

**Reflections upon polygamy and the encouragement given to that practice  
in the scriptures of the Old Testament ... / By Phileleutherus Dublinensis  
[pseud.] [i.e. Patrick Delany].**

**Contributors**

Delany, Patrick, 1685 or 1686-1768.

**Publication/Creation**

London : Printed for J. Roberts ..., 1737.

**Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/m4hsr25f>

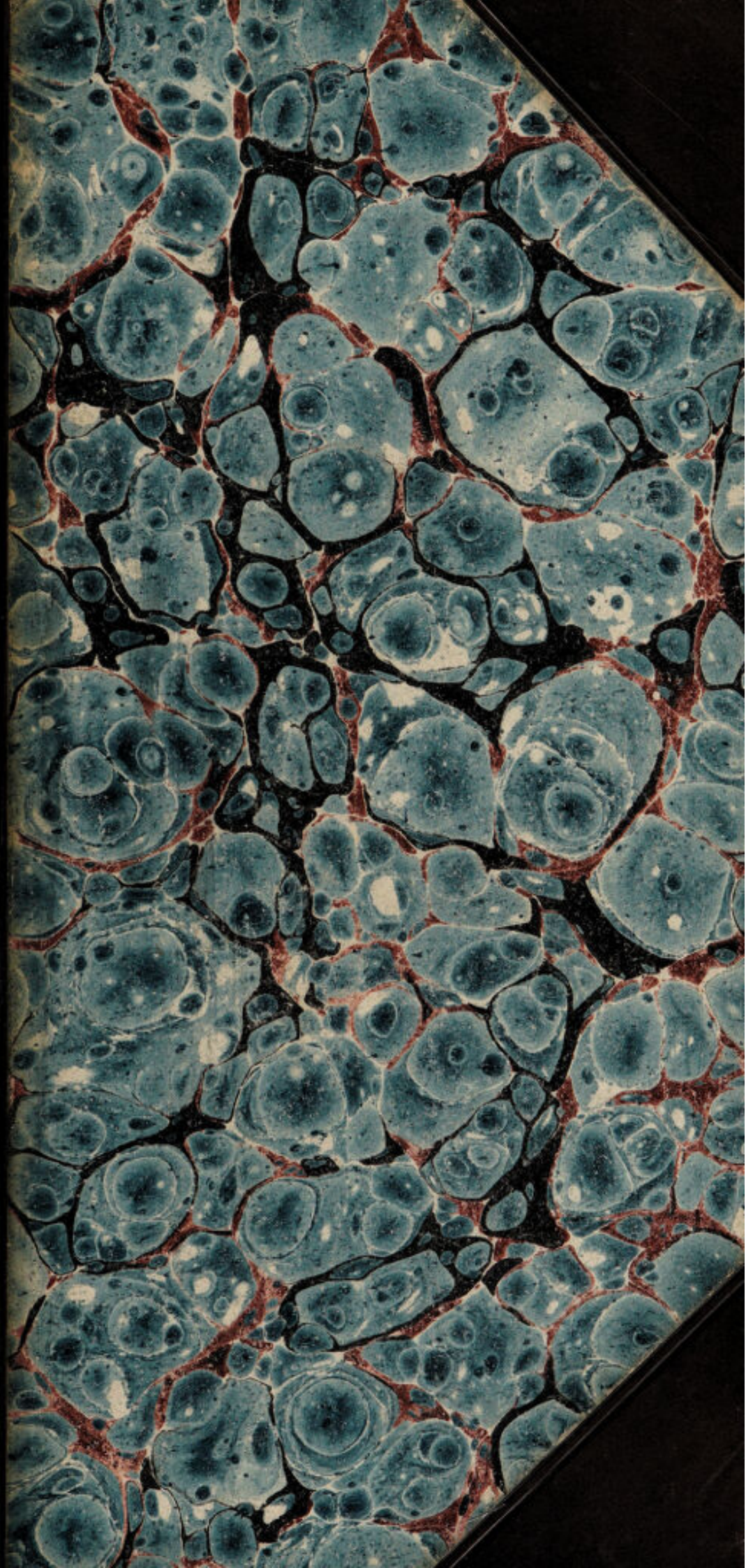
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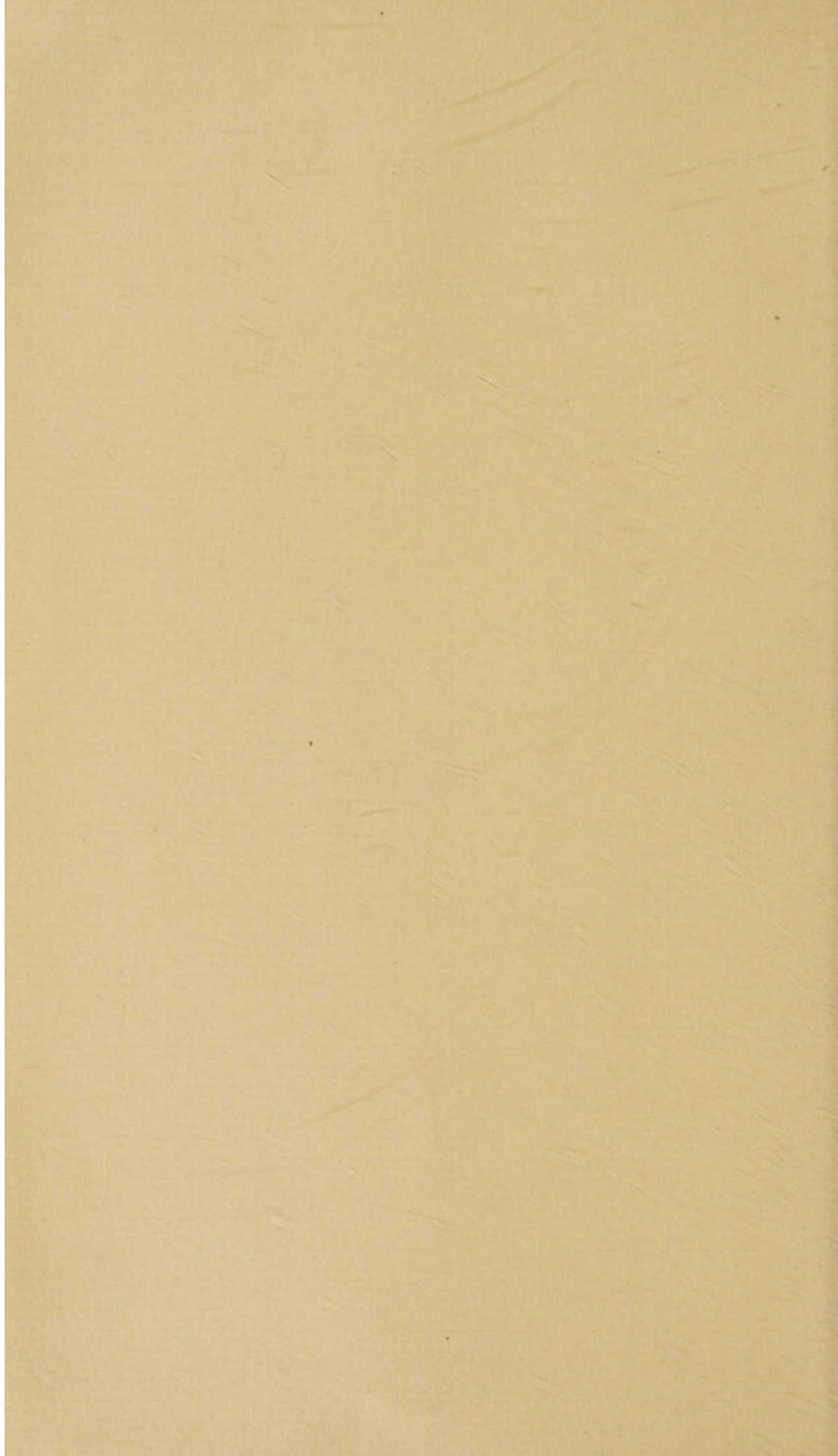
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*Booby Harvey Esq.*  
C.B.R.N.















19978/B 32619  
REFLECTIONS

UPON

POLYGAMY,

AND THE

Encouragement given to that Practice

IN THE

Scriptures *of the* Old Testament.

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*Res ardua, vetustis novitatem dare, novis auctoritatem, obsoletis  
nitorem, obscuris lucem, fastiditis gratiam, dubiis fidem, omnibus  
vero naturam, & naturæ suæ omnia.*

Plin. ad Div. Vesp. Præf.

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By PHILELEUTHERUS DUBLINIENSIS.

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*Edmund Delany*

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L O N D O N :

Printed for J. ROBERTS, at the Oxford Arms  
in Warwick - Lane.

M DCC XXXVII.



REFLECTIONS

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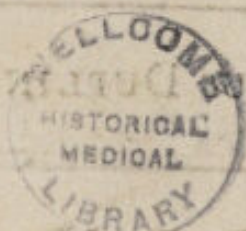
Encouragement given to that Practice

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DELANEY, Patrick

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MDCCLXXII.





REFLECTIONS  
UPON  
POLYGAMY.

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DISSERTATION I.



S Polygamy is a doctrine daily defended in common conversation, and often in print, by a great variety of *plausible* arguments; and as those arguments are no where, that I know, thoroughly examined and discussed; and the determining that point, upon plain and clear principles, is a  
B matter



matter of the utmost consequence to human society : This, I hope, will be a sufficient apology for a man, who hath considered this question with all the care he could, to publish his thoughts to the world, with that candour and freedom, which best become a sincere lover of truth, and friend of mankind.

A short  
sketch of  
the work.

IN the first place, I have considered how far this question is determinable by the law of *nature* : and under this head, I have considered Mr. *Lock*'s opinion concerning the nature of the marriage union.

IN the next place, I have examined this practice at large, by the precepts of the *Mosaic law*, and the examples of the patriarchs, *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*.

I then proceeded to the prophet *David*, and inquired how far he was  
*blame-*



*blameable* or *excuseable* in the business of Polygamy, from the laws of God then in being; and have ventured to differ from all the commentators I ever met with, in the sense of every text relating to this point.

IN the next place, I carefully considered the condition and consequences of Polygamy in the great empires of *Turkey*, *China*, and *Japan*; and thoroughly examined the foundation of that opinion, which ascribeth the increase of mankind in those countries to the advantage of this institution.

AND lastly, I have inquired into the reasons, why the northern hive hath ceased to swarm for some centuries past; and whether this be owing to the retardment of the human generation, by the establishment of Christianity, which abolished Polygamy.



FIRST then, Polygamy appeareth to me plainly repugnant to the law of *nature* : inasmuch as it is found, by accurate observations on the increase of mankind. that there are more males born into the world than females, and that, in a constant and established course, in the proportion of about thirteen to twelve nearly ; and since the right of marriage is a right of nature, which all men have equal claim to, and yet this right cannot be obtained, if any number of men be allowed to have many wives at once ; therefore no such allowance should be made : because as many wives as they have above their just number, so many must such a number of other men want.

IF one man, for example, have twenty wives to his share, nineteen men must, of necessity, be robbed, each of them of their natural right :  
and



and consequently, if it be agreeable to the law of *nature*, that nineteen men should have nineteen wives; then is it directly contrary to the law of *nature*, that one man should have twenty wives, or any number above one at once.

AND, whereas some have been so weak, as to imagine mankind more multiplied by permitting a plurality of wives; and consequently, that the ends of Providence, in the increase of mankind, were better answered by that permission; the direct contrary to this is demonstrably true: forasmuch as it is evident, that twenty men will, ordinarily, have more children by twenty wives, than one man by twenty wives; and of consequence, any greater or less number of men will have more children by any greater or less number of women, than one man can have: because variety doth but excite to luxury and excess; and



both these enfeeble and enervate; and destroy the main end for which the appetite of procreation was implanted. Not to insist, that *twenty* men and *twenty* women will, ordinarily, be better able, by their united care, to support and educate their issue, than *one* man and his twenty wives †.

