it might be to provide for it*.

children would often be left in the wide world, without a mortal to look after them.

* I have often been tempted to find fault with Providence in bringing so early to perfection the carnal appetite, while a man, still in early youth, has acquired no degree of prudence nor of self-command. It rages indeed the most when young men should be employ'd in acquiring knowledge, and in fitting themselves for living comfortably in the world. I have set this thought in various lights; but I now perceive that the censure is without foundation. The early ripeness of this appetite proves it to be the intention of Providence that people should early settle in matrimony. In that state the appetite is abundantly moderate, and gives no obstruction to education. It never becomes unruly, till one, forgetting the matrimonial tie, wanders from object to object. It is pride and luxury that dictate late marriages: industry never fails to afford the means of living comfortably, provided men confine themselves to the demands of nature.

(*a*) Elements of Criticism, chap. 14.



I say more: The promiscuous use of women would unqualify them in a great measure from procreating, or having a family. The carnal appetite in man resembles his appetite for food: both of them demand gratification without end, after short intervals. Where the carnal appetite is felt but a short space annually, as among animals who feed on grass, the promiscuous use of females is according to the order of nature: but such a law in man, where the carnal appetite is always awake, would be an effectual bar to population; as it is an undoubted truth, that women who indulge that appetite to excess, seldom have children; and if all women were common, all women would in effect be common prostitutes.

If undisguised nature show itself any where, it is in children. So truly is matrimony an instinct of nature, as to be understood even by children. They often hear, it is true, people talking of matrimony; but they also hear of logical, metaphysical, and commercial matters, without understanding a syllable. Whence then their notion of marriage but from nature? Marriage at the same time is a compound idea, which no instruction could bring within the comprehension of a child, did not nature co-operate.

That the arguments urged above against a promiscuous use of women do not necessarily conclude against polygamy, or the union of one man with a plurality of women, will not escape an attentive reader. St Augustin and other fathers admit, that polygamy is not prohibited by the law of nature; and the learned Grotius professes the same opinion (*a*). But great names terrify me not; and I venture to maintain, that pairing in the strictest sense is a law of nature among men as among wild birds; and that polygamy is a gross infringement of this law. My reasons follow.

(*a*) De jure belli ac pacis, lib. 2. cap. 5. § 9.



I urge, in the first place, the equal number of males and females, as a clear indication of the will of God, that every man should be confined to one wife, and every woman to one husband. That equality which has subsisted in all countries, and at all times, is a signal instance of over-ruling Providence; for the chances against it are infinite. All men are by nature equal in rank; and every man consequently is equally privileged to have a wife; which cannot be, if polygamy be permitted. Were ten women born for one man, as is falsely reported to be the case in Bantam, polygamy might be the intention of Providence; but from the equality of males and females, it is clearly the voice of nature, as well as of the sacred scripture, "That a man shall leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and that they shall be one flesh."

Consider, in the next place, that however plausible polygamy may appear in the present state of things, where inequality of rank and of fortune have produced luxury and sensuality; yet that the laws of nature were not contrived by our Maker for a forc'd state, where numberless individuals are degraded below their natural rank, for the benefit of a few who are elevated above it. To form a just notion of polygamy, we must look back to the original state of man, where all are equal. In that state, every man cannot have two wives; and consequently no man is intitled to more than one, till every other be upon an equal footing with him. At the same time, the union of one man with one woman is much better calculated for continuing the race, than the union of one man with many women. Think of a savage who may have fifty or sixty children by different wives, all depending for food upon his industry. Chance must turn out much in his favour, if the half of them perish not by hunger. How much a better chance for life have infants who are distributed more equally in different families?

Polygamy



Polygamy is attended with an effect still more pernicious, with respect to children even of the most opulent families. Unless affection be reciprocal and equal, there can be no proper society in the matrimonial state, no cordiality, nor due care of offspring. But such affection is inconsistent with polygamy: a woman in that state, far from being a companion to her husband, is degraded to the rank of a servant, a mere instrument of pleasure and propagation. Among many wives there will always be a favourite: the rest turn peevish; and if they resent not the injury against their husband, and against their children as belonging to him, will at least be disheartened, and neglect them altogether. At the same time, fondness for the favourite wife and her children makes the husband indifferent about the rest; and woful is the condition of children who are neglected by both parents (*a*). To produce such an effect, is certainly not the purpose of nature.

It merits peculiar attention, that Providence has provided for an agreeable union among all creatures who are taught by nature to pair. Animal love among creatures who pair not, is confined within a narrow space of time: while the dam is occupied about her young, animal love lies dormant, that she may not be abstracted from her duty. In pairing animals, on the contrary, animal love is always awake: frequent enjoyment endears a pair to each other, and makes constancy a pleasure. Such is the case of the human race; and such is the case of wild birds (*b*). Among the wild birds that build on trees, the male, after feeding his mate in the nest, plants himself upon the next spray, and cheers her with a song. There is still greater pleasure provided for the human race in the matrimonial state, and stronger incitements to

(*a*) L'esprit des loix, liv. 16. chap. 6.

(*b*) Buffon, liv. 5. p. 359. octavo edition.



constancy. Sweet is the society of a pair fitted for each other, in whom are collected the affections of husband, wife, lover, friend, the tenderest affections of human nature. Public government is in perfection, when the sovereign commands with humanity, and the subjects are cordial in their obedience. Private government in conjugal society arrives at still greater perfection, where husband and wife govern and are governed reciprocally, with entire satisfaction to both. The man bears rule over his wife's person and conduct; she bears rule over his inclinations: he governs by law; and she by persuasion. Nor can her authority ever fail, where it is supported by sweetness of temper, and zeal to make him happy*.

The

* L'empire de la femme est un empire de douceur, d'adresse, et de complaisance; ses ordres sont des caresses, ses menaces sont des pleurs. Elle doit regner dans la maison comme un ministre dans l'état, en se faisant commander ce qu'elle veut faire. En ce sens il est constant que les meilleurs ménages sont ceux où la femme a le plus d'autorité. Mais quand elle reconnoit la voix du chef, qu'elle veut usurper ses droits et commander elle-même; il ne résulte jamais de ce désordre, que misère, scandale, et déshonneur. *Rousseau Emile, liv. 5. p. 96.* — [*In English thus*: “The empire of the woman is an empire of softness, of address, of complacency; her commands are caresses, her menaces are tears. She ought to reign in the family like a minister in the state, by making that which is her inclination be enjoined to her as her duty. Thus it is evident, that the best domestic economy is that where the wife has most authority. But when she is insensible to the voice of her chief, when she tries to usurp his prerogative, and to command alone, what can result from such disorder, but misery, scandal, and dishonour?”] — The Empress Livia being questioned by a married lady, how she had obtained such ascendant over her husband Augustus, answered, “By being obedient to his commands, by not wishing to know his secrets, and by hiding my knowledge of his amours.” The late Queen of Spain was a woman of singular prudence, and of solid judgement. A character of her, published after her death, contains the following passage. “She had a great ascendancy over the King, founded on his persuasion of her superior sense, which she show'd in a
“ perfect



The God of nature has enforc'd conjugal society, not only by making it agreeable, but by the principle of chastity inherent in our nature. To animals that have no instinct for pairing, chastity is utterly unknown; and to them it would be useless. The mare, the cow, the ewe, the she-goat, receive the male without ceremony, and admit the first that comes in the way without distinction. Neither have tame fowl any notion of chastity: they pair not; and the female gets no food from the male, even during incubation. But chastity and mutual fidelity are essential to all pairing animals; for wandering inclinations would render them negligent in nursing their young. Wild birds pair; and they are by instinct faithful to each other while their young require nurture. Chastity and mutual fidelity in matrimony are equally essential to the human race, and equally enforc'd by the principle of chastity, a branch of the moral sense.

Nor is chastity confined to the matrimonial state. Matrimony is instituted by nature for continuing the species; and it is the duty of man to abstain from animal enjoyment except in that state. The ceremonies of marriage, and the causes of separation and divorce, are subjected to municipal law: but if a man beget children, it is his duty to unite with the mother in taking care of them; and such union is matrimony according to the law of nature. Hence it is, that the first acts of incontinence, where enjoyment only is in view, are always attended with shame, and with a degree of remorse. At the same time, as chastity in persons who are single is only a self-duty, it is not so strongly enforc'd by the moral sense as chastity is in married persons, who

“ perfect submission to his commands; the more easily obey'd, as they were com-
“ monly, tho' to him imperceptibly. dictated by herself. She cured him of many
“ foibles, and in a word was his Minerva, under the appearance of Mentor.”



owe to each other mutual fidelity. Deviations accordingly from the former make a less figure than from the latter: we scarce ever hear of adultery among savages; tho' among them incontinence before marriage is not uncommon. In Wales, even at present, and in the highlands of Scotland, it is scarce a disgrace for a young woman to have a bastard. In the country last mentioned, the first instance known of a bastard-child being destroy'd by its mother through shame is a late one. The virtue of chastity appears to be there gaining ground; as the only temptation a woman can have to destroy her child is, to conceal her frailty. The principle of chastity, like that of propriety or of decency, is but faint among savages, and has little of that authority which it acquires among polished nations before they are corrupted by luxury. We shall have occasion to see afterward, that even the great duty of justice is but faint among barbarians, and yields too readily to every irregular impulse, till the moral sense acquires full maturity. Bougainville reports, that in the island of Otaheite, or King George's island, a young woman is free to follow her inclinations; and that her having had many lovers gives her not the less chance for a husband.

Chastity is no doubt a restraint upon nature; and therefore, if shame be removed, by making it lawful to obey the appetite, nature will prevail. In the year 1707, a contagious distemper having carried off a large proportion of the inhabitants of Iceland, the King of Denmark fell on a device to repeople the country, which succeeded to a wish. A law was made, authorising young women in that island to have bastards, even to the number of six, without wounding their reputation *. The young women were so zealous

* Don Juan de Ulloa, in his voyage to Peru, mentions a very singular taste prevalent in that country, that a man never takes a virgin to wife; and thinks himself dishonoured

zealous to repeople their country, that after a few years it was found proper to abrogate the law.

Modesty is by nature intended to guard chastity, as chastity is to guard matrimony. And modesty, like chastity, is one of those delicate principles that make no great figure among savages. In the land of Jessô, young women sometimes go naked in summer: if however they meet a stranger, they hang the head, and turn away through shame. Nature here is their only instructor *. Some savage tribes have so little notion of modesty, as to go naked, without even covering their privy parts. Regnard reports upon his own knowledge, that in Lapland, man, woman, and child, take the hot bath promiscuously, and are not ashamed to be seen in that condition, even by a stranger. As this appeared singular, I took opportunity to mention it to Dr Solander, who made more than one visit to that country. He said, that Regnard's report might be true, but without any imputation on the modesty of the Laplanders; for that their place of bathing is always so dark, that nothing can be seen. He added, that the females in Lapland, both married and unmarried, are extremely chaste. The inhabitants of Otaheite, tho' otherwise a good sort of people, seem to have as little notion of modesty as of chastity. We have Bougainville's authority, that they frankly offered their young women to the French, and were greatly surpris'd when they declined performing in public. The women of New Zeland are both chaste and modest. In Lieutenant Cook's voyage round the world, it is reported, that he stumbled upon some of them naked, searching for

dishonoured if his wife have not, before marriage, enjoy'd many lovers. If we can trust Paulus Venetus, a young woman of Thibet, in Asia, is not reckoned fit to be married till she be deflowered.

* Doth not modesty prevail among many animals? Elephants are never seen in copulation, nor cats, nor beasts of prey.

lobsters



lobsters in the sea; and that they were in great confusion for being seen in this condition by strangers.

But now, if pairing in the strictest sense be a law of nature among men, as among some other animals, how is polygamy to be accounted for, which formerly was universal, and to this day obtains among many nations? I am reduced to no dilemma here. Polygamy is derived from two sources; first, from savage manners, once universal; and next, from voluptuousness in warm climates, which instigates men of wealth to transgress every rule of temperance. These two sources I propose to handle with care, because they make a great part of the history of the female sex.

With respect to the first, sweetness of temper, a capital branch of the female character, displays itself externally, by mild looks, and gentle manners. But such graces are scarce perceptible in a female savage; and even in the most polished would not be perceived by a male savage. Among savages, strength and boldness are the only valued qualities: in these qualities females are miserably deficient; and for that reason are contemned by the males, as beings of an inferior order. The North-American tribes glory in idleness: the drudgery of labour degrades a man in their opinion, and is proper for women only. To join young persons in marriage is accordingly the business of parents; and it would be unpardonable meanness in the bridegroom to shew any fondness for the bride. Young men among the Hottentots are admitted into society with their seniors at the age of eighteen; after which it is disgraceful to keep company with females. In Guiana, a woman never eats with her husband; but after every meal attends him with water for washing. A woman in the Caribbee islands is not permitted to eat even in presence of her husband; and yet we are assured (*a*), that the women there obey with such sweet-

(*a*) Labat's voyages to the American islands.

ness



ness and respect, as never to give their husbands occasion to remind them of their duty; "an example," adds our sage author, "worthy the imitation of Christian wives, who are daily instructed from the pulpit in the duties of obedience and conjugal fidelity, *but to very little purpose.*" Dampier observes in general, that among all the wild nations he was acquainted with, the women carry the burdens, while the men walk before, and carry nothing but their arms. Women even of the highest rank are not better treated. The sovereign of Giaga, in Africa, has many wives, who are literally his slaves: one carries his bow, one his arrows, and one gives him drink; and while he is drinking, they all fall on their knees, clap their hands, and sing. Not many centuries ago, a law was made in England, prohibiting the New Testament in English to be read by women, 'prentices, journeymen, or serving men (a). What a pitiful figure must the poor women have made in that age! In Siberia, and even in Russia, the capital excepted, men treat their wives in every respect as slaves. The regulations of Peter I. put marriage upon a more respectable footing among people of rank; and yet such are the brutal manners of the Russians, that tyrannical treatment of wives is far from being eradicated.

The low condition of the female sex among savages and barbarians paved the way to polygamy. Savages, excited by a taste for variety, and still more by pride, which is gratified by many servants, delight in a multiplicity of wives. The pairing principle, tho' rooted in human nature, makes little figure among savages, yielding to every irregular appetite; and this fairly accounts why polygamy was once universal. It might indeed be thought, that animal love, were there nothing else, should have raised women

(a) 34th and 35th Henry VIII. cap. 1.



to some degree of estimation among the men. But male savages, utter strangers to decency or refinement, gratify animal love with as little ceremony as they do hunger or thirst.

Hence appears the reason of a custom that will surprize those who are unacquainted with ancient customs; which is, that women were purchased for wives, as other goods are purchased. Women by marriage became slaves; and no man will give away his daughter to be a slave, but for a valuable consideration. The practice was universal. I begin with the Jews. Abraham bought Rebekah, and gave her to his son Isaac for a wife (*a*). Jacob having nothing else to give, served Laban fourteen years for two wives (*b*). Sechem demanding in marriage Dinah, Jacob's daughter, said, "Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife (*c*)." To David, demanding Saul's daughter in marriage, Saul said, "The king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines (*d*)." In the Iliad, Agamemnon offers his daughter to Achilles for a wife, and says, that he would not demand for her any price. Pausanias reports of Danaus, that no suitors appearing to demand any of his daughters, he published, that he would give them without dowry. In Homer there is frequent mention of nuptial gifts from a bridegroom to his bride's father. From terming them gifts, it is probable that the former method of purchase was beginning to wear out. It wore out before the time of Aristotle, who infers, that their forefathers must have been a very rude people. The ancient Spaniards

(*a*) Genesis, xxiv. 53.

(*b*) Genesis, chap. xxix.

(*c*) Genesis, xxxiv. 12.

(*d*) 1 Samuel xviii. 25.

purchased



purchased their wives. We have the authority of Herodotus and of Heraclides Ponticus, that the same was practised in Thrace. And the latter adds, that if a wife was ill treated, her relations could demand her back, upon repaying the price they got for her. In the Roman law mention is made of matrimony *per aes et libram*, which was solemnized by laying down a quantity of brass, with a balance for weighing it, understood to be the price paid for the bride. This must have been once a reality, tho' it sunk down to be a mere ceremony, after it became customary for a Roman bride to bring a dowry with her. The Babylonians and the Assyrians, at stated times, collected all the marriageable young women, and disposed of them by auction. Rubruguis, in his voyage to Tartary ann. 1253, reports, that there every man bought his wife. They believe, he adds, that their wives serve them in another world as they do in this; for which reason, a widow has no chance for a second husband, whom she cannot serve in the other world. Olaus Magnus remarking, that among the ancient Goths no dower was provided on the bride's part, gives a reason, better suited perhaps to the time he lived in than to what he describes. "Apud Gothos, non mulier viro sed vir mulieri dotem assignat; ne conjux, ob magnitudinem dotis insolescens, aliquando ex placida conforte proterva evadet, atque in maritum dominari contendat*;" as if the hazard of petulancy in a wife would hinder a man to accept a dower with her:—a sad doctrine for an heiress. Giraldus Cambrensis, in his description of Wales, says, that formerly they hardly ever married without a prior cohabitation, it having been customary for parents to let out their daughters to young men upon trial, for a sum of money told down, and under a penalty if the girls were returned. This I believe to be a mistake. It is more

* "Among the Goths, a man gave a dowry for his bride, instead of receiving one with her; to prevent pride and insolence, that commonly accompany riches on the woman's part."



probable, that in Wales men purchased their wives, as was done all the world over, with liberty to return them if they proved not agreeable. The bride's parents retained the dowry, and her chance for a husband was as good as ever.