BUT here it may be objected, that the excess of one in thirteen will not be sufficient to answer the extraordinary wastes of men above women, by war, vices, navigation, and noxious trades of various kinds; consequently, there must always be an excess of women above men in the world for Polygamy.

I answer, that this excess, considered in reference to the simple num-

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† Upon this principle *Charondas* the *Thurian* lawgiver excluded all those from all offices of trust and dignity in his commonwealth, who having children by a first wife married a second.



bers of thirteen and twelve, is *seemingly* small; but considered in relation to the aggregate numbers of a whole nation, is very considerable: for example, the joint inhabitants of *England* and *Ireland* may be computed at about thirteen millions: Suppose then, a waste of half a million of men, every age, in these kingdoms, above women, by the forementioned accidents, (which, I believe, will be thought a considerable allowance) it is plain, there can still be no surplusage of women for Polygamy.

THE case will be still the same, whether we suppose the inhabitants of these kingdoms to be more or less numerous.

IF ever there was a reason for a plurality of wives, it was at the creation, and after the deluge; when the world wanted most to be peopled: and it



is certain, that at the deluge, God preserved only *Noah* and his wife, with his three sons and their three wives; when he might have preserved any greater number of women, had he thought a greater necessary for the peopling of the world. It is also equally certain, that God might as easily have created *twenty* women for *Adam* as *one*; and yet he created *Eve* only: altho' as the prophet *Malachi* observeth, *he had the residue of the spirit*; the same spirit that impowered him to create *one*, was equally sufficient for any greater number. A plain demonstration that he never intended more than one woman for one man. And this is fully confirmed by our

Matt. 19. Saviour.

POLYGAMY was not established, nor so much as permitted, by the law of *Moses*. But however, *Moses* allowed, in case of defilement, to  
give



give a bill of divorce || ; but without an exprefs license to take another wife.

THIS

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|| Mr. *Selden* tells us, (*uxor Hebr.* l. 3. c. 18.) that the learned of the *Jews* were divided upon this point. The *Hillelians* held, that any dislike conceived of a woman justified a divorce. The *Sammæans* affirmed, that nothing could justify it, but some real actual defilement. Our Saviour seems to have been applied to as arbitrator in this dispute; (*Matt.* xix.) and to have declared in favour of the *Sammæans*, that an union, instituted by God, was not to be dissolved upon every trifling pretence; that nothing, but such foul crimes as are comprehended, according to the *Hebrew* idiom, under the word *fornication*, could justify that practice.

Thus much is certain; that whoever will take the trouble to consider *Moses's* precept upon this point, (*Deut.* xxiv. 1.) will find, that nothing but uncleanness in the wife justified a bill of divorce.

What that uncleanness was is not so clear; but I think the most natural interpretation of the word is *unchastity*. And therefore, with great submission, Mr. *Chub* is not sufficiently justified, in supposing the *Mosaic* precept in relation to divorces not of divine authority; inasmuch as the separation of man and wife, on account of unchastity, is agreeable to the law of *nature*; and the only objection to *Moses* is, that



THIS allowance the *Jews* in process of time greatly abused; and far from confining themselves to *Moses's* limitation, took every slight pretence of turning away one wife, to take another they liked better; and by this means introduced all sorts of corruption and confusion into their families; and at last they arrived to such a degree of iniquity, that it was customary

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that this was permitted to be done in a private way. And this permission is what our Saviour seemeth to censure, as extending beyond *that* law.

I shall not take upon me to pronounce, that God cannot in any case or upon any occasion dispense with his own laws; or that he is bound to give his people, in all circumstances, such as are most perfect, and no other.

But the true distinction I take to be here. *Moses* permitted every man, in his *private capacity*, to put away his wife for uncleanness: whereas, by the law of reason, she should not have been put away but by *public authority* and a fair hearing. In the first case *Man* put them asunder, in the latter *God*; for in this case the judgment is his. *Deut. i. 17.*

with



with them to marry a wife for one day.

NOR was this corruption confined to the *Jews*; the whole world was now over-run with it: and it was almost as flagrant in the practice of the *Roman wives* †; as of the *Jewish husbands*.

THIS was the state of things when the *Pharisees* came to our Saviour, and put the question to him, whether it were *lawful for a man to put away* Matt. 19. *his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye*

† *Nunquid jam ulla repudio erubescit, postquam illustres quædam & nobiles fœminæ, non Consulum numero, sed Maritorum, annos suos computant.* Senec. de benef. l. 3. c. 16.

*Sic crescit numerus, sic fiunt octo mariti  
Quinque per autumnos ——— Juv.*

*Aut minus, aut certe vix jam vicesima lux est,  
Et nubit decimo jam Telefina viro. Mart.*

not



*not read, that he who made them at the beginning, made them male and female; and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh? wherefore, they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. Why then, say they, did Moses command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? he saith unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered (not commanded) you, to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.*

FROM this reasoning of our Saviour's two things are clearly to be inferred: first, That the union of one man with one woman, is an original law of nature, evidenced in the very creation. And secondly, That this union was, in the primary intention of God, to last for life; and therefore, it is no matter  
what



what *Moses* might have been directed by Almighty God, to permit to a vicious and stubborn generation, to keep them from greater corruptions†.

THE question is not, what was occasionally permitted; but what was originally intended and enjoined? and that is evidently the permanent union of one man with one woman.

AND indeed, the good of society, which greatly dependeth upon the good education of children, is greatly concerned; and evidently requireth, that

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† I shall not take upon me to say, why God permitted this practice at first; but this I can say, that God himself declareth his abhorrence of this practice, (as it was then abused) by the mouth of his prophet *Malachi* (ch. ii. v. 16.). I am sensible, that some men have interpreted this passage into quite another sense: but whoever considereth the whole chapter, will soon see, that this interpretation is utterly abhorrent from the whole scope and purpose of the prophet, in this place.

men



men should have but one wife at once; because a variety of children, by a variety of women, (and those perhaps of the same age, and in the same circumstances) must multiply the cares of education to such a degree, that it is impossible for any father to discharge his duty to them all, as he ought. And it is observable, that such children are always regarded or neglected, according as the mother is esteemed or despised: and this, I think, will best explain that passage in the prophet *Malachi*, (ii. 15.) where, speaking of the creation of one woman at the beginning, he putteth the question, *And wherefore one?* i. e. Why did God create but one woman for *Adam*? to which he immediately answereth, *that he might seek a godly seed*: i. e. That the children of such an union might be carefully educated in the knowledge and fear of God, and under the example of continence and conjugal fidelity. Whereas, had *Adam* been



been divided between many wives, his issue would have had the curse of a loose and careless education; and been influenced, by their father's example, to luxury and incontinence; which are the great fountains of immorality and irreligion.

AND this observation furnisheth us with a sufficient answer to that argument in favour of Polygamy, which urgeth, that children by successive wives create equal contests and competitions for the father's favour and fortune, with those born of several wives, subsisting at the same time: for, supposing they did, how doth this affect the objection in relation to the duty of education and maintenance? is it equally easy to maintain and educate any number of children by several wives at the same time; as to maintain and educate the same number by several wives in succession? Most certainly it is not.

BE-



BESIDES, the presumption is, that many wives subsisting at once, will produce more children than several wives in succession: and consequently, both the care of education, and expence of maintenance, will in this case be greatly multiplied; and for that reason greatly neglected\*. Nothing is more known, than that the care of a very few children, nay, oftentimes the care of one, is found to exhaust the parents best hours and years; and what then must become of him and them, if this care be not only multiplied, but distracted? and therefore, as nothing can more concern the peace and interest of private families, or the well-being of the pub-

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\* And if St. Paul rightly account him worse than an infidel, who provideth not for those of his own house; what are we to think of him, who alloweth himself in such methods of multiplying his family, as will make it impossible for him to provide for them?



lic, than a careful education of children, nothing can be more prejudicial to either, than that pernicious and unnatural practice of Polygamy; which must rob them of this advantage; and instead of increasing the parental care towards the children, render it languid and indifferent to such a degree, that it is generally seen to end in an utter neglect both of the mothers and their issue \*.

As

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\* This point is well illustrated in that passage of *Sallust*, (*Bell. Jugurth. c. 80*) "*Etiam antea, Jugurtha, filia Bocchi nups erat; verum ea necessitudo, apud Numidas Maurosq; levis ducitur; quod singuli, pro opibus quisque quam plurimas uxores, denas alii, alii plures habent; sed reges eo amplius. Ita animus multitudine distrahitur; nullam pro socia obtinet; pariter omnes viles sunt.* Bocchus's daughter had also before this been married to *Jugurtha*; but that is accounted but a slight tie among the *Moors* and *Numidians*; inasmuch as with them every man hath many wives, according to his wealth; some ten, some more, and kings a yet greater number. By which means, the mind, distracted by variety,



As to the other objection in relation to the peace of families, I desire to ask any candid or reasonable man, whether families can, in the ordinary course of things, be equally distracted and disquieted by the competition of

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“ety, regardeth none of them with a true fo-  
 “cial affection; and so all become despicable  
 “alike.”

Also by that passage in *Procop. Hist. Vandal.*

l. 2. c. 11. “παιδων μεντοι ενεκεν υμιν μελησει, οis μιαν  
 “αγεσθ γυναικα αναγκη, ημας γδ, οis κη κατα πενήτηκοιλα  
 “(αν ελω τυχοι) ξυνοικουσι γυναικες, παιδων ουκ αν ποτε  
 “επιλειποι γονη. It is yours, (say the Barbari-  
 “ans) who can have but one wife [at once]  
 “to be touched with solicitude for your chil-  
 “dren; but as for us who can have fifty wives  
 “if we please, we are under no apprehension  
 “of wanting posterity.”

And by another of *Ammianus Marcellinus*, where speaking of the *Persians* (l. 23. c. 6.) he hath these words; “*Pro opibus quisque adsciscens*  
 “*matrimonia, plura vel pauca. Unde apud eos,*  
 “*per libidines varias caritas dispersa torpescit.*  
 “Each engaging in more or fewer marriages,  
 “according to his wealth; by which means,  
 “their affections being dissipated thro’ variety  
 “of lusts, become numbed and insensible.”

several



several mothers and their children, in succession, as by the competitions of many mothers and their children, at once? surely no candid man will say they can; till it can be demonstrated, that a fire shall burn as fiercely, waste as much, and last as long, with half the quantity of air and fuel; as it will with a double, a triple, or any greater quantity of both. And therefore, the good education (I might add too the health) of children, and the peace and well-being of families, and in consequence of these, the peace and well-being of the public, is greatly concerned in driving out this evil practice of Polygamy from the society of mankind; and introducing in its stead the sacred union of one man with one woman.

AND, that this union of one man with one woman should be for life, is evident from our Saviour's express words; *What God hath joined, let no*



*man put asunder.* And therefore, if man cannot, must not, put them asunder ; they must continue together till it pleaseth God to part them, either by death, or the sentence of public justice. And so far was God from intending to part them before, that he plainly intended they should sooner part with every thing else: even their nearest and dearest friends ; *for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife.*

AND indeed, if this union were to continue only at the discretion of either party, or for any term less than life ; the evils which would devolve upon society from such a limitation, would be infinite : the great engagement to peace and mutual love would be dissolved ; all the trust and confidence of the most perfect friendship would be intirely destroyed ; the assurance of consolation in distress, of support in sickness, and society in age, would



would be taken away from the earth : and the interests of families would be torn into ten thousand distractions. In short, the evils of life would be infinitely multiplied by it, and its greatest blessings infinitely impaired.

AND, on the other hand, the mischiefs that would arise from allowing one man many wives at once, would be full as great as those that would arise from a temporary union ; because they would in a great measure be the very same ; since that also would of necessity produce contention, disquiet, and distrust, and a distraction of interests ; and would of necessity destroy the peace and consolation of life, and cause great neglect and endless mischief in the education of children : And the evils of unbounded appetite, which are now in a great measure restrained by marriage, and banished to the bestial herd, would return with tenfold violence into the society of

C 3                      men:



men : and therefore, the permission either of a plurality of wives, or of arbitrary divorces, would be of infinite ill consequence to mankind.

ANOTHER argument against Polygamy is, that miserable state of servitude to which the whole female world are reduced, where-ever it obtaineth. This is notoriously true all over the East; and perhaps, more remarkably so in *China*; in *Africa* they are as very slaves as the Negroes in the plantations; and in *Persia*, they are levelled with the beasts that perish. In *China* † they are without inheritance; in *Persia* || without Souls. So that, if there were no other objection to this practice, than the debasement and

† No females inherit in *China*. *Navarette* B. ii. ch. 3.

|| In *Persia*, the profoundest divines teach, that women have no souls. *Fryar's Travels*, p. 239.



the misery to which it reduceth one half of the human species, where-ever it prevai<sup>le</sup>th; this alone were abundantly sufficient, to demonstrate it a most glaring and grievous violation of the law of nature †.

To

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† To all this may be added mischiefs of many other kinds; such as parting, lending, and pawning wives at pleasure; practices frequent in *China*. And what is yet worse, I am assured, it is a common practice in *Turkey*, to murder and make away with these servile associates, upon the slightest suspicion of jealousy; and without the least apprehension of a legal prosecution upon that account: and in truth, how is it possible it should be otherwise? inasmuch as most of them are their slaves, bought in their markets, over whom they are as absolute lords, as over their mules, or other beasts of burden; and for whom they are only accountable to prudence, or self-interest. This I vouch upon the credit of a merchant of great integrity, who resided many years at *Smyrna*; and had himself the mortification to be present at one of these executions; where, in the midst of mirth, in a party of pleasure, he beheld one of these unhappy wives tied up in a sack, and thrown into the sea, with as little precaution or concern, as usually attends the drowning of the meanest brute, in this part of the world.



TO this it may be objected, that women are doomed to subjection by God himself.

I answer, To subjection, but not to slavery. And God forbid, this distinction should ever cease, any more in the married, than in the civil society.

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And *Olearius* tells us, that both voluntary and violent deaths of wives, occasioned by jealousy, are frequent in *Persia*. *Ambass. Trav.* B. vi. p. 239, 245.







REFLECTIONS  
UPON  
POLYGAMY.

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DISSERTATION II.



Having in the precedent dissertation sufficiently shewn Polygamy to be destructive of the natural rights of mankind, and the peace of society; I cannot begin a further prosecution of this subject more properly, than by observing upon the united ignorance



rance and effrontery of modern free-thinkers : who, at the same time that they are insulting *christians* with the sufficiency and self-evidence of the law of *nature*, are demonstrating their own utter ignorance of one of its most important branches; by pleading so loudly and so importunately, as they have done for some years past, for Polygamy † ; *i. e.* pleading for a license to violate one of the most important of all the laws of nature : a law guarded with as many and as strong sanctions, and demonstrated

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† Witnesses the *Polygamia Triumphatrix*, published in *London*, under the name of *Theophilus Aletheus* ; and another dissertation on the same subject, said to be written by a Lord Chancellor of *England* : a man of as much sagacity and as fine parts, perhaps, as any that ever presided in a court of equity. To say nothing of the decision of a christian bishop of no mean talents upon this point; and the known outcry of Deists and Free-thinkers, upon this head; which nobody who hath been any way conversant with them, can be a stranger to.

with



with as much, perhaps more evidence, from the reason and nature of things, than any other whatsoever. Nay, more; complaining of the abridgment of their natural rights by the prohibition of Polygamy, at the same time that they were stretching them beyond all the bounds of *fit* and *just*, to the infinite prejudice and disadvantage of society, and the notorious violation of the natural rights of mankind.

AND here I must beg leave to put a plain question to these men of superior talents, as a late writer had frequent occasion to do in another work ||, (and I hope will soon have again). Do they know that Polygamy is a notorious violation of the law of nature? if they do know this, and yet plead for that violation, how shock-

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|| Revelation Examined, &c.



ing must this conduct be to every man of candour and honesty? if they do not know it, can the laws of nature be self-evident? and in consequence of that self-evidence, be sufficient rules to all mankind, to direct them (at all times, in all places, and in all circumstances), in all the duties they owe to God and Man? Can those laws be self-evident, which have hitherto been a secret to men of so much sagacity? Can Polygamy be a notorious violation of the law of nature, and yet all mankind be ignorant of that violation, till the coming of *Jesus Christ*? How came it to pass, that so young and so uneducated a man as *Jesus Christ* should see the iniquity of this practice, and condemn it, when so great a genius as *Socrates* was utterly ignorant of it? for otherwise, I am confident, he never would have committed it himself, as he undoubtedly did: And when so wise



wife a people as the *Chinese*, universally allow and practise it at this day?

Now that *Jesus Christ* condemned it, is evident, from that express declaration in the sixth of St. *Matthew*, that *Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery*. Now I presume, that no man will say, that the adultery here committed, consisteth in *putting away*, but in *marrying* another.

AND will these gentlemen still insist, that the laws of nature are self-evident, and obvious to the meanest capacity? and that *Jesus Christ* brought no light into the world? This I am sure of, the credit of their candour, as well as that of their superior abilities, is greatly concerned that they should not.

BUT



BUT Polygamy will be found still more contrary to the law of *nature*, from another argument ; and that is, the natural equality of desire, which it hath pleased God to establish between the sexes of the human species, in order to continue and endear their commerce || in a social union of affection and interests, and in a manner very different from that of all other creatures ; whose commerce is limited and regulated by times and seasons. Now, if this desire be rightly and wisely appointed by Almighty God, it certainly hath a right to be gratified ; in Polygamy it can only be gratified in one sex, and conse-

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|| *Grotius* assigneth this reason, among others, for the reception of single marriages among christians ; that the wife, bestowing herself entirely on the husband, may receive the equal return of his whole heart and affection.

quently,



quently, the other sex is injured in its natural right.

I should be glad to see all the infidel sagacity of *Asia* and *Europe* united in one hardy attempt to answer this argument. It is indeed an argument which will give some room for idle wit, and loose ribaldry ; but then, it is wit very remote from *wisdom*, as well as virtue ; and consequently, such as must for ever be utterly despicable, in all rational disquisitions and determinations ||.

AN-

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|| If the predominance of desire in *some men* be urged, in opposition to this way of reasoning, I must desire those that urge it, to reflect, how easily that pretence is overthrown, by retorting the predominance of desire in *some women* ; and if that never was, or can be, a reason, why one woman should be allowed the use of several men ; it never can be a reason, why one man should be indulged in a commerce with many women. Especially, since this cannot be done in the ordinary course of things,



ANOTHER argument against the abominable practice of Polygamy is taken from the detestable evils of Sodomy and Eviration ; one, or both which, it never faileth to draw after it, where-ever it cometh.

A number of females, restrained in their natural rights, are not to be kept within the bounds prescribed by their tyrants, otherwise than by keepers envious of others, and incapable themselves of offending in the charge committed to them : From hence

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things, without manifest injury to some other. *Nam uxor contenta est, quæ bona est, uno viro ; qui minus vir una uxore contentus fiet ?* A wife, if she is a good woman, is content with one man ; and why should a man [if he is a good man] not be content with one woman ? *Plaut. Mercat. Act 5. Sc. 1. v. 8.* It is plain then, that nothing can be inferred from this accidental predominance of desire in some individuals of either sex, but this ; that the desires of both are, in the main, equal.

proceed



proceed those monstrous mutilations of great numbers of unhappy mortals, in the manner which is most shocking, and most injurious to human nature. Nor will it, I believe, be pretended, that this infamous practice deriv'd its origin from any other source, than that of Polygamy ; tho' other causes (as one vice begetteth another) have continued to support and propagate it in the world.

AND, as a number of females, restrained and injured in their natural rights, introduced the infamous practice of Eviration ; a number of males, restrained and injured in their natural rights, by the same infamous practice of Polygamy, turned the instincts of nature out of their proper course, and introduced all that train of monstrous and detestable desires and brutalities, which is dreadful even to think of, much more to mention : and whoever abhorreth these vile,  
D these



these hellish practices, must at the same time abominate Polygamy, the parent of them ||.

BUT here we are immediately upbraided with the sacred writings, and the practice of the patriarchs and prophets. And I am sorry to see one gentleman, whose talents I have long honoured, roundly assert, in his letter to Dr. *Waterland*, (p. 8.) “ That  
 “ we must allow, not only a plura-  
 “ lity of wives, but a number of  
 “ concubines into the bargain ; unless  
 “ we will give up some part, at least,  
 “ of the scripture, and condemn

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|| How prodigiously the detestable vice of Sodomy (I might add too Brutality ) prevails, where-ever Polygamy is allowed, is sufficiently known to all who have been any way conversant in the accounts we have of the great empires of *Asia* : nay, we are told, that there are public stews for this abomination in the great empire of *China*, at this day ; and that those of *Japan* are yet more corrupt.

“ the



“ the holy patriarchs, *Abraham*, I-  
 “ *saac*, and *Jacob*; and, above all,  
 “ *David*, the man after God’s own  
 “ heart; who had at least seven  
 “ wives and ten concubines, without  
 “ ever being admonished for it by  
 “ any of the prophets; or censured  
 “ by any of the sacred writers: so  
 “ that here he (*i. e.* the author of  
 “ *Christianity as old as the creation*)  
 “ will probably turn your own rea-  
 “ soning upon you; that it is a weak  
 “ thing of you, to charge the law of  
 “ nature as not strict enough; when  
 “ your own Scripture appears to be  
 “ looser.”

B U T here this gentleman, with  
 great submission, confoundeth two  
 very different things: he saith, That  
 we must allow a plurality of wives,  
 &c. or give up some part of Scrip-  
 ture, and condemn the patriarchs, &c.  
 Pray, may we not condemn the pa-  
 triarchs, without giving up scripture?



Must we condemn the Scriptures, either as untrue or unholy, because they relate the conduct of the patriarchs, in all the simplicity of plain, honest truth; without concealing their least failure or infirmity? What if the patriarchs *did* violate the law of *nature*, in the business of Polygamy; must we, for that reason, give up the Scriptures, which tell us they did so? Was ever so absurd a doctrine as this advanced, in an age, and to a people, of uncommon learning and penetration! the Scriptures then are surely not to be given up as untrue, or uninspired, on account of the veracity and integrity of the writers; and therefore, condemning the patriarchs, and giving up the Scriptures, with great submission, are two very different things.

BUT still, it should seem, we must give up the Scriptures; because, as this gentleman saith, they are looser than the law of *nature*. Is then the  
law



law of nature loose? and doth it allow Polygamy, Concubinage, or any other commerce of the sexes, than such as is founded upon a sacred and inseparable union of one man with one woman? and will this learned gentleman take upon him to prove it doth? if ever he undertaketh to do this, and publisheth his attempt, (which I hope he will not for his own sake) I am commissioned to promise him a speedy and a full confutation.