The same custom continues among barbarous nations. It continues among the Tartars, among the Mingrelians, among the Samoides, among the Ostiaks, among the people of Pegu, and of the Molucca islands. In Timor, an East-Indian island, men even sell their children to purchase more wives. The Prince of Circassia demanded from the Prince of Mingrelia, who was in suit of his daughter, a hundred slaves loaded with tapestry and other household furniture, a hundred cows, as many oxen, and as many horses. We have evidence of the same custom in Africa, particularly in Biledulgerid, among the negroes on the sea-coast, and in Monomotapa. Among the Caribbees there is one instance where a man gets a wife without paying for her. After a successful war, the victors are entertained at a feast, where the General harangues on the valour of the young men who made the best figure. Every man who has marriageable daughters, is fond to offer them to such young men without any price. The purchasing of wives is universal among the wild Arabs. When the bargain is concluded, the bridegroom is permitted to visit the bride: if she answer not his expectations, he may turn her off; but has no claim for the price he paid. The inland negroes are more polished than those on the coast; and there is scarce any remains among them of purchasing wives: the bridegroom makes presents to his bride, and her father makes presents to him. There are remaining traces in Russia of purchasing wives. Even so late as the time of Peter I. the Russians married without seeing each other; and before solemnization the bride received from the bridegroom a present of sweetmeats, soap, and other little things.

The purchasing of wives made it a lawful practice to lend a wife as one does a slave. The Spartans lent their wives to their friends; and

and Cato the elder is said to have done the same. The Indians of Calicut frequently exchange wives.

If brutish manners alone be sufficient to degrade the female sex, they may reckon upon extreme harsh treatment when purchased to be slaves. The Giagas, a fierce and wandering nation in the central parts of Africa, being supinely idle at home, subject their wives and their slaves to every sort of drudgery, such as digging, sowing, reaping, cutting wood, grinding corn, fetching water, &c. These poor creatures are suffered to toil in the fields and woods, ready to faint with excessive labour, while the monsters of men will not give themselves even the trouble of training animals for work, tho' they have the example of the Portuguese before their eyes. It is the business of the women among the wandering Arabs of Africa to card, spin, and weave, and to manage other household affairs. They milk the cattle, grind, bake, brew, dress the victuals, and bring home wood and water. They even take care of their husbands horses, feed, curry, comb, bridle, and saddle them. They would also be obliged, like Moorish wives, to dig, sow, and reap their corn; but luckily for them the Arabs live entirely upon plunder. Father Joseph Gumilla, in his account of a country in South America, bordering upon the great river Oroonoko, describes pathetically the miserable slavery of married women there, and mentions a practice that would appear incredible to one unacquainted with the manners of that country, which is, that married women frequently destroy their female infants. A married woman, of a virtuous character and good understanding, having been guilty of that crime, was reproached by our author in bitter terms. She heard him patiently to an end, with eyes fixed on the ground; and answered as follows. " I wish to God, Father, I wish to God, that my mother had by my death prevented the manifold distresses I have endured, and have yet to endure as long I live. Had she kindly



“ stifled me at my birth, I should not have felt the pain of
“ death, nor numberless other pains to which life hath subject-
“ ed me. Consider, Father, our deplorable condition. Our hus-
“ bands go to hunt with their bows and arrows, and trouble
“ themselves no farther. We are dragged along, with one infant
“ at our breast, and another in a basket. They return in the e-
“ vening without any burden: we return with the burden of our
“ children; and, tho’ tired out with a long march, are not per-
“ mitted to sleep, but must labour the whole night in grinding
“ maize, to make chica for them. They get drunk, and in their
“ drunkenness beat us, draw us by the hair of the head, and
“ tread us under foot. And what have we to comfort us for
“ slavery, perhaps of twenty years? A young wife is brought in
“ upon us, who is permitted to abuse us and our children, be-
“ cause we are no longer regarded. Can human nature endure
“ such tyranny! What kindness can we show to our female chil-
“ dren equal to that of relieving them from such servitude, more
“ bitter a thousand times than death? I say again, would to God
“ that my mother had put me under ground the moment I was
“ born.” One would readily imagine, that the women of that
country should have the greatest abhorrence at matrimony: but
all-prevailing nature determines the contrary; and the appetite for
matrimony overbalances every rational consideration.

Nations polish by degrees; and from the lowest state to which
a human creature can be reduced, women came in time to be re-
stored to their native dignity. Attention to dress is the first symp-
tom of that progress. Male savages, even of the grossest kind,
are fond of dress. Charlevoix mentions a young American hired
as a rower, who adjusted his dress with great care before he en-
tered the boat; and at intervals inspected his looking-glass, to see
whether the violence of his motion had not discomposed the red
upon his cheeks. We read not of vanity for dress in females of
such



such savage nations : they are too much dispirited to think of being agreeable. Among nations in any degree humanized we find a different scene. In the isthmus of Darien government has made some progress, as a chieftain is elected for life : a glimmering of civility appears among the inhabitants ; and as some regard is paid to women, they rival the men in dress. Both sexes wear rings in their ears and noses ; and are adorned with many rows of shells hanging down from the neck. A female in a sultry climate submits to fry all day long under a load of twenty or thirty pounds of shells ; and a male under double that load. Well may they exclaim with Alexander, “ Oh Athenians ! what do I not endure “ to gain your approbation ?” The female Caribbeans and Brazilians are not less fond of ornament than the males. Hottentot ladies are fond of dress ; and strive to outdo each other in adorning their krosses, and the bag that holds their pipe and tobacco : European ladies are not more vain of their silks and embroideries. Women in Lapland are much addicted to finery. They wear broad girdles, upon which hang chains and rings without end, commonly made of tin, sometimes of silver, weighing perhaps twenty pounds. The Greenlanders are nasty and slovenly, eat with their dogs, make food of the vermin that make food of them, seldom or never wash themselves ; and yet the women, who make some figure among the men, are gaudy in their dress. Their chief ornaments are pendants at their ears, with glass beads of various colours ; and they draw lines with a needle and black thread between their eyes, cross the forehead, upon the chin, hands, and legs. The negroes of the kingdom of Ardrah in Guinea have made a considerable progress in police, and in the art of living. Their women carry dress and finery to an extravagance. They are clothed with loads of the finest satins and chintzes, and are adorned with a profusion of gold. In a sultry climate they gratify vanity at the expence of ease. Among the inland negroes, who are
more



more polished than those on the sea-coast, beside domestic concerns, the women sow, plant, and reap. A man however suffers in the esteem of the world, if he permit his wives to toil like slaves while he is indulging in ease. From that auspicious commencement, the female sex have risen in a slow but steady progress to higher and higher degrees of estimation. Conversation is their talent, and a display of delicate sentiments: the gentleness of their manners, and winning behaviour, captivate every sensible heart. Of such refinements savages have little conception: but when the more delicate senses are unfolded, the peculiar beauties of the female sex, internal as well as external, are brought into full light; and women, formerly considered as objects of animal love merely, are now valued as faithful friends and agreeable companions. Matrimony assumes a more decent form, being the union, not of a master and slave, but of two persons equal in rank uniting to form a family. And it contributed greatly to this delicious refinement, that in temperate climes animal love is moderate, and women long retain good looks, and power of procreation. Thus marriage became honourable among polished nations; which of course banished the barbarous custom of purchasing wives; for a man who wishes to have his daughter properly matched, will gladly give a dowry with her, instead of selling her as a slave.

Polygamy is found intimately connected with the purchasing wives. There is no limitation in purchasing slaves: nor has a woman purchased as a wife or a slave, any just cause for complaining, that others are purchased as she was: on the contrary, she is in part relieved, by addition of hands for performing the servile offices of the family. Polygamy accordingly has always been permitted, where men pay for their wives. The Jews purchased their wives, and were indulged in polygamy (a). Diodorus Sicu-

(a) Leviticus, xviii. 18.



lus says, that polygamy was permitted in Egypt, except to priests (a). This probably was the case originally; but when the Egyptian manners came to be polished, a man gave a dowry with his daughter, instead of receiving a price for her; witness Solomon, who got the city of Gazer in dowry with the King of Egypt's daughter. When that custom became universal, we may be certain that it would put an end to polygamy. And accordingly Herodotus affirms, that polygamy was prohibited in Egypt (b). Polygamy undoubtedly prevailed in Greece and Rome, while it was customary to purchase wives; but improved manners put an end to the latter, and consequently to the former. Polygamy to this day obtains in the cold country of Kamskatka; and in the still colder country round Hudson's bay. In the land of Jesso, near Japan, a man may have two wives, who perform every sort of domestic drudgery. The negroes in general purchase their wives, and deal in polygamy. Polygamy is the law in Monomotapa. Polygamy and the purchasing wives were customary among the original inhabitants of the Canary islands. The men in Chili buy their wives, and deal in polygamy.