AT the same time that I say this, I must do this learned letter-writer the justice to own, that Mr. *Locke* and some others have thought so far with him, as to declare their opinion, that there was nothing in the marriage union that should make it last longer than till the ends of it, *viz.* the procreation and education of children were fully answered.



BUT they forget, that the necessary consequence of this opinion is, that it would then be dissoluble almost at pleasure : first, When there were no children : secondly, When the child, or children, were dead : and thirdly, Whenever a proper provision of sustenance and education was made, or believed to be made, for the child, or children in being : and lastly, When conceptions were either prevented by medicines, or secretly destroyed by forced abortions, (a practice common in many parts of the East) to leave one of the parties at liberty : in one word, the necessary consequence of this principle must be the introduction of infinite murders, and universal licentiousness among mankind.

BUT to proceed ——— I should be glad to know what this learned gentleman meaneth, by calling the Scriptures



tures *looser than the law of nature*, Do they give any countenance or encouragement to Polygamy, or incontinence of any kind ? are there any precepts or licenses upon this head, to be found in them ? if there be, shew them to us ; and we are satisfied : if there be not, how groundless, how unjust, is this censure !

ALL then that can be inferred from this practice of the patriarchs and prophets, to the disadvantage of the scriptures, is this ; that God Almighty did not think fit to reveal his will, as clearly and fully upon this head, either before, or under the dispensation of the Old testament, as under that of the New ; or, having revealed it, suffered that revelation to be lost, or obscured, either by the negligence, or by the corrupt glosses and comments of idle and wicked men. And will any man of candour and consideration say, that God is obliged to pre-



vent such corruptions? or, that he is obliged to reveal his will equally at all times, and in all places, to all mankind? This evil doctrine is now, I hope, sufficiently exploded; at least, I am sure, it is sufficiently || confuted. Or, if others can have a right to an express revelation from God, on this head; yet surely they, of all mankind, will make no such claim, who pretend, that God Almighty hath already revealed all that he could reveal to mankind; by the sole light of nature: and therefore, if the silence or obscurity of the law of *nature* upon this head, till the coming of *Jesus Christ*, be no proof that it did not come from God; neither can the silence or obscurity of the *Mosaic* law, be any proof that *Moses* was not divinely inspired.

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|| See this pernicious doctrine, together with many others of like tendency, clearly and fully confuted in *Leland's* learned and excellent answer to *Christianity as old as the creation*.

IT



It is undoubtedly too arduous and presumptuous a province, to take upon us, to pronounce upon the reasons of the divine conduct, in any particular instance ; and yet, one reason, why God left the business of Polygamy in obscurity, seemeth so very plain, in the case before us, that I will venture to appeal even to our adversaries themselves, (if they be true Deists) for the evidence of it.

IF they be true Deists, they will not deny the divine prescience ; but must admit, that the condition and circumstances of all times are equally present to infinite wisdom : and if so, then God certainly foresaw, that there would be a time, wherein the Scriptures would be exploded by a certain set of men, and the sufficiency and self-evidence of the law of *nature* set up and asserted, in opposition to them ; and that this vaunt could never



ver be more effectually confuted, than by demonstrating, that the very assertors of the sufficiency and self-evidence of the law of *nature*, were grossly ignorant of one of its most important branches ; and proved themselves to be so, by arguing and writing professedly and zealously against it : and that this is exactly the case of the defenders and asserters of Polygamy, is, I hope, by this time past all doubt.

BUT this is not all : God Almighty foresaw, that these very men would assert the obscurity, the uncertainty, the insufficiency, and even the impossibility, of a written revelation ; and that the sure and only way of instructing mankind, was, from the reason and nature of things, laid plainly before them. Now, *this*, God Almighty had done as plainly, as clearly, and as fully, in the business of Polygamy, as it is possible ; and yet,  
almost



almost all mankind, the very wisest and best of them, in almost all ages and countries, have mistaken this instruction ; and acted directly against it for four thousand years ; and were never corrected in this error, but by a new and express revelation. Is not the consequence then clear and cogent, that instruction by the nature and constitution of things, is not sufficient ; and that a new and express revelation from God may, on some occasions, be absolutely necessary to the guidance of his creatures ?



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REFLECTIONS  
UPON  
POLYGAMY.

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DISSERTATION III.



THE evidence arising from the nature of things, to prove Polygamy a violation of the law of nature, hath already been sufficiently set forth: the discountenance given to it in the scriptures of the Old testament, cometh next to be considered. For that it is strongly,



strongly, variously, and repeatedly discountenanced in them, I hope, I shall soon evince.

FIRST then, I lay down this as a postulatum, or plain proposition of undoubted truth; that *all those parts of the Scripture which recommend, or enjoin, the inseparable union of one man with one woman, do so far discountenance, and prohibit Polygamy.*

THIS being taken for granted, I proceed to enumerate those passages, which thus assert, or encourage the union of one man with one woman.

AND first, the Scriptures inform us, that God in the beginning created one man and one woman; and no more. And if this act be not thought a sufficient document to all mankind, upon the business of marriage, as it undoubtedly was, and is; yet, surely his own declaration, subsequent to it,  
was



was sufficiently instructive; *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife* (not to his wives); *and they, (or as our Saviour explaineth it, they twain) shall be one flesh*; not *they three, they four, they five, &c.* which would be a monstrous position; but *they twain, shall be one flesh.* And this argument with several others, *Tertullian* urgeth with great force, in his treatise *de Monogamia. c. iv. ||*

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|| All the antient Rabbins, and all the learned men among the *Jews*, at this day maintain, that marriage makes man and wife one person: and that so strictly, that if a woman be divorced from one husband, and married to another, the first husband is prohibited from marrying the near relations of the second. (As if the personality with the first still subsisted, conjointly with the personality with the second) *Seld. Ux. Hebr. l. i. c. 3.* Is it not a clear consequence from hence, that there is even upon their principles, something so binding and so sacred in this union, that no subsequent engagement can absolutely dissolve it? for otherwise, How could it affect the first husband in a second marriage?

AGAIN;



AGAIN ; *Moses* took care to tell us, that Polygamy began in the accursed family of *Cain* ; and that *Lamech*, the author of it, was a murderer, and a greater villain even than *Cain* : and that the Polygamy of the sons of *Seth*, with the daughters of *Cain*, introduced universal corruption into the world. (See this matter more fully discussed in *Rev. Examin'd*, &c. Vol. I. and 3d Edit. p. 167, &c.) And what could more fully, or more clearly imply the evil and iniquity of Polygamy, than this account of its origin, increase, and effects ?

AGAIN ; At the deluge, righteous *Noah* and his one wife is saved, and his three sons with each their single wife ; and this at a time, when God is represented as uncommonly solicitous to have the race of mankind multiplied upon the earth, and pronouncing repeated blessings upon them,



them, to that purpose. And was Polygamy the best way of multiplying mankind? And did God Almighty not know it? Or was he unable to save more women for *Noah*, and his sons? Can the nature and reason of things contain a stronger prohibition of Polygamy, than this?

PROCEED we next, from the *History* to the *Law* of *Moses*.

IT is agreed, that the high-priest among the *Jews* could only be the husband of one wife; nor could he so much as divorce her: (as *Josephus* giveth us plainly to understand, l. iii. c. 12.) *This wife was to be a virgin, &c.* and the reason is annexed, because he was consecrated to God: And were not the whole people of the *Jews* the people of God? May we not infer from hence, That Polygamy and Divorces were unacceptable to God? And that the holier any person is,

Lev. xxi.  
13.



is, the more is he obliged to abstain from these practices? And if there be any degree of holiness or purity in abstaining from Polygamy, Is it not a necessary consequence, that Polygamy is in some degree a pollution?

AGAIN ; A woman that was divorced, could not be re-married to the same husband, when divorced by the second ; and the reason of this prohibition is, the pollution of her second marriage ; the words of the law are these ; *Her former husband,* Deut. 24. *which sent her away, may not take* <sup>3, 4.</sup> *her again, to be his wife ; after that she is defiled.* Is it not plainly implied in these words, That a marriage to a second husband, during the life of the first, is a defilement? And if the wife be defiled, by a commerce with another man, after divorce, Is not the husband, by a parity of reason, defiled, by a commerce with another woman? And is not this a plain

E pro-



prohibition of Polygamy, as a defilement? And a plain foundation for that declaration of our Saviour's, above-cited; that he *that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery?*

BUT what putteth this matter, to my apprehension, past all manner of doubt, is, the precept in relation to the marriage of a slave betrothed by a father to his son; whilst he is yet in his father's house: as you may read it in the 21st chapter of *Exodus*, at the 9th and 10th verses; *And if he have betrothed her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters; if he take him another wife, her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage shall be not diminish.* Here it is evident, that a second wife is to be taken, only upon conditions (in the ordinary course of things, and by the generality of men) impossible to be fulfilled: and consequently,



sequently, this conditional permission (if the words could amount to a permission, which they certainly do not) is equal to an absolute prohibition; according to that undoubted axiom of the schools, *Si conditio sit impossibilis, &c. i. e.* If the condition be impossible, an hypothetic proposition is equivalent to a plain, categoric, unconditional negative.

IF it be objected, that an impossible supposition is nugatory; I answer, that it is not; but frequently used in the Scriptures, with great beauty and energy. For example, *If you can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night; then may also my covenant be broken with David, &c.* Jer. 33. 20, 21.

AND if this be the treatment due to a betrothed bond-woman; no man will say, that any thing worse than



than this, was due to a betrothed free-woman.

BUT if this comment be objected to, in this light, let it be considered in another ; it is evident, from these words of *Moses*, that there is a duty of marriage to which the first wife hath a right ; and it is as plain, that she may be wronged of this duty, by her husband's taking a second wife ; What then is the intention of this precept, but to prohibit that wrong ? Her duty of marriage, saith *Moses*, shall not be diminished by a second marriage. But, in fact, it is diminished by a second marriage ; and more by a third, and more yet by a fourth, and so on : Is it not plain then, that *Moses's* view in this precept was, to prohibit second, third, and fourth marriages, in conjunction with the first ?

Now,



NOW, the Rabbinical decision upon the point standeth thus. If a man have but one wife, he is indeed bound to have marital commerce with her, at least, once a week : but if he take a second, he is obliged to have commerce with the first, only once a fortnight : and if he take a fourth, he is obliged to have commerce with the first, but once a month, and so on † : Is not then her duty of marriage diminished ? And is not this Rabbinical decision in direct contradiction to the *Mosaic* precept ?

NOW, how is this very plain point evaded ? Why thus ; the husband, say they, is to pay the marital debt || ; but then it must be paid rateably to

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† *Seld. Ux. Hebr.* l. iii. c. 6.

|| *Ibid.*



all his creditors. Let us see how this will bear the test of common sense : A man oweth me four hundred pounds by a prior bond ; Is he acquitted of this obligation, by paying me only one hundred, and distributing the other three, among three other subsequent creditors, and for the discharge of debts which he was under no necessity of contracting ? The marriage duty (which is a debt) to the first wife shall not be diminish'd, saith *Moses*, by the assumption of a second. It may justly be diminish'd to one half, to one third, to one fourth, to one hundredth, say the Rabbins. If this be not to make the law of God of none effect, by their traditions, what is ?

BUT here it may be asked ; Is not Polygamy supposed in the law of *Moses* ?



I answer, that it is ; and so is incest, murder, and adultery supposed ; and methods of punishment and prevention prescribed: but, surely, no man will say that they are, for that reason, licensed ! on supposition that a man hath a second wife, there are certain rules of humanity and good treatment to both, prescrib'd ; which he is not to transgress : but certainly, such limitations and restraints are far from being encouragements to a practice, which *Moses* had evidently in his view to discourage, as much as ever he could.