The low condition of women among barbarians introduced polygamy, and the purchasing women to be wives. And the just respect paid to them among civilized nations, restored the law of nature, and confined a man to one wife. Their equality as to rank and dignity bars the man from taking another wife, as it bars the woman from taking another husband. We find traces in ancient history of polygamy wearing out gradually. It wore out in Greece, as manners refined; but such was the influence of long habit, that tho' a man was confined to one wife, concubines were in-

(a) Lib. 1.

(b) Lib. 2. § 92.

dulged



dulged without limitation. In Germany, when Tacitus wrote, very few traces remained of polygamy. “*Severa illic matrimonia, nec ullam morum partem magis laudaveris: nam prope foli barbarorum fingulis uxoribus contenti sunt, exceptis admodum paucis, qui non libidine, sed ob nobilitatem, plurimis nuptiis ambiuntur* *.” When polygamy was in that country so little practised, we may be certain the purchasing wives did not remain in vigour. And Tacitus accordingly, mentioning the general rule, “*dotem non uxor marito, sed uxori maritus offert* †,” explains it away by observing, that the only *dos* given by the bridegroom were marriage-presents, and that he at the same time received marriage-presents on the bride’s part (*a*). The equality of the matrimonial engagement, for the mutual benefit of husband and wife, was well understood among the Gauls. Cæsar (*b*) says, “*Viri quantas pecunias ab uxoribus dotis nomine acceperunt, tantas ex suis bonis, æstimatione facta, cum dotibus communicant. Hujus omnis pecuniæ conjunctim ratio habetur, fructusque servantur. Uter eorum vita superarit, ad eum pars utriusque cum fructibus superiorum temporum pervenit* ‡.” In

* “*Marriage is there rigidly respected; nor is there any part of their morality more laudable: for they are almost the only race of barbarians who are contented with a single wife; a very few excepted, who, not from incontinency, but from an ambition of nobility, take more wives than one.*”

† “*The husband gives a dowry to the wife, but the wife brings none to the husband.*”

‡ “*Whatever sum the husband has received as his wife’s portion, he allots as much from his own effects to be joined with it. An account is kept of this joint stock, and the fruits of it are preserved. Upon the death of either, the surviving spouse has the property of both the shares, with the fruits or profits.*”

(*a*) *De moribus Germanorum, cap. 18.*

(*b*) *Lib. 6. cap. 19. De bello Gallico.*



Japan, and in Nicaragua, a man can have but one wife; but he may have many concubines. In Siam, polygamy is still permitted, though the bride brings a dowry with her: but that absurdity is corrected by refined manners; it being held improper, and even disgraceful, to have more than one wife. The purchasing wives wore out of fashion among the ancient Tuscans; for it was held infamous, that marriage should be the result of any motive but mutual love. This at the same time put an end to polygamy. Polygamy was probably early eradicated among the ancient Persians; for the bride's dowry was settled in marriage-articles, as among us. And there is the same reason for presuming, that it was not long permitted in Mexico; marriage there being solemnized by the priest, and the bride's dower specified, which was restored in case of a separation. In the countries where the Christian religion was first propagated, women were fast advancing to an equality with the men, and polygamy was wearing out of fashion. The pure spirit of the gospel hastened its downfall; and tho' not prohibited expressly, it was however held, that Christianity is a religion too pure for polygamy.

But, as hinted above, it was by slow degrees that the female sex emerged out of slavery, to possess the elevated state they justly are intitled to by nature. The practice of exposing infants among the Greeks, and many other nations, is an invincible proof of their depression, even after the custom ceased of purchasing them. It is wisely ordered by Providence, that the affection of a woman to her children commences with their birth, because during infancy all depends on her care. As during that period the father is of little use to his child, his affection is extremely slight till the child begin to prattle and shew some fondness for him. The exposing an infant therefore shows, that the mother was little regarded: if she had been allowed a vote, the practice never would have obtained in any country. In the first book of the Iliad, Achilles says to A-



gamemnon, who threatened to force from him his mistress Briseis,
 " Another thing I will tell thee : record it in thy soul. For a wo-
 " man these hands shall never fight, with thee nor with thy foes.
 " Come, seize Briseis : ye Argives, take the prize ye gave. But
 " beware of other spoil, which lies stowed in my ships on the
 " shore. I will not be plundered farther. If other be thy thoughts,
 " Atrides, come in arms, a trial make : these very slaves of thine
 " shall behold thy blood pouring around my spear *." The co-
 medies of Menander, Philemon, and Diphilus, are lost ; but man-
 ners must have been little polished in their time, so far as can be
 conjectured from their translators or imitators, Plautus and Te-
 rence. Married women in their comedies are sometimes intro-
 duced, and treated with very little respect. A man commonly
 vents his wrath on his wife, and scolds her as the cause of the
 misconduct of their children. A lady, perhaps too inquisitive about
 her husband's amours, is scolded by him in the following words.

* Pope hides that sentiment as follows.

" Seize on Briseis, whom the Grecians doom'd
 " My prize of war, yet tamely see resum'd ;
 " And seize secure ; no more Achilles draws
 " His conqu'ring sword in any woman's cause.
 " The gods command me to forgive the past ;
 " But let this first invasion be the last :
 " For know, thy blood, when next thou dar'st invade,
 " Shall stream in vengeance on my reeking blade."

Such contempt of the female sex as expressed by Achilles was perhaps thought too gross for a modern ear without some disguise. But did not Pope discover, that one capital beauty in Homer is the delineation of ancient manners ? At that rate, had it fallen to his share to describe Julius Cæsar, he would have dressed him like a modern beau. And after all, in a genteel assembly, what a savage would he appear, without breeches, and without linen !

" Ni



“ Ni mala, ni stulta fis, ni indomita impósque animi,

“ Quod viro esse odio videas, tute tibi odio habeas.

“ Præter hac si mihi tale post hunc diem

“ Faxis, faxo foris vidua visas patrem *.”

One will not be surpris'd, that women in Greece were treated with no great respect by their husbands. A woman cannot have much attraction who passes all her time in solitude: to be admir'd, she must receive the high polish of society. At the same time, men of fashion were so much improved in manners as to relish society with agreeable women, where such could be found. And hence the figure that courtezans made at that period, especially in Athens. They studied the temper and taste of the men, and endeavoured to gain their affection by every winning art. The daily conversations they listened to on philosophy, politics, poetry, enlightened their understanding and improved their taste. Their houses became agreeable schools, where every one might be instructed in his own art. Socrates and Pericles met frequently at the house of Aspasia: from her they acquired delicacy of taste, and in return procured to her public respect and reputation. Greece at that time was governed by orators, over whom some celebrated courtezans had great influence, and by that means entered deep into the government. It was said of the famous Demosthenes, “ The measure he hath meditated on for a year, will

* “ Would you be held a wife and virtuous spouse,

“ And of discretion due, observe this counsel:

“ Whatever I, your lord, blame or approve,

“ Still let your praise or censure be the same.

“ But hearkee, — be this reprimand the last:

“ If you again offend, no more a wife

“ Within these walls; — your father has you back.”



“ be overturned in a day by a woman.” It appears accordingly from Plautus and Terence, that Athenian courtezans lived in great splendor. See in particular *Theautontimorumenos*, act 3. scene 2.

I proceed to the other cause of polygamy, mentioned also above, viz. opulence in a hot climate. Men there have a burning appetite for animal enjoyment; and women become old and lose the prolific quality, not long after the age of maturity in a temperate climate. These circumstances dispose men of opulence to purchase their wives, that they may not be confined to one; and purchase they must, for no man, without a valuable consideration, will surrender his daughter to be one of many who are destined to gratify the carnal appetite of one man. The numerous wives and concubines in Asiatic harems are all of them purchased with money. In the hot climate of Hindostan, polygamy is universal, and men buy their wives. The same obtains in China: after the price is adjusted and paid, the bride is conducted to the bridegroom's house locked in a sedan, and the key delivered to him: if he be not satisfied with his bargain, he sends her back at the expence of losing the sum he paid for her: if satisfied, he feasts his male friends in one room, and she her female friends in another. A man who has little substance takes a wife for his son from a hospital, which saves him a dowry.

It has been pleaded for polygamy in warm climates, that women are fit for being married at or before the age of ten, and past child-bearing at twenty-five, while men are yet in the prime of life; and therefore that a second wife ought to be permitted, who can bear children. Is then the interest of the female sex to be totally disregarded in the matrimonial engagement, as if women were intended by nature for beasts of burden only? But even putting them out of the question, it ought to be considered, that a man, by taking a second wife, deprives some other of the privilege all men have to be married. The argument indeed would
be

be conclusive, were ten females born for one male, as is said to be the case in Bantam: but as an equality of males and females is the destination of nature, the argument has no force. All men are born equal by nature; and to permit polygamy in any degree, is to authorise some to usurp the privilege of others.

Thus in hot climates women remain in the same humble and dependent state, in which all women were originally, when all men were savages. Women by the law of Hindostan are not admitted to be witnesses, even in a civil cause; and I blush to acknowledge, that in Scotland the same law has not been long in disuse.

In contradiction to the climate, Christianity has banished polygamy from Ethiopia, tho' the judges are far from being severe upon that crime. The heat of the climate makes them wish to indulge in a plurality of wives, even at the expence of purchasing each of them. Among the Christians of Congo polygamy is in use, as formerly when they were Pagans. To be confined to one wife during life, is held by the most zealous Christians there, to be altogether irrational: rather than be so confined, they would renounce Christianity.

Beside polygamy, many other customs depend on the nature of the matrimonial engagement, and vary according to its different kinds. Marriage-ceremonies, for that reason, vary in different countries, and at different times. Where the practice is to purchase a wife, whether among savages, or among pampered people in hot climates, the payment of the price completes the marriage, without any other ceremony. Other ceremonies however are sometimes practised. In old Rome, the bride was attended to the bridegroom's house with a female slave carrying a distaff and a spindle, importing that she ought to spin for the family. Among the savages of Canada and of the neighbouring countries, a strap, a kettle, and a faggot, are put in the bride's cabin, as symbols of
her

her duty, viz. to carry burdens, to dress the victuals, and to provide wood. On the other hand, the bride, in token of her slavery, takes her axe, cuts down timber, bundles it up, and lays it before the door of the bridegroom's hut. All the salutation she receives is, "It is time to go to rest." The inhabitants of Sierra Leona, a negro country, have in all their towns a boarding-school, where young ladies are educated for a year under the care of a venerable old gentleman. When their education is completed, they are carried in their best attire to a public assembly; which may be termed a matrimonial market, because there young men convene to make a choice. Those who fit themselves to their fancy, pay the dowry, and over and above gratify the old superintendent for his extraordinary care in educating the bride. In the island of Java, the bride, in token of subjection, washes the bridegroom's feet; and this is a capital ceremony. In Ruffia, the bride presents to the bridegroom a bundle of rods, to be used against her when she deserves to be chastised; and at the same time she pulls off his boots. The present Empress, prone to reform the rude manners of her subjects, has discountenanced that ceremony among people of fashion. Very different were the manners of Peru before the Spanish conquest. The bridegroom carried shoes to the bride, and put them on with his own hands. But there purchasing of wives was unknown. Marriage-ceremonies in Lapland are directed by the same principle. It is the custom there for a man to make presents to his children of rein-deer; and young women, such as have a large stock of rein-deer, have lovers in plenty. A young man looks for such a wife at a fair, or at their meetings for paying taxes. He carries to the house of the young woman's parents, some of his relations; being solicitous in particular to chuse an eloquent speaker. They are all admitted except the lover, who must wait till he be called in. After drinking some spirits, brought along for the purpose, the spokesman addresses the father



father in the most humble terms, bowing the knee as if he were introduced to a prince. He styles him, the worshipful father, the high and mighty father, the best and most illustrious father, &c. &c.

In viewing the chain of causes and effects, instances sometimes occur of bizarre facts, starting from the chain without any cause that can be discovered. The marriage-ceremonies among the Hottentots are of that nature. After all matters are adjusted among the old people, the young couple are shut up in a room by themselves, where they pass the night in struggling for superiority, which proves a very serious work where the bride is reluctant. If she persevere to the last without yielding, the young man is discarded; but if he prevail, which commonly happens, the marriage is completed by another ceremony, not less singular. The men and women squat on the ground in different circles, the bridegroom in the centre of one, and the bride in the centre of another. The Suri, or master of religious ceremonies, pisses on the bridegroom; who receives the stream with eagerness, and rubs it into the furrows of the fat with which he is covered. He performs the same ceremony on the bride, who is equally respectful. Marriage-ceremonies among the Kamskatkans are still more whimsical. A young man, after making his proposals, enters into the service of his intended father-in-law. If he prove agreeable, he is admitted to the trial of the *touch*. The young woman is swaddled up in leathern thongs; and in that condition is put under the guard of some old women. He watches every opportunity of a slack guard to uncase her, in order to touch what is always the most concealed. The bride must resist, in appearance at least; and therefore cries out to summon her guards; who fall with fury upon the bridegroom, tear his hair, scratch his face, and act in violent opposition. The attempts of the lover prove sometimes unsuccessful for months; but the moment the

touch

touch is atchieved, the bride testifies her satisfaction, by pronouncing the words *Ni, Ni*, with a soft and loving voice. The next night they bed together without any opposition. One marriage-ceremony among the inland negroes is singular. So soon as preliminaries are adjusted, the bridegroom with a number of his companions set out at night, and surround the house of the bride, as if intending to carry her off by force. She and her female attendants, pretending to make all possible resistance, cry aloud for help, but no person appears. This resembles strongly a marriage-ceremony that is or was customary in Wales. On the morning of the wedding-day, the bridegroom, accompanied with his friends on horseback, demands the bride. Her friends, who are likewise on horseback, give a positive refusal, upon which a mock scuffle ensues. The bride, mounted behind her next kinsman, is carried off, and is pursued by the bridegroom and his friends with loud shouts. It is not uncommon to see on such an occasion two or three hundred sturdy Cambro-Britons riding at full speed, crossing and jostling, to the no small amusement of the spectators. When they have fatigued themselves and their horses, the bridegroom is suffered to overtake his bride. He leads her away in triumph, and the scene is concluded with feasting and festivity. The same marriage-ceremony was usual in Muscovy, Lithuania, and Livonia, as reported by Olaus Magnus (a).

Divorce also depends on the nature of the matrimonial engagement. Where the law is, that a man must purchase his wife as one does a slave; it follows naturally, that he may purchase as many as he can pay for, and that he may turn them off at his pleasure. This law is universal, without a single exception. The Jews, who purchased their wives, were privileged to divorce them,

(a) Lib. 14. cap. 9.

without



without being obliged to assign a cause (a). The negroes purchase their wives, and turn them off when they think proper. The same law obtains in China, in Monomotapa, in the isthmus of Darien, in Caribæana, and even in the cold country round Hudson's bay. All the savages of South America who live near the Oroonoko, purchase as many wives as they can maintain; and divorce them at their pleasure.

Very different is a matrimonial engagement between equals, where a dowry is contracted with the bride. The nature of the engagement implies, that neither of them is privileged to dismiss the other without a just cause. In Mexico, where the bride brought a dowry, there could be no divorce but by mutual consent. In Lapland, the women who have a stock of rein-deer, as above mentioned, make a considerable figure. This lays a foundation for a matrimonial covenant as among us, which bars polygamy, and consequently divorce without a just cause. And when these are barred in several instances, the prohibition in time becomes general.

I proceed to adultery, the criminality of which depends also in some measure on the nature of the matrimonial engagement. Where wives are purchased, and polygamy is indulged, adultery can scarce be reckoned a crime in the husband; and where there are a plurality of wives, sound sense makes it but a venial crime in any one of them. But as men are the lawgivers, the punishment of female adultery, where polygamy takes place, is generally too severe. It is however more or less severe in different countries, in proportion as the men are more or less prone to revenge. The Chinese are a mild people, and depend more on locks and bars for preventing adultery, than on severity; the punish-

(a) Deuteronomy, chap. 24.



ment being only to sell an adulteress for a slave. The same law obtains in the kingdom of Laos, bordering upon China. An adulteress among the ancient Egyptians was punished with the loss of her nose. In ancient Greece, a pecuniary penalty was inflicted on an adulterer (*a*). An adulteress was probably punished more severely. Among the negroes, who have very little delicacy, adultery is but slightly punished; except in the kingdom of Benin. There an adulteress, after a severe whipping, is banished; and the adulterer forfeits his goods, which are bestow'd on the injured husband. Among the ancient Germans, a grave and virtuous people, adultery was extremely rare. An adulteress was deprived of her hair, expelled from her husband's house, and whipped through the village (*b*). In Japan, where the people are remarkably fierce, female adultery is always punished with death. In Tonquin, a woman guilty of adultery is thrown to an elephant to be destroy'd. By the law of Moses, an adulteress is punished with death, as also the adulterer (*c*). Margaret of Burgundy, Queen to Lewis Hutin King of France, was hang'd for adultery; and her lovers were flea'd alive. Such were the savage manners of those times. There is an old law in Wales, that for defiling the Prince's bed the offender must pay a rod of pure gold, of the thickness of the finger of a ploughman who has ploughed nine years, and in length from the ground to the Prince's mouth when sitting.