THE world was now over-run with this evil practice ; and doubtless many of the *Israelites* had, at this time, a plurality of wives ; And was it not necessary, that some regulations should be laid down concerning them ? But surely, such regulations cannot, with any degree of

E 4                      common



common sense, be construed into a permission or licence of the practice so regulated ||.

ADD to all this, that *Moses* had to do with a sensual and obstinate people; and if God thought it proper to discountenance this practice, by indirect and consequential prohibitions, added to the history of the evils derived from it, upon the antediluvian world, and the authority of his own conduct, at the creation, and the deluge; I say, if God thought fit to take this method of repressing this

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|| One of these regulations is that of *Deut.* xxi. 15, 16, 17. where it is ordered, that if a man have two wives, one beloved, and the other hated; the son of the beloved, being younger, shall not be made heir, in preference to the son of the hated, being elder. Where it is observable, that one expression in this passage, *If the first-born be her's that was hated*, makes this law appear rather to be understood of the children of two successive wives.



practice, rather than the other, of more express and absolute prohibitions ; I can easily submit my surmises, to the secret reasons of his infinite wisdom. My intention is only to shew, that we are not bound to give up the Scriptures, either as false, fallacious, or uninspired, on account of any licence given to this practice, from their authority.







REFLECTIONS  
UPON  
POLYGAMY.

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DISSERTATION IV.



Proceed in the next place, to consider the encouragement supposed to be given to Polygamy, and Concubinage, by the example of the patriarchs.

THE



THE case of *Abraham* is well known. He was long married to a barren woman ; desirous indeed of children, but without the least desire, that appeareth, of obtaining them either by Concubinage, or Polygamy ; till, at the earnest intreaty of *Sarai* his wife (and that too when she herself was, by the course of nature, past the power of child-bearing ) he took *Hagar*, her handmaid, to wife also ; and by her had one son. He took her at his wife's earnest intreaty, (*Gen. xvi.*) and immediately discharged her again, as soon as she desired it †.

G O D had promised *Abraham* a numerous issue ; *Sarai* was barren  
and

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† And when we find God confirming this desire of *Sarai's*, by his command, (*Gen. xxi. 12.*) what less can we infer from it, than that husbands



and superannuate ; a child by her slave would be her property ||.

GOD's promise to *Abraham* must be made good : this was the only natural and probable way, in which it could be made good ; she only had a right to her husband ; she desireth to transfer that right ; and it was transferred no longer than she desired it. I will not take upon me, strictly

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husbands have no right to impose, or to continue, a second wife, in opposition to the will of the first ?

|| The case is the same, at this day, among the *Chinese*. “ They are allowed but one wife, “ (saith *le Comte*) but may have as many concubines, as they please ; and all the children have an equal claim to the estate ; because they are reckoned the wife's children, and call her mother ; being the sole mistress of the house ; and the concubines, her servants.” *Harris's Collection of Travels*, Vol. ii. p. 516.

And *Navarette* tells us, that “ when the first wife hath no children, she herself courts the husband to take a concubine.” *Churchill's Collection of Voyages*. Vol. i. p. 66.



to justify this conduct: if we are to speak to this point as christians, *Sarai* must be owned guilty of a wrong desire; and *Abraham* criminal, in complying with it: (and each of them had very soon reason to repent); but this I will say, that Polygamy cannot derive any advantage, or encouragement from this example; and yet, this is the only imputation of licentiousness, that resteth upon the character of *Abraham*.

AND as for his son *Isaac*, tho' he also be lump'd in to aggravate the charge of Polygamy and Licentiousness upon the patriarchs, his character is absolutely clear of all imputation upon this head; and, in my humble opinion, it will not be easy to fix any imputation upon him, on any other.

*JACOB*'s case is next to be considered. He served painfully and  
faith-



faithfully for one wife, and another is imposed upon him ; not only without his consent, but evidently against it. What was he to do in this exigency ? He could not repudiate this wife ; neither her father, nor the laws of the country, would bear it : and if he could repudiate her, there would be some cruelty in doing it, to a woman, who was perhaps innocent in this matter ; or at worst, was criminal, only in obedience to a father's authority. Was he in this case to forego his undoubted right to another woman, to whom he was married before God ? Or could he do it ? And was she to forego her undoubted right to him, for another's fraud ? Or could she do it ? Let any man consider this case candidly, and if he can derive any argument from it, in favour of Polygamy, I will readily allow him infinitely more penetration, than I shall ever pretend to.

BUT



BUT *Jacob* is chargeable with Concubinage, as well as Polygamy. I own he is; but yet only at the instance and earnest intreaty of his wives, (*Gen. xxx.*) influenced by emulation and jealousy, (and partly too by barrenness) to the same earnest desire of children, which swayed *Sarai* before ||. And if this example be pleaded in favour of licentiousness, let it be pleaded fairly, and as it ought; and I am of opinion, that very little corruption will be introduced into the world, by it. Let no man take more than one wife, otherwise than thro' fraud and force; nor ever meddle

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|| Here we see how one vice draweth others after it; one would little expect to see Polygamy the parent of Concubinage: and yet it evidently was so, in this instance; and, I believe, is so, in many others, at this day. Envy will make people part with even their own gratifications, so it can debar another, at the same time.

with



with any other woman, except at his wife's earnest intreaty ; and, I am pretty confident, the world will never be over-run either with Polygamy, or Concubinage.

BESIDES all this, let me desire all candid readers, calmly and impartially to consider *Moses's* account of the felicity derived to *Abraham* and *Jacob*, from this plurality of wives ; and ask their own consciences, Whether their condition be painted out, as luxurious and delicious, upon this score ; or rather, as vexatious and disquieted, from the endless contention, jealousy, and envy, of their associates ? And consequently, Whether these examples were set forth by *Moses*, more to encourage Polygamy, or to discourage it ?

I know no example, that is not capable of being abused and misapplied, that of the Son of God himself  
was



was so ; and I am verily persuaded, that his example might, with almost as little guilt, be pleaded for intemperance, as the examples of *Abraham* and *Jacob*, for licentiousness. Nor do I believe, that any man ever yet pleaded these examples, for the indulgence of corrupt appetites, who would not as fully have indulged those appetites, if no such examples had ever been heard of. And therefore, with great deference to the superior sagacity of the learned letter-writer above-cited, I am humbly of opinion, that no conclusion can be drawn, to the disadvantage of the writings of *Moses*, from any encouragement given to Polygamy, or incontinence of any kind, either from the precepts of his laws, or the examples recorded in his history ; but quite the contrary.

BUT here we are pressed by the contrary decision ( as it is said ) of an eminent bishop, and *seemingly* well



attested †. His words are these,  
 “ Yea, Polygamy was made, in  
 “ some cases, a duty by *Moses’s* law;  
 “ when any died without issue, his  
 “ brother, or nearest kinsman, was  
 “ to marry his wife, for raising up  
 “ seed to him; and all were obliged  
 “ to obey this, under the hazard of  
 “ infamy, if they refused; neither is  
 “ there any exceptions made for such  
 “ as were married: from whence I  
 “ may faithfully conclude, that what  
 “ God made necessary in some cases,  
 “ to any degree, can in no case be  
 “ sinful in itself; since God is holy in  
 “ all his ways. And thus far it ap-  
 “ pears, that Polygamy is not con-  
 “ trary to the law and nature of  
 “ marriage.”

Now the learned prelate’s reasons  
 for his judgment in this point, appear

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† See remarks upon bishop *Burnet’s* history  
 by *B. Higgons*, p. 237.



to be, first, because the law of marrying the deceased brother's widow, obliged all brothers, upon pain of infamy: and secondly, because there were no exceptions made for such brothers as were married.

Now, supposing these, two distinct reasons, or intended as such, by the bishop, or not intended; it is evident however, that if there are any necessary exceptions to this law, they must be admitted, tho' not expressed; and that there are many such, the *Jews* themselves bear me witness: for example, where the deceased brother's marriage was incestuous; where he had any child that survived him, even for a few days; where the surviving brother was superannuate, or an eunuch, &c. In these and many other cases, recounted at large by *Selden* ||,

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|| See *Basnage's History of the Jews*. l. v. c. 19.



(*Uxor. Hebr.* l. i. c. 12.) It is agreed by the *Jewish* doctors, that this law was not obligatory upon the surviving brother. There are then exceptions to this, as there are to all other general laws in the world.

IN the next place, I take it for granted, that the laws of God are not contradictions to one another; and consequently, that this law was never intended to oblige, in contradiction to any other law, prohibiting such a marriage: for example, I take it for granted, that this law was not intended in contradiction to the law of *Levit.* xviii. 18. prohibiting the marriage of two sisters, *i. e.* the marriage of a second sister, during the life of the first: consequently, if two brothers were married to two sisters, (a case that often happens) the survivor could not be obliged, by virtue of this law, to take his deceased brother's widow to wife, conjointly with his own.



own. And for the same reason, if the surviving brother had a wife of his own, he could not be obliged, nor indeed was it lawful for him, to take his brother's widow to wife ; because these two were sisters. And it is agreed by the *Jewish* doctors, that all the degrees of affinity are upon the same foot of prohibition with those of consanguinity ; and the moral reasons for both are exactly the same. And the *Chaldee* paraphrast, the *Midrash*, and *Josephus* || agree, that this was the reason, why *Mablon's* next kinsman refused to redeem *Ruth*, his widow ; viz. because it was not lawful for him to marry her, having already a wife of his own.

THE learned prelate is indeed pleased to tell us, (*ibid.* p. 241.) that he was at some distance from his

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|| See *Seld. Uxor. Hebr.* l. i. c. 9.



books and papers when he gave his opinion upon this point. And this, I must own, was the best excuse that could be given for so rash a decision: which it would have been for the honour of his reading to have retracted, and which, I sincerely wish, he had retracted, when he returned to his books.

AND doubtless it was for the reason now mentioned, that no infamy attended the next kinsman's refusal of *Ruth*; neither did she pull off his shoe, nor spit before him, for she was absent during the whole transaction of this affair; and the kinsman only took off his own shoe †, in token of

Ruth iii.  
18.

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† And gave it to *Boaz*, (giving a shoe was then like giving a sod with us) it being a natural indication (say *Dr. Patrick* and others) that he resigned his interest in the land by giving him his shoe, wherewith he us'd to walk in it; to the end that he might enter into it, and take possession of it himself.

his



his resigning *Mablon's* inheritance, and with it his widow. For this was the custom of that time; whereas, had he declined his duty in this case, infamy must have attended him.

Ruth iv.  
7, 8.

Deut. 25.  
7, 9.

AND these considerations lead me to the same conclusion so lately laid down; that no inference can be made to the disadvantage of *Moses's* writings, from any encouragement given to Polygamy, or incontinence of any kind, either from the precepts of his law, or the examples recorded in his history, (or indeed in any part of the history of the old testament) but quite the contrary.

AND I am the more confirmed in this opinion, by the judgment of the *Samaritans* in this point; who receive the books of *Moses*, as well as the *Jews*, and yet are so far from being led to these enormities, by their authority, that they raise loud outcries



against the *Jews*, upon that very account. Nay, so far are they from thinking Polygamy permitted by the law of *Moses*, that they think it expressly prohibited by it, in *Lev. xviii. 18.* which they render, (as it is read in the margin of the bible) *Neither shalt thou take one wife to another, to vex her, &c.*

NOR are they singular in this interpretation: many learned commentators, and even some Rabbins ||, have understood the words in this sense; as did the *Sadducees* of old, and as do the *Caraites* (a learned sect among the *Jews*) at present. And the decision of the *Caraites* is of more weight in this case; inasmuch as they profess to stick to the letter of the Scripture, and reject the idle comments and traditions of the Rabbins.