Matrimony between a single pair, for mutual comfort, and for procreating children, implies the strictest mutual fidelity. Adultery however is a deeper crime in the wife than in the husband:

(*a*) *Odyſſey*, book 8. l. 384.

(*b*) Tacitus, *De moribus Germanorum*, cap. 19.

(*c*) *Leviticus*, xx. 10.



in him it may happen occasionally, with little or no alienation of affection; but the superior modesty of the female sex is such, that a wife does not yield, till unlawful love prevails, not only over modesty, but over duty to her husband. Adultery therefore in the wife, is a breach of the matrimonial engagement in a double respect: it is an alienation of affection from the husband, which unqualifies her to be his friend and companion; and it tends to bring a spurious issue into the family, betraying the husband to maintain and educate children who are not his own.

The gradual advance of the female sex to an equality with the male sex, is visible in the laws of female succession that have been established at different times, and in different countries. It is not probable, that in any country women were early admitted to inherit land: they are too much despised among savages for so valuable a privilege. The fierceness and brutality of the ancient Romans in particular, unqualified the women to be their companions: it never entered their thoughts, that women should inherit land, which they cannot defend by the sword. But women came to be regarded in proportion as the national manners refined. The law prohibiting female succession in land, established in days of rusticity, was held to be rigorous and unjust when the Romans were more polished. Proprietors of land, such of them as had no sons, were disposed to evade the law, by ample provisions to their daughters, which rendered the land of little value to the collateral heir-male. To reform that abuse, as termed by the veterans, the *lex Voconia* was made, confining such provisions within moderate bounds: and this regulation continued in force, till regard for the female sex broke through every legal restraint, and established female succession in land, as formerly in moveables*.

barous

* Justinian, or more properly the lawyers employ'd by him upon that absurd



barous nations who crush'd the Roman power, were not long in adopting the mild manners of the conquered: they admitted women to inherit land, and they exacted a double composition for injuries done to them. By the Salic law among the Franks, women were expressly prohibited to inherit land; but we learn from the forms of Marculfus, that this prohibition was in time eluded by the following solemnity. The man who wanted to put his daughter upon a footing with his sons, carried her before the commissary, saying, "My dear child, an ancient and impious custom bars a young woman from succeeding to her father: but as all my children equally are given me by God, I ought to love them equally; therefore, my dear child, my will is, that my effects shall divide equally between you and your brethren." In polished states, women are not excluded from succeeding even to the crown. Russia and Britain afford examples of women capable to govern, in an absolute as well as in a limited monarchy*.

What

compilation the Pandects, is guilty of a gross error, in teaching, that by the Twelve Tables males and females of the same degree succeeded equally to land. The *lex Voconia* (which see explain'd in *Alexandri ab Alexandro geniales dies, lib. 6. cap. 15.*) vouches the contrary. And one cannot see without pain Justinian's error, not only adopted by an illustrious modern, but a cause assigned for it so refined and subtle as to go quite out of sight, *L'esprit de loix, liv. 27. chap. 1.* I venture to affirm, that subtle reasoning never had any influence upon a rough and illiterate people; and therefore, at the time of the Decemvirs, who compos'd the Twelve Tables of law, the subtle cause assigned by our author could not have been the motive, had the Decemvirs introduced female succession in land, which they certainly did not.

* The kingdom of Gurrah in Hindostan was governed by Queen Dargoutté, eminent for spirit and beauty. Small as that kingdom is, it contained about 70,000 towns and villages, the effect of long peace and prosperity. Being invaded by A-saph Can, not many years ago, the Queen, mounted on an elephant, led her troops to battle. Her son Rajah Bier Shaw, being wounded in the heat of action, was by her orders carried from the field. That accident having occasioned a general



What I have said, regards those nations only where polygamy is prohibited. I take it for granted, that women are not admitted to inherit land where polygamy is lawful: they are not in such estimation as to be intitled to a privilege so illustrious.

Among the Hurons in North America, where the regal dignity is hereditary, and great regard paid to the royal family, the succession is continued through females, in order to preserve the royal blood untainted. When the chief dies, his son succeeds not, but his sister's son; who certainly is of the royal blood, whoever be the father: and when the royal family is at an end, a chief is elected by the noblest matron of the tribe. The same rule of succession obtains among the Natches, a people bordering on the Mississippi; it being an article in their creed, That their royal family are children of the sun. On the same belief was founded a law in Peru, appointing the heir of the crown to marry his sister; which, equally with the law mentioned, preserved the blood of the sun in the royal family, and did not encroach so much upon the natural order of succession.

Female succession depends in some degree on the nature of the government. In Holland, all the children, male and female, succeed equally. The Hollanders live by commerce, which women are capable of as well as men. Land at the same time is so scanty in that country, as to render it impracticable to raise a family by engrossing a great estate in land; and there is nothing but the am-

neral panic, the Queen was left with no more but 300 horsemen. Adhar, who conducted her elephant, exhorted her to retire while it could be done with safety. The heroine rejected the advice. "It is true," said she, "we are overcome in battle; but not in honour. Shall I, for a lingering ignominious life, lose a reputation that has been my chief study! Let your gratitude repay now the obligations you owe me: pull out your dagger, and save me from slavery, by putting an end to my life."

bition



bition of raising a family that can move a man to prefer one of his children before the rest. The same law obtains in Hamburgh, for the same reasons. Extensive estates in land support great families in Britain, a circumstance unfavourable to younger children. But probably in London, and in other great trading towns, mercantile men take care to prevent the law, by making a more equal distribution of their effects among their children.

After traversing a great part of the globe with painful industry, will not one be apt to conclude, that originally females were every where despised, as they are at present among the savages of America; that wives, like slaves, were procured by barter; that polygamy was universal; and that divorce depended on the whim of the husband? Such conclusion however would be rash; for upon a more accurate scrutiny, an extensive country is discovered, where polygamy never was in fashion, and where women were from the beginning courted and honoured as among the most polished nations. But the reader is humbly requested to suspend his curiosity, till he peruse the following sketch, concerning the progress of manners, which appears to be the proper place for that curious and interesting subject.

We proceed now to a capital article in the progress of the female sex; which is, to trace the different degrees of restraint imposed upon married women in different countries, and at different times in the same country; and to assign the causes of these differences. Where luxury is unknown, and where people have no wants but what are suggested by uncorrupted nature, men and women live together with great freedom, and with great innocence. In Greece anciently, even young women of rank ministered to men in bathing.

“ While these officious tend the rites divine,

“ The last fair branch of the Nestorian line,

“ Sweet



“ Sweet Polycasté, took the pleasant toil

“ To bath the Prince, and pour the fragrant oil (a).

Men and women among the Spartans bathed promiscuously, and wrestled together stark naked. Tacitus reports, that the Germans had not even separate beds, but lay promiscuously upon reeds or heath along the walls of the house. The same custom prevails even at present among the temperate Highlanders of Scotland; and is not quite worn out in New England. A married woman is under no confinement, because no man thinks of an act so irregular as to attempt her chastity. In the Caribbee islands adultery was unknown, till European Christians made settlements there. At the same time, there scarce can be any fewel for jealousy, where men purchase their wives, put them away at pleasure, and even lend them to a friend. But when by ripening sensibility a man puts a value on the affections of his wife, and on her attachment to him, jealousy commences; jealousy of a rival in her affections. Jealousy accordingly is a symptom of an increasing esteem for the female sex; and that passion is visibly creeping in among the natives of Virginia. It begins to have a real foundation, when inequality of rank and of riches takes place. Men of opulence study pleasure: married women become objects of a corrupted taste; and often fall a sacrifice, where morals are imperfect, and the climate favourable to animal love. Greece is a delicious country, the people handsome; and when the ancient Greeks made the greatest figure, they were extremely defective in morals. They became jealous of their honour and of rivals; which prompted them, according to the rough manners of those times, to exclude women from society with men. Their women accor-

(a) Odyssy, book 3. See also book 8. line 491.

dingly



dingly were never seen in public; and if my memory serve me, an accidental interview of a man and a woman on the public street brings on the catastrophe in a Greek tragedy. In Hecuba, a tragedy of Euripides, the Queen excuses herself for declining to visit Polyestor, saying, "that it is indecent for a woman to look a man in "the face." In the Electra of Sophocles, Antigone is permitted by her mother Jocasta to take a view of the Argian army from a high tower: an old man who accompanies her, being alarmed at seeing some females pass that way, and afraid of censure, prays Antigone to retire; "for," says he, "women are prone to detraction; and to them the merest trifle is a fruitful subject of "conversation *." Spain is a country that scarce yields to Greece in fineness of climate; and the morals of its people in the dark ages of Christianity, were not more pure than those of Greece. By a law of the Visigoths in Spain, a surgeon was prohibited to take blood from a free woman, except in presence of her husband or nearest relations. By the Salic law (*b*), he who squeezes the hand of a free woman shall pay a fine of 15 golden shillings. In the fourteenth century, it was a rule in France, that no married woman ought to admit a man to visit her in absence of her husband. Female chastity must at that time have been extremely feeble, when so little trust was reposed in the fair sex.

To treat women in that manner, may possibly be necessary, where they are in request for no end but to gratify animal love. But where they are intended for the more elevated purposes, of being

* Women are not prone to detraction unless when denied the comforts of society. The censure of Sophocles is probably just with respect to his countrywomen, because they were lock'd up. Old maids have the character with us of being prone to detraction; but that holds not unless they retire from society.

(a) Tit. 22.



friends and companions, as well as affectionate mothers, a very different treatment is proper. Locks and spics will never answer; for these tend to debase their minds, to corrupt their morals, and to render them contemptible. By gradual openings in the more delicate senses, particularly in all the branches of the moral sense, chastity, one of these branches, acquires a commanding influence over females; and when they are treated with humanity, becomes their ruling principle. In that refined state, women are trusted with their own conduct, and may safely be trusted: they make delicious companions, and uncorruptible friends; and that such at present is generally their case in Britain, I am bold to affirm. Anne of Britany, wife to Charles VIII. and to Lewis XII. Kings of France, introduced the fashion of ladies appearing publicly at court. This fashion was introduced much later in England: even down to the Revolution, women of rank never appeared in the streets without a mask. In Scotland, the veil, or plaid, continued long in fashion, with which every woman of rank was covered when she went abroad. That fashion has not been laid aside above forty years. In Italy, women were much longer confined than in France; and in Spain the indulging them with some liberty is but creeping into fashion at present. In Abyffinia polygamy is prohibited; and married women of fashion have by custom obtained the privilege of visiting their friends, tho' not much with the good-will of many husbands. It were to be wished, that a veil could be drawn over the following part of their history. The growth of luxury and sensuality, undermining every moral principle, renders both sexes equally dissolute: wives in that case deserve to be again lock'd up; but the time of such severity is past. Then indeed it becomes indecent for the two sexes to bathe promiscuously. The men in Rome, copying the Greeks, plunged together into the same bath, and became such proficient in assurance,



rance, that men and women did the same (a). Hadrian prohibited that indecent custom. Marcus Antoninus renewed the prohibition; and Alexander Severus, a second time: but to so little purpose, that even the primitive Christians made no difficulty to follow the custom: such appetite there is for being *nudus cum nuda*, when justified by fashion. This custom withstood even the thunder of general councils; and was not dropt till people became more decent, in appearance at least.

In days of innocence, when modesty is the ruling passion of the female sex, we find great frankness in external behaviour; for women who are above suspicion are little solicitous about appearances. At the same period, and for the same reason, we find great looseness in writing; witness the Queen of Navarre's tales. In the capital of France at present, chastity, far from being practised, is scarce admitted to be a female virtue. But people who take much freedom in private, are extremely circumspect in public: no indecent expression nor insinuation is admitted, even into their plays or other writings. In England the women are less corrupted than in France; and for that reason are not so scrupulous with respect to decency in writing.

Hitherto of the female sex in temperate climes, where polygamy is prohibited. Very different is their condition in hot climes, which inflame animal love in both sexes equally. In the hot regions of Asia, where polygamy is indulged, and wives are purchased for gratifying the carnal appetite merely, it is vain to think of restraining them otherwise than by locks and bars, after having once tasted enjoyment. Where polygamy is indulged, the body is the only object of jealousy; not the mind, as there can be no mutual affection between a man and his instruments of sensual

(a) Plutarch, Life of Cato.

pleasure.



pleasure. And if women be so little virtuous as not to be safely trusted with their own conduct, they ought to be lock'd up; for there is no just medium between absolute confinement and absolute freedom. The Chinese are so jealous of their wives, as even to lock them up from their relations; and so great is their diffidence of the female sex in general, that brothers and sisters are not permitted to converse together. When women are permitted to go abroad, they are shut up in a close sedan into which no eye can penetrate. The intrigues carried on by the wives of the Chinese Emperor, and the jealousy that reigns among them, render them unhappy. But luckily, as women are little regarded where polygamy is indulged, their ambition and intrigues give less disturbance to the government, than in the courts of European princes. The ladies of Hindostan cover their heads with a gauze veil, even at home, which they lay not aside except in presence of their nearest relations. A Hindoo buys his wife; and the first time he is permitted to see her without a veil, is after marriage in his own house. In several hot countries, women are put under the guard of eunuchs as an additional security; and black eunuchs are commonly preferred for their ugliness. But as a woman, deprived of the society of men, is apt to be inflamed even with the appearance of a man, some jealous nations, refining upon that circumstance, employ old maids, termed *duennas*, for guarding their women. In the city of Moka, in Arabia Felix, women of fashion never appear on the street in day-light; but it is a proof of manners refined above those in neighbouring countries, that they are permitted to visit one another in the evening. If they find men in their way, they draw aside to let them pass. A French surgeon being called by one of the King of Yeman's chief officers, to cure a rheumatism which had seized two of his wives, was permitted to handle the parts affected; but he could not get a sight of their faces.



I proceed to examine more minutely the manners of women, as resulting from the degree of restraint they are under in different countries. In the warm regions of Asia, where polygamy is indulged, the education of young women is extremely loose, being calculated for the sole end of animal pleasure. They are accomplished in such graces and allurements as tend to inflame the sensual appetite: they are taught vocal and instrumental music, with various dances that cannot stand the test of decency: but no culture is bestowed on the mind, no moral instruction, no improvement of the rational faculties; because such education, which qualifies them for being virtuous companions to men of sense, would inspire them with abhorrence at the being made prostitutes. In a word, so corrupted are they by vicious education, as to be unfit objects of any desire but what is merely sensual. The Asiatic ladies are not even trusted with the management of household affairs, which would afford opportunities for infidelity. In Persia, says Chardin, the ladies are not permitted, more than children, to chuse their own dress: no lady knows in the morning what gown she is to wear that day. The education of young women in Hindostan is less indecent. They are not taught music nor dancing, which are reckoned fit only for ladies of pleasure: they are taught all the graces of external behaviour, particularly to converse with spirit and elegance: they are taught also to sew, to embroider, and to dress with taste. Writing is neglected; but they are taught to read, that they may have the consolation of studying the Alcoran; which they never open, nor would understand if they did. Notwithstanding such care in educating Hindostan ladies, their manners, by being shut up in a seraglio, become extremely loose: the most refined luxury of sense, joined with idleness, or with reading love-tales, still worse than idleness, cannot fail to vitiate the minds of persons deprived of liberty, and to prepare them for every sort of intemperance. The wives and concubines of grandees



dees in Constantinople are permitted sometimes to walk abroad for air and exercise. A foreigner stumbling accidentally on a knot of them, about forty in number, attended with black eunuchs, was in the twinkling of an eye seized by a brisk girl, with the rest at her heels: she accosted him with loose amorous expressions, attempting at the same time to expose his nakedness. Neither threats nor intreaties availed him against such vigorous assailants; nor could the vehemence of their curiosity be moderated, by representing the shame of a behaviour so grossly immodest. An old Janizary, standing at a little distance, was amazed: his Mahometan bashfulness would not suffer him to lay hands upon women; but with a Stentorian voice he roared to the black eunuchs, that they were guardians of prostitutes, not of modest women; and urging them to free the man from such harpies.—All in vain (a).

Very different are female manners in temperate climes, where polygamy is prohibited, and women are treated as rational beings. These manners however depend in some measure upon the nature of the government. As many hands are at once employ'd in the different branches of republican government, and still a greater number by rotation, the males, who have little time to spare from public business, feel nothing of that languor and weariness which to the idle make the most frivolous amusements welcome. Married women live retired at home, managing family-affairs, as their husbands do those of the state: whence it is, that simplicity of manners is more the tone of a republic, than of any other government. Such were the manners of the female sex during the flourishing periods of the Greek and Roman commonwealths; and such are their manners in Switzerland and in Holland. In a monarchy, government employs but a few hands; and those who

(a) Observations on the religion, laws, &c. of the Turks.

are



are not occupied with public business, give reins to gallantry, and to other desires that are easily gratified. Women of figure, on the other hand, corrupted by opulence and superficial education, are more ambitious to captivate the eye than the judgement; and are fonder of lovers than of friends. Where a man and a woman thus disciplined meet together, they soon grow particular: the man is idle, the woman frank; and both equally addicted to pleasure. Such commerce must in its infancy be disguised under the appearance of virtue and religion: the mistress is exalted into a deity, the lover sinks into a humble votary; and this artificial relation produces a bombast sort of love, with sentiments that soar high above nature. Duke John de Bourbonnois, ann. 1414, caused it to be proclaimed, that he intended an expedition to England with sixteen knights, in order to combat the like number of English knights, for glorifying the beautiful angel he worshipped. René, styled *King of Sicily and Jerusalem*, observes, in writing upon tournaments, that they are highly useful in furnishing opportunities to young knights and esquires to display their prowess before their mistresses. He adds, "that every ceremony regarding tournaments is contrived to honour the ladies. It belongs to them to inspect the arms of the combatants, and to distribute the rewards. A knight or esquire who defames any of them is beat and bruised till the injured lady condescend to intercede for him." Remove once a female out of her proper sphere, and it is easy to convert her into a male. James IV. of Scotland, in all tournaments, professed himself knight to Anne Queen of France. She summoned him to prove himself her true and valorous champion, by taking the field in her defence against Henry VIII. of England. And, according to the romantic gallantry of that age, the Queen's summons was thought to have been his chief motive in declaring war against Henry his brother-in-law. The famous Gaston de Foix, who commanded the French troops
at



at the battle of Ravenna, rode from rank to rank, calling by name the officers, and even some private men, recommending to them their country and their honour; adding, "that he would see what they would perform for the love of their mistresses." During the civil wars in France, when love and gallantry were carried to a high pitch, Monsieur de Chatillon, ready to engage in a battle, tied to his arm a garter of Mademoiselle de Guerchi, his mistress.