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|| *Seld. Ux. Hebr. l. i. c. 9. Basnage's Hist. of the Jews. l. v. c. 19.*



NOW it is agreed, that the text will bear this interpretation † : and I must beg leave to add, that, in my humble opinion, the idiom of the *Hebrew* tongue requireth it.

THE *Jews* were all the descendants of one man, and evidently considered, throughout the Scriptures, as one family : in consequence of this, they considered themselves as brethren: every man was a brother, and every

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† So also the *Chaldee* paraphrast interpreteth it, and assigneth it as the reason, why *Ruth's* kinsman refused to marry her, that he had a wife before; and therefore could not redeem *Elimelech's* inheritance. *Lest* (saith he) *I mar mine own inheritance.* The most natural interpretation of which words seemeth to be, that having already children of his own, who were his heirs, his estate might be exhausted by the maintenance of another wife, and another offspring; and his inheritance become in time doubtful. See *Basnage's History of the Jews.* l. v. c. 19. Sect. 4. *Gerson has opposed the doctors, and observing, &c.*



woman a sister ||. *The Jews*, (saith \* *Grotius*) *were wont to call their wives, sisters; on account of their common origin; as Christians did theirs, on account of their common faith.* And hence it is, that according to the *Hebrew* idiom, as sister standeth for every woman of the same nation, so is it a known appellation for every other thing of the same kind; as one wing of the living creatures mentioned by *Ezekiel*, ch. i. v. 9: is *sister* to the other wing; and one curtain of the tabernacle is *sister* to another curtain. So likewise, when we are told by *St. Paul*, that he had as much right *to lead about a sister, a wife*, as any other apostle; Will any man imagine that he meaneth his own sister, strictly speaking? So likewise, when *Solomon*, in the *Canticles*, call-

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|| Those sectaries among us, who affect the Scripture phrase, use the word in this sense, to this day.

\* See his comment on 1 Cor. ix. 5.



eth his beloved (as he frequently doth) *my sister, my spouse*; are we to imagine, that this *Egyptian Spouse* was really his sister; or rather, that *sister* was the common name of endearment, used by the *Jews*, to every woman amongst them; and was, in effect, but another name for *woman*. And must we understand the word *sister* in this prohibition of *Moses*, in a different sense, from what we understand it, in the writings of *St. Paul*, and *Solomon*; and in a sense so remote from the *Hebrew* idiom? Surely, no candid man will say we must. And therefore, whether these *Jews* who do so, do not interpret it in a manner, more accommodate to their own corruptions, than to the intentions of *Moses*, let any impartial reader judge ||.

BUT,

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|| The chief reason why interpreters explain this of two sisters is, because *Moses* is, in this chap-



BUT, besides the idiom of the tongue, the reason of the prohibition, doth, in my opinion, require this sense, rather than the other. *Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her*; saith *Moses*: Is not then the reason of not taking the second wife, that the first be not vexed and † disquieted? And is a woman only

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chapter, speaking of that unlawful commerce of the sexes, which is prohibited on account of affinity, or proximity of blood. In answer to this; it is owned, that the 17 precedent verses treat of those prohibitions; but all the subsequent treat of other prohibited defilements; such as adultery, sodomy, &c. and therefore, this objection is (with great submission to the learned patrons of it) of no weight.

† And this supplieth us with another argument against Polygamy and Concubinage; the jealousy and distraction these practices raise in the breasts of wives and concubines; and the infinite murders, and mischiefs of various kinds, consequent to them. This is particularly observed of the *Chinese* concubines, that jealousy frequently drives them into despair, and deaths of several sorts. See *Navarette's Account of China*; *Churchill's Collect.* ch. vii. p. 66.

to



to be disquieted, in this case, when her husband marrieth her own sister? Will no woman kindle the passions of envy and jealousy in her breast, besides her own sister?

BUT, say the adversaries, the jealousy of sisters is most furious. I cannot say it is not, where it is just; but this I am sure of, that reason and nature say, it should not, in this case. I should think, a sister might better bear to have her husband's affection divided with her nearest and dearest relation, (where law and custom allowed it to be so) than with a stranger! But however it may be with his affection, it were surely much more tolerable, to have his fortune so distributed; than that strangers should share the inheritance: and therefore, I think, the reason of this prohibition tieth it down strongly to this sense, in which I have now explained it; especially, if we consider, that the  
vex-



vexation which *Moses* would here prevent, is absolute, and not relative.

BUT, at worst, this text *Lev. xviii. 18.* is allowed by all mankind to prohibit the taking of a second sister to wife, during the life of the first ; and consequently, all possible abuse, or corrupt imitation, of *Jacob's* example, in this point, is expressly prohibited by it.







REFLECTIONS  
UPON  
POLYGAMY.

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DISSERTATION V.

*The Case of DAVID consider'd.*



THE reader will, I hope, by this time, think the patriarchs, or, at least, the writings of *Moses*, sufficiently vindicated, from the calumny thrown upon them, by the learned letter-



letter-writer; and others of his way of thinking. And as for the prophet *David*, (the only prophet mentioned by the learned letter-writer) I shall not so much as attempt to vindicate him upon this head. It is not to be denied, that he was very criminally, and notoriously incontinent. But are God and his laws accountable for this? It seemeth they are, in the estimation of this gentleman; inasmuch as he was *admonished by no prophet, nor censured by any sacred writer*, upon this account.

BUT, suppose there were standing laws of God sufficiently known, promulged, and received, subsisting and expressly prohibiting, these very crimes, at the time of their committal? Was God, notwithstanding this, obliged to send a prophet expressly, to admonish for every transgression of them? This gentleman will not, I am persuaded, upon calmer deliberation, insist



insist upon this doctrine ; inasmuch as it is such a doctrine, as would, in its consequences, lead directly to Atheism.

IT is true, God hath sometimes admonished his servants in this manner ; but certainly, his doing so was more matter of mercy, than strict obligation. And as for any reproof, due to these practices, from the sacred writers ; I know no reproof more severe upon guilt, than publishing it to the whole world, in a full and true light ; and with all its aggravations, and attending evils ; and whether the sacred writers have not done this, I appeal to their enemies.

THE only question that will bear to be debated upon this head, is, Whether *David's* crimes were sufficiently prohibited by the laws of God, then in being ? His adultery and murder are out of the question ;



inasmuch as the ten commandments will, I presume, be allowed to have been then in being. Proceed we then to the consideration of the other charges, that lie against him.

AND first, he is charged with adding *Saul's* wives to his own. Now the plain question upon this point is, Whether the law of God allowed this conduct?

IN the first place then ; it is agreed by all writers, *Jewish* and *Christian*, and reason plainly voucheth with them, that a mother-in-law is within the prohibited degrees of marriage || : nay, the *Jews* go so far, as to affirm this to be an eternal and inviolable law of nature ; and such as was established and promulged from the cre-

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|| See *Selden Ux. Heb.* l. i. c. 3. and *de jure nat. & gent.* l. i. c. 3. *Grot. de jure belli & pac.* l. v.



ation. All *Saul's* wives were such to *David*, in a larger sense ; therefore all plainly prohibited ; and *Michal's* mother ( who, I am satisfied, was his only wife ; 1 *Sam.* xiv. 50.) doubly so. A daughter-in-law is confessedly within the prohibited degrees ; and therefore, by parity of reason, a mother-in-law ; and therefore, we always find a stepmother, and a mother-in-law, among the principal prohibitions set forth by the *Jews*. *Michal's* affinity to any wife of her father's is undoubted, (any wife of his was in law her mother) and her marriage to *David* made his affinity the same with her's. *David* was a prophet, and as well skilled in the law of God, as any man in *Judea* ; and could there then be a necessity of admonishing him, by the mouth of a prophet, for every violation of that law ? Supposing him to have violated it, which I am satisfied he did not, for reasons which shall soon be seen.



BUT, however this may be, *David* is charged with a plurality of wives ; and the charge is admitted : the plain question upon this head, is, Whether he be justified, or condemned, in this practice, by the law of God ?

Deut. 17.  
17.

NOW, besides what hath been already offered upon this point, *David* must be allowed sufficiently acquainted with the duty of a king, prescribed by *Moses* : nor could he be ignorant, that a principal part of that duty was *not to multiply wives to himself*. He did multiply wives to himself, in manifest violation of this law ; and consequently, he was criminal, in so doing.

I am indeed humbly of opinion, that his guilt, in this point, may admit of great alleviation from the corrupt glosses, which might have been  
put



put upon this prohibition, at that time; as they have been since, *viz.* that a king of *Israel* may have several wives at once, tho' not many||. And most *Christian* writers, as well as the *Jews*, have interpreted the text in that sense; but, with great submission, for very bad reasons.

THEY reason thus — A king of *Israel* is forbidden to multiply horses, and silver, and gold to himself; as well as wives: and therefore, they think, that if he may have more horses than one, or several sums of money, for several occasions, notwithstanding this prohibition; therefore, by parity of reason, he may have more than one wife.

BUT (with great submission) this by no means followeth: he might

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|| The Rabbins say, that a king of *Israel* might (for very senseless reasons which they urge) have 18 wives; but no more.



have necessary occasion for more horses, or more sums of money, than one ; but had he necessary occasion for more wives ?

WHOEVER attendeth to these prohibitions, with the particular reason of each, and the general reason of them all, will plainly see, that the design of them was, to guard the kings of *Israel* from those corruptions, by which their neighbouring kings were erected into magnificent and luxurious tyrants.

HE was not to multiply horses to himself, lest he should bring the *Israelites* again into a closer commerce with the *Egyptians* ; (with whom the best horses were bred ) and in consequence of that, into a liking and imitation of their customs, manners, and martial institutions ; whose chief confidence in war was in their cavalry. Whereas the children of *Israel* were



were to have no confidence in any thing, either for conquest, or defence, but God alone. This *David* very well knew, and plainly alludeth to, in that passage of the 20th Psalm, ver. 7. *Some put their trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.*

HE was not to multiply wives, *that his heart turn not away*, i. e. left his attachment to them, and care to please them, should divert and alienate his thoughts, either from the duty of his station, or from his duty to his God. And I appeal to any man of sense, Whether the envy and jealousy of two contending wives, might not be effectual enough, to this purpose? Might not supply any man living with matter of disquiet ||  
and

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|| *οὐδε γὰρ καλὸν  
Δύοιν γυναικοῖν ἀνδρα ἐν' ἡνίας εἶναι*



and distraction, abundantly sufficient, to turn away his thoughts from every other business of importance? And whether any greater number be any way necessary to this end? And I am satisfied, the Rabbins might have allowed their king 18 millions of wives, as consistently with his duty to God, and his people, as eighteen.

BESIDES, in my humble opinion, the difference of the expressions, here made use of, sheweth these prohibitions to be of a very different nature.

Deut. 17. *Neither shall he multiply wives to*  
 17. *himself, that his heart turn not away:*  
*neither shall he greatly multiply to*

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Ἀλλ' εἰς μίαν βλέποντες ὄναιαν Κύπειν  
 Στεργουσιν, οἷς μὴ κακῶς οἰκεῖν θέλει.

And again,

Οὐδέποτε ἀν δίδυμα  
 Λεκτέ' ἐπαινέσω βροτῶν  
 Οὐδ' ἀμφιματοῦρας κορυφῆς

Ἐν μὲν οἰκῶν. Eurip. in *Androm.* And we know he spoke from experience. *Ant. Gel. noct. Attica*, l. xv. c. 20.