But when unlawful commerce between the sexes turns common, and consequently familiar, the bombast style appears ridiculous, and the sensual appetite is gratified with very little ceremony. Nothing of love remains but the name; and as animal enjoyment without love is a very low pleasure, it soon sinks into disgust when confined to one object. What is not found in one, is fondly expected in another; and the imagination, roving from object to object, finds no gratification but in variety. An attachment to a woman of virtue or of talents appears absurd: true love is laughed out of countenance; and men degenerate into brutes. Women, on the other hand, regarding nothing but sensual enjoyment, become so careless of their infants, as even, without blushing, to employ mercenary nurses *. Such a course of life cannot fail to

sink

* Les femmes d'un certain état en France trouvent qu'elles perdent trop à faire des enfans, et à cause de cela même, la plupart vivent célibataires, dans le sein même du mariage. Mais si l'envie de se voir perpetuer dans une branche de descendans, les porte à se conformer aux vœux de l'hymen, la population, dans cette classe, n'en est pas plus avancée, parce que leur delicateffe rend inutile leur propagation; car, parmi les femmes du premier et second rang en France, combien y en a-t-il qui nourrissent leurs enfans? Il seroit facile de les compter. Ce devoir indispensable de mere, a cessé chez nous d'en être un. *Les Interests de la France, vol. 1. p. 234.* — [In English thus: "The women of a certain rank in France find that they lose too much by childbearing; and for that reason, even

" though



sink them into contempt: marriages are dissolved as soon as contracted; and the state is frustrated of that improvement in morals and manners, which is the never-failing product of virtuous love. A state enriched by conquest or commerce declines gradually into luxury and sensual pleasure: manners are corrupted, decency banished, and chastity becomes a mere name. What a scene of rank and dissolute pleasure is exhibited in the courts of Alexander's successors, and in those of the Roman emperors!

Gratitude to my female readers, if I shall be honoured with any, prompts me to conclude this sketch with a scene that may afford them instruction, and cannot fail of being agreeable; which is, the figure a woman is fitted for making in the matrimonial state, where polygamy is excluded. Matrimony among savages, having no object but propagation and slavery, is a very humbling state for the female sex: but delicate organization, great sensibility, lively imagination, with sweetness of temper above all, qualify women for a more dignified society with men; which is, to be their bosom-friends and companions. In the common course of European education, young women are trained to make an agreeable figure, and to behave with decency and propriety: very little culture is bestowed on the head; and still less on the heart, if it be not the art of hiding passion. Education so slight and superficial is far from seconding the purpose of nature, that of making women fit companions for men of sense. Due cultivation of the female mind,

“ though married, live in a state of celibacy. But population is not advanced, even by those who, from a desire of seeing themselves perpetuated in their descendents, conform to the purpose of marriage; for their delicacy counterbalances their fertility. How few of the first and second rank of women in France suckle their children? It would be easy to count the number. This indispensable duty of a mother has now ceased to be one with us.”]—As such woful neglect of education is the fruit of voluptuousness, we may take it for granted, that the same obtains in every opulent and luxurious capital.

would



would add greatly to the happiness of the males, and still more to that of the females. Time runs on; and when youth and beauty vanish, a fine lady, who never entertained a thought into which an admirer did not enter, finds in herself a lamentable void, occasioning discontent and peevishness. But a woman who has merit, improved by virtuous and refined education, retains in her decline an influence over the men, more flattering than even that of beauty: she is the delight of her friends, as formerly of her admirers.

Admirable would be the effects of such refined education, contributing no less to public good than to private happiness. A man, who at present must degrade himself into a fop or a coxcomb in order to please the women, would soon discover, that their favour is not to be gained but by exerting every manly talent in public and in private life; and the two sexes, instead of corrupting each other, would be rivals in the race of virtue. Mutual esteem would be to each a school of urbanity; and mutual desire of pleasing would give smoothness to their behaviour, delicacy to their sentiments, and tenderness to their passions.

Married women in particular, destin'd by nature to take the lead in educating their children, would no longer be the greatest obstruction to good education, by their ignorance, frivolity, and disorderly manner of living. Even upon the breast, infants are susceptible of impressions*; and the mother hath opportunities

* May not a habit of cheerfulness be produced in an infant by being trained up among cheerful people? An agreeable temper is held to be a prime qualification in a nurse. Such is the connection between the mind and body as that the features of the face are commonly moulded into an expression of the internal disposition; and is it not natural to think, that an infant in the womb may be affected by the temper of its mother? Its tender parts makes it susceptible of the slightest impressions. When a woman is breeding, she ought to be doubly careful of her temper; and in particular to indulge no ideas but what are cheerful, and no sentiments but what are kindly.



without end of instilling into them good principles, before they are fit for a male tutor. Coriolanus, who made a capital figure in the Roman republic, never returned from war without meriting marks of distinction. Others behaved valliantly, in order to acquire glory : he behaved valiantly, in order to give pleasure to his mother. The delight she took in hearing him praised, and her weeping for joy in his embraces, made him in his own opinion the happiest person in the universe. Epaminondas accounted it his greatest felicity, that his father and mother were still alive to behold his conduct, and enjoy his victory at Leuctra. In a Latin dialogue about the causes that corrupted the Roman eloquence, injudiciously ascribed to Tacitus, because obviously it is not his style, the method of education in Rome, while it flourished as a commonwealth, is described in a lively manner. I shall endeavour to give the sense in English, because it chiefly concerns the fair sex. “ In that age, children were suckled, not in the hut of a mercenary nurse, but by the chaste mother who bore them. Their education during nonage was in her hands ; and it was her chief care to instil into them every virtuous principle. In her presence, a loose word or an improper action were strictly prohibited. She superintended, not only their serious studies, but even their amusements ; which were conducted with decency and moderation. In that manner the Gracchi, educated by Cornelia their mother, and Augustus, by Attia his mother, appeared in public with untainted minds ; fond of glory, and prepared to make a figure in the world.” In the expedition of the illustrious Bertrand du Gueselin against Peter the Cruel, King of Castile, the governor of a town, upon being summoned to give it up, made the following answer, “ That they might be conquered, but would never tamely yield ; that their fathers had taught them to prefer a glorious death before a dishonourable life ; and that their mothers had not only educated them in
“ these

“ these sentiments, but were ready to put in practice the lessons
“ they had inculcated.” Let the most profound politician say,
what more efficacious incentive there can be to virtue and man-
hood, than the behaviour of the Spartan matrons, flocking to the
temples, and thanking the gods, that their husbands and sons had
died gloriously, fighting for their country. In the war between
Lacedemon and Thebes, the Lacedemonians having behaved ill,
the married men, as Plutarch reports, were so ashamed of them-
selves, that they durst not look their wives in the face. What
a glorious prize is here exhibited to be contended for by the
female sex!

By such refin'd education, love would take on a new form, that
which nature inspires for making us happy, and for softening the
distresses of chance: it would fill deliciously the whole soul with
tender amity, and mutual confidence. The union of a worthy
man with a frivolous woman can never, with all the advantages
of fortune, be made comfortable: how different the union of a
virtuous pair, who have no aim but to make each other happy!
Between such a pair emulation is reversed, by an ardent desire in
each to be surpassed by the other.

Cultivation of the female mind is not of great importance in a
republic, where men pass little of their time with women. Such
cultivation where polygamy is indulged, would to them be a
great misfortune, by opening their eyes to their miserable condi-
tion. But in an opulent monarchy where polygamy is prohibited,
female education is of high importance, not singly with respect to
private happiness, but with respect to the society in general.