*him-*



*himself silver, and gold.* The meaning of the latter prohibition, doubtless, was that, tho' he might lay up sufficient treasure for the exigencies of his government, or for public occasions of any kind, yet was he not to lay up great sums *for himself*; he was not to amass immense sums, for the gratification of his private avarice. Was not this then, in effect, a prohibition of avarice, or hoarding useless wealth? And is it possible, that less could be meant by the precedent prohibition, (which is absolute and unlimited) than the providing of useless women? The plain, natural, meaning of the precepts seemeth to me, to be this; that wealth was not greatly to be multiplied, for private use; nor wives, at all: it being just as irrational to multiply wives, to any degree, as money to excess.

THE reason, why a king of *Israel* was not greatly to multiply silver and gold



gold to himself, (*i. e.* to his private use) tho' not expressed, is sufficiently plain; because this was not, ordinarily, to be done, without oppressing and impoverishing his people; and introducing, in consequence of that, luxury, and all the evil arts of tyranny: to prevent which, beside the restraints already laid down, he was to have the law of God continually before his eyes; *that his heart might not be lifted up above his brethren.*

THIS plainly appeareth, from the concluding reason of these precepts, assigned by *Moses* in these words; *that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren; and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left. i. e.* that he raise not up himself into a proud tyrant, to oppress his people; or think himself more exempted from a strict observance of the law of God, than the meanest man amongst them; that



that is, in one word, that he may not become like any of his neighbour tyrants.

NOW what were the ends, for which the eastern monarchs amassed treasure, and multiplied horses, and wives? Was it not evidently for the ends of pride, luxury, and tyranny? To the oppression of their neighbours, and the oppression, and impoverishment of their own people? And did God ever intend, that the kings of *Israel* should be kings of this character? Or did he intend, by these restraints, to guard them from corruption, in all these instances? Most certainly he did: and if he did, Is not the plain meaning, and intention, of the prohibitions above-mentioned, that he should not multiply more money, more horses, or more wives, than he had just occasion for? And hath any man just occasion for more wives than one? Are not the ends  
of



of nature, and society, sufficiently answered by one? And can a multiplicity of wives answer any end, to a monarch, more than to a private man ; except the ends of pride, state, and luxury ? Are not these the ends, for which they have ever been multiplied ? The very evils, *Moses* evidently intended to guard against, by these prohibitions.

I shall deduce but one plain and obvious consequence from this reasoning. If a king of *Israel* was prohibited to multiply wives to himself, it is not easy to believe that any other man of that nation was permitted to do so.

THAT *David* knew the reasons, why horses were not to be multiplied, sufficiently appeareth from the Scriptures ; and is fully, and clearly, made out by Dr. *Sherlock*, in his judicious dissertation on our Saviour's entry into  
to



to *Jerusalem* : and accordingly, he abstained from multiplying them. Nay, he abstained so religiously in this point, that it doth not appear, that ever he kept, at least made use of, so much as one horse, for any purpose whatsoever. We never hear of one horse, or one chariot, in all his wars ; nor of one horse-officer, or keeper of horses, among all his servants : tho' the keepers of his asses, his camels, his herds, and his flocks, are particularly mentioned. But <sup>1Chr.27. 29, &c.</sup> when his son *Solomon* succeeded him, we immediately hear of his chariots, his horses, their number, and the cities where they were kept. And yet it is plain, *David* could have had them, as well as *Solomon* ; for he had money enough ( more perhaps than all the present princes of the earth, put together ). Nay, he could have had them without any expence ; for he took vast numbers of them in war ; but, instead of maintaining, he  
*bought*



1 Chron.  
xviii. 4.

*bought* them. It is true, he is, in one place, said to have reserved an hundred chariots; and therefore it is concluded, the horses of those chariots were reserved too; possibly for state, but more probably, for trophies and monuments of victory: and in all probability, he was punished for so doing: for we find, that both his sons, *Absalom* and *Adonijah*, began their rebellious purposes with a parade of horses, and chariots.

2 Sam.  
xv. 1.  
1 Kin. i.  
5.

WHEN *Absalom* slew *Amnon*, the rest of the king's sons gat every man upon his mule, and fled.

2 Sam.  
xiii. 29.

WHEN *Joab* sent couriers with the news of *Absalom's* defeat, they ran on foot; it seemeth from hence pretty evident, that *David* kept no horses, for any use whatsoever.

2 Sam. xv.  
14, 22.

FROM this conduct of *David*, in relation to horses, it is reasonable to believe,



believe, (the character of that monarch considered) that *had* the reasons of the precept, which prohibited wives to be multiplied, been then as apparent to him, as the reason of that, which prohibited horses; he never would have suffered his incontinence to sway him, in opposition to them. There is no room to doubt, but that the same texts, which have since influenced Christians, to believe Polygamy then lawful, had at least equal influence, upon a people blinded, and misled, by the frequency of the practice ||.

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|| And indeed, I think it demonstrable, that this practice was not then known to be a transgression of the law of God, above-mentioned; *Deut.* xvii. 17. inasmuch as the sacred historian acquits *David* of all habitual, deliberate, violation of the known law of God; save only, in the matter of *Uriah the Hittite.* 1 *Kin.* xv. 5. For this is the known meaning of that declaration concerning him, that *he turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him;* i. e. he did not deliberately swerve from any of the known laws of God.

BUT



BUT still, no prophet was sent to reprove *David* for this enormity ; as there was, in the matter of *Uriah*.

TO this I answer, ( besides what hath already been urged upon this head ) that the guilt of manifest murder, and adultery, was doubtless more flagrant, than that of Polygamy could be, at any time ; ( but especially in an age, when that corrupt practice, in all probability, prevailed ; and was certainly not deemed criminal ) ; and consequently, demanded a severer reproof.

BUT after all ; Is there no reproof, upon this head, in *Nathan's* parable ?

2 Sam.  
xii.

THE rich man's flocks, and herds, in this parable, are undoubtedly emblems of *David's* many wives ; as the poor man's ewe-lamb was the emblem of *Uriah's* single wife : and  
when



when the prophet saith, that this rich man had *exceeding many flocks and herds*, Can he possibly mean any thing less, than that *David had multiplied wives*? And did *David* not know, that his multiplying wives was a violation of the law of God? What can be plainer?

AND I think it is pretty remarkable, that *David* never took any other woman to wife, after this reproof; unless *Abishag the Shunammite*, might be called one: who was not chosen for any end of luxury, nor ever made use of, in the character of I Kin. i. 4. a wife.

PROBABLY indeed, his number of wives, even before this reproof, was very inferiour to those of the *Asiatic* monarchs, his neighbours; neither did it come up to that, which the Rabbins now think allowed him. And can we believe, that the doctors  
H of



of the law thought in a more refined manner then ? When their own sensuality was concerned, in seducing their monarch ?

BUT still, we are told, that the prophet declareth, that God had given him *his master's wives, into his bosom*; which plainly implieth God's consent, that they should be his wives.

How ! Can this imply God's consent, that *David* should commit incest ? No surely ; and therefore, men have, in my humble opinion, inferred too much, and too rashly, from a mere form of speech ; which giveth no just, or solid grounds, for such an inference.

WE are told by *Solomon*, *Prov.* xxi. 14. that *a reward in the bosom, pacifieth wrath*. Doth it necessarily follow from hence, that a reward must be put, literally, into the bosom,



som, before it can have this effect ?  
Or is the mere giving of it, sufficient?

IT is a common way of speaking now in use with us, when one man hath enriched another, to say of him, that he hath put five, or ten, or twenty thousand pounds (more or less) into such a one's pocket ; Is it necessarily implied in this phraseology, that he, literally, put those sums of money into his pocket ? Or is it sufficient to make good the assertion, that he put them into his power, and made him master of them † ?

IN like manner, doth the expression, of *Saul's* wives being given into *David's* bosom, imply, that they were actually given, or taken, into his

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† Take this expression in its strongest and most strict sense, as where *Sarai* tells *Abram* that she had given her maid into his bosom, (*Gen.* xvi. 5.) what more can be meant by it, than that she gave her into his power?



arms? No certainly: What then can it mean? Why (supposeing the original word here to signify *wives*) plainly this; that God had made him king of *Israel*; with all the marks and ensigns of royalty, by which any king could be distinguished; and one of these was, the sole power over the precedent king's wives †. But tho' *David* had this power, doth it follow, That he had a right to use it incestuously? God forbid. I no more believe, that he had a right to use *Saul's* wives in this manner, or that he thought so; because God gave them to him, *i. e.* put them into his power; than, that he had a right to bring a curse upon the house of *Israel*, and *Judah*, by numbering the people; because God

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† This is well known to have been, from the earliest antiquity, and to continue to this day, one of the distinguishing marks of royalty, all over the East.



also gave them to him. Or that *Absalom* would have had a right to murder all the wives of *David*, (as in all probability he would have done ||) if they had fallen into his power (after the overthrow of his father); because, in that case, it might have very properly been said, that God had given them into his hands.

BUT after all ; those who are of opinion , that *David* took *Saul's* wives to be his own, have not only had very little attention to the cha-

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|| If they had fallen into his hands, there is great reason to believe, he intended to murder them all. At least, so *Joab* (who was in all *David's* secrets, as *David* was let into all *Absalom's*, by means of his friend *Hushai*) sufficiently gives us to understand, from these words in 2 *Sam.* xix. 5. *And Joab came into the house to the king, and said, Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons, and of thy daughters; and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines* — Now, if this had happened, Could *Absalom* properly plead God's approbation of this murder?



rafter of *David*, but likewise have had very little attention to the history, either of *Saul*, or of *David*, or the condition of those times.

FIRST then ; as to the histories of *Saul* and *David*, tho' they be more minutely, and particularly, transmitted to us, than those of all the other kings of *Judah*, and *Israel*, put together ; yet, is there not the least trace, either of *Saul's* having had more wives, or concubines, than one of each ; or of *David's* having taken any one of *Saul's* wives, or concubines, to himself ; or of his having had any kind of commerce, with any one of them : which, from the candour, and impartiality, of their historians, groundeth a very fair, and just presumption, that he had none.

I N the next place ; the condition of those times naturally leadeth us to the same conclusion.

WHEN



WHEN *Saul* died, *Ishbosheth* his son succeeded him; and was, for seven years, king of eleven tribes; whilst *David* was received only by the twelfth. And can it be made a rational doubt, Whether *Saul's* whole family was then in *Ishbosheth's* power?

THAT they were then in his power, is, I think, sufficiently evident, not only from the situation of affairs at that time, but also, from the account we have of *Rispa*, *Saul's* concubine. The quarrel, between him and *Abner*, arose on account of some commerce *Abner* was supposed to have with her. Is it not plain from hence, that the wives and concubines of *Saul* (if he had more than one of each) were then in the possession of *Ishbosheth*? Any commerce of his with them was incest, beyond all controversy; and there is nothing in

2 Sam. iii.

H 4

his



2 Sam.  
xx. 3.

his character, that should induce us to believe him any more scrupulous upon that head, than *Absalom* was ; especially, when he might think it his interest, and a means of securing the kingdom to him ||. And if *David* shut up, and never more came near, those concubines, which his son went in to † ; (as he certainly did) it is in no wise probable, that he would have any commerce with those wives, who had before belonged to *Saul* ; and were afterwards in the hands of *Ishbosheth* \*. Certainly  
the

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|| However, it is but just, to observe that, in his dispute with *Abner*, he calleth *Risbak*, his father's concubine ; not his own.

† It is not improbable, that this judgment from God, cooperating with the prophet's reproof, contributed to bring *David* into a thorough sense of his guilt, in the point of Polygamy.

\* We naturally take the character of a family from the father of it ; if there be nothing to determine us to the contrary. Now, as to *Saul's* religion, besides his monstrous massacre  
of



the pollution, nay, the suspicion of the pollution, of incest upon himself, and upon those women, by such a commerce, must be more shocking to such a spirit as his, than the involuntary pollution contracted by his own women; in which he had no share, and possibly, they no guilt. Especially, when he could propose no advantage to himself by such a commerce; the kingdom being now his own, without a rival: and when, in all probability, he could be under no temptation to this guilt, from the youth, or beauty, of any of the persons, supposed to be concerned in it.

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of *Akimelech*, his associates, and whole city in the security of their innocence; (in which the *Gibconites*, in all probability, had their share) we may form a rational conjecture concerning it, from what *David* saith to the elders of *Israel*; 1 *Chron.* xiii. where advising them to bring again the ark, he addeth, *for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul.*

How



How long they had been *Saul's* wives (supposing he had any such) is uncertain ; but, if we may judge by the unsettled condition of his later years, probably a considerable time : but however that may be, the distance of more than seven consuming years, betwixt *Saul's* death and *David's* succession to *Ishbosheth*, will, I believe, be found sufficient to exhaust the bloom of a short-lived, *Asiatic*, beauty. This is certain ; that a less space hath been found sufficient to exhaust it, in those regions, where it is supposed more permanent.

BESIDES all this, *Rispa* was one of these wives ; she was undoubtedly put into *David's* power, as well as the rest ; but is there the least colour, or 'pretence of reason for believing, that ever she was literally in his bosom ?



THE learned letter-writer, and others, may think as they please upon this point ; but, I hope, they will allow me to believe *David* incapable of so gross, so fruitless, so untempting a guilt : even if he had had any opportunity of incurring it, as I verily believe he had not.

TO all this may be added that the word which in this text is translated *wives*, doth in its primary import signify only *women* ; and that the generality of the Rabbins understand it in this place to signify only the ladies of *Saul's* court ||, and are also of opinion, that it was unlawful, even for a king of *Israel*, to marry the widow of a king. And indeed, as far as I can learn, it was a practice even in this sense almost unknown to

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|| See *Seld. Ux. Hebr.* l. i. c. 10.



the heathen, *that a man should have his father's wife* †.

BUT if we understand the expression so as to comprehend all the women over whom *Saul* had any power, the prophet's reasoning, and *David's* guilt will both be seen in their strongest light : and that it must be so understood, I think, is evident from the text, *I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives, &c. i. e. I put Saul's whole family into your power.* How criminal must *David* be in his attempt upon *Uriah's* wife, when he had so many other women in his power to chuse out of ! whereas had his choice been confined to anti-

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† Unless in such instances as that of *Nero* or *Caracalla*. It is true, *Procopius* tells us in his fourth book of the *Vandal* wars, that this was customary among the *Varni*; and *Cæsar* chargeth the antient *Britons* with yet greater abominations ( *Bell. Gall. l. v. c. 14. Græv.* ) but men of learning have with good reason doubted, whether their informations were well grounded.



quated and polluted *Rispa*, (the only surviving wife of *Saul* that we hear of) I cannot conceive what foundation there could be for this part of the prophet's reproach.

BESIDES; if *David* had been conscious to himself of such guilt, was it possible for him, in a psalm of thanksgiving to God upon his thorough establishment in the kingdom, to cry out, nay, to appeal to God, as he doth in the xviiiith psalm, *The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness, &c. For I have kept the ways of the Lord; as for his statutes, I did not depart from them. I was also upright before him, and have kept myself from mine iniquity.* This is an appeal, which I am persuaded, no hypocrite, not even the most abandoned, ever yet made to God; however he might glose, and falsify before men. See psalm cxix.





# REFLECTIONS UPON POLYGAMY.

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## DISSERTATION VI.



UT still it is objected in favour of Polygamy, that those countries where it is permitted, are more numerous in their inhabitants, than those where it is prohibited: and they instance in *Turkey, China, and Japan.*

As



As to the first of these, it is well known (say they) that the *Asiatic* armies are much more numerous than the *European*; and it is allowed, that *China* and *Japan* are the best inhabited regions of the earth; and these advantages are ascribed to the benefit of Polygamy.

BUT, with great submission, nothing can be more rash and ill-grounded than these conclusions.

THE *Turk* is tyrant over an immense tract of earth, absolute master of the lives and fortunes of his subjects ||, and therefore he can at any time croud as many of them together

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|| All the lands of that empire are held upon the terms of military contributions. That is, under conditions of supplying the emperor with a certain number of horse and foot, in proportion to the extent and value of the estate.



under his ensigns as he thinks fit, and hence his armies are much more numerous, than those of the *European* powers, whose empires are much less extensive, and whose dominion is less absolute; but at the same time, it is well known that his Janizaries, his best soldiers, the support and strength of his empire, are the sons of christian parents, who are no way indebted to Polygamy for their increase.

BUT, suppose the case otherwise, the number of the Grand Seignior's forces inferreth nothing in favour of Polygamy, for the reasons now mentioned.

THE only question is, Whether the inhabitants of those countries, over which he is tyrant, are become more numerous since the admission of Polygamy amongst them? And it is evident to demonstration, that they  
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are



are not. Notwithstanding the vast supplies they have received (and do daily) from their depredations on the *European* borders ||, sometimes to the

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|| It is well known, that the *Crim-Tartars* make a trade of ravageing the borders of *Poland*, and *Muscovy*, and carrying the inhabitants into slavery to *Constantinople*, &c. beside the *Turkish* depredations in the *Levant*. See *Churchill's Collection of Voyages*, p. 530.

*Olearius* relateth, that the *Circassian Tartars* trade with one another in horses, lads, and maids, which they steal from the frontiers of *Muscovy*, p. 165.

And *Busbequius*, p. 103. that at the gates of *Constantinople* he met with whole waggon-loads of boys and girls brought from *Hungary* to *Constantinople* to be sold, and that no merchandize is more frequent among them than that; besides the sale of slaves taken in war, which is a gainful trade, p. 158, 159.

The *Persians* have their *Georgians* to supply their armies, as the *Turks* their *Fanizaries*. *Fryar*, p. 259.

The north coast of the Black sea, from the lake *Mæotis* to *Mingrelia*, is full of woods inhabited by a sort of mountaineers, called *Chercks*, who are not subject to the *Turks*, but trade with all ships as they pass by for slaves male and female, with which they furnish the *Turk*; (*Univ. Travel*. p. 814.) by which the country is dispeopled. *Ibid*. p. 815.



amount of half a million of souls at once. Nay, whoever compareth the present state of those countries with the antient, in the times of the *Greeks*, and *Romans*, will find abundant reason to conclude, that notwithstanding their imaginary increase from Polygamy, they do not now contain one half, nay, not one tenth of their antient either heathen or christian inhabitants. Their great and flourishing cities are either in utter ruine, or in comparative desolation || ; and no new ones worth nameing are risen up in their stead. The place of many of them is not so much as to be found ; and many others are only known by some remain of antient magnificence, or some monument of

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|| I am sensible that *Grand Cairo* is an exception to this observation, and possibly so may *Constantinople* in point of inhabitants : but these exceptions no way affect the truth of the general observation.

more



more distinguished ruine; the present rude race that possess them, strangers to culture, and enemies to art and elegance, have spread misery and desolation where-ever they came.

WITH what heavy hearts do all travellers of taste, or common humanity, traverse these sad ruins of antient grandeur! surveying their present devastation with an equal mixture of pity and contempt; and aggravateing it by comparison with their antient glory; in a word, whoever will allow himself time and attention enough to survey the several regions of this great empire, whether in their pagan or christian state, and compare that with their present depopulation, will have as much reason to believe that the present *Athini* transcendeth the antient *Athens*, or the mosque at *Jerusalem*, *Solomon's* temple, as that Polygamy hath peopled *Asia*.



NAY, the contrary to this is so demonstrably true, that whoever thoroughly considereth the state of that empire, will have abundant reason to conclude, that if it were not for their constant supplies of christian captives ||, and that policy faral to *Christendom*, of supporting their empire by christian natives educated, and perverted to Mahometism, the *Turks* had long since ceased to be a people; nor doth it require great sagacity to foresee, that whenever that policy ceaseth, (as it is said to be in its † decline)

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|| And therefore Sir *Paul Ricaut* very judiciously observeth, that the checking of that trade would be the most effectual way of weakening this empire.

† The *Fanizaries* are now become a considerable body in this empire, as the *Prætorian* bands were in the *Roman*; and the *Turks* are said, by bribing their officers, to procure the admission of many of their children into it, instead of those of christians. Whether any of them



cline ) their empire will not long survive it.

BUT still it is objected, that *China* and *Japan* are confessedly the best peopled regions of the earth, and in them Polygamy remarkably prevail-eth.

IN answer to this, I shall beg leave to consider the state of both these countries in a very particular manner with relation to this point ; and doubt not to demonstrate to the conviction of the meanest capacity, that the number of inhabitants in each of these empires, is so far from being increased, that it is greatly check'd by

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them are admitted, by the same means, into the seminaries of the *Ichoglans* and *Agiamoglans* (which were originally to consist of christians) I cannot say.



Polygamy : and that the excess of females above males in those countries, (if in truth they do exceed) is owing to other causes than the proportion of their natural increase.

IN the first place then, I believe it will be allowed, that the great natural increase of people in all countries, is from the increase of the populace. Now the common people in *China*, who are there, as in all other countries, the bulk of the people, and an exceeding majority, marry but one wife ; and consequently the increase of that people above all others is not due to Polygamy. If the increase of inhabitants in any country were due to Polygamy, the inhabitants would certainly be found to increase most in those countries, (*cæteris paribus*) where that practice was found to be most prevalent with the greater part of the people ; as in *Turkey* for example, (where



(where it remarkably prevaieth ||) whereas in fact it is otherwise : and the common people in *China* who marry but one wife, increase faster than those of the *Turks*, who marry many ; and there is reason to believe, that this practice hath not long prevailed even among the people of better condition in *China*. The reason why the common people of *China* marry but one wife, is expressly mentioned in some accounts of that country, and easily collected from all the rest ; they buy their wives there, (as they do almost all over the East) and are unable to purchase and maintain more than one ; nor can it well be otherwise, except in those parts of the world, where the original inhabitants

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|| But with this difference, that the bulk of common people in *Turkey* are christians, who are found in fact to have more children by one wife, than the *Turks* by many. See Salmon's *present State of the Turkish Empire*, ch. vi.



are slaves and poor, and their tyrants rich, as in *Turky*, or where the wives are reduced to such an abject state of slavery as to maintain both themselves and their husbands by hard labour ; as in some parts of *Afric*.

IN the next place, the *Chinese* have for four thousand years past enjoyed the advantage of more peace and better civil institutions than any region under heaven † hath for such a length of time ; and if mankind are doubled in the ordinary state of things in the compass of about 300 years, we may easily conceive why *China* (so advantaged far beyond the ordinary condition of other countries) should be the best peopled region of the earth ||.

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† See Navarette's *Accounts of China*. Churchill's *Collect. of Trav.* Vol. I. ch. v.

|| In any place or country where the number of people is to the annual increase in a constant



IN the next place, when *China* was conquered, as it hath been twice by

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stant given ratio; and where they are neither diminished by the emigration of the natives, nor augmented by the accession of strangers, the time in which the inhabitants will be doubled, may be determined in the following manner.

Let the number of people be to the annual increase as  $N$  to  $A$ , consequently  $N + A$  will be as the number of people after one year; and forasmuch as  $N. N + A. \frac{N + A|^2}{N^2} \cdot \frac{N + A|^3}{N^2}$ .

&c. are in continued proportion,  $\frac{N + A|^2}{N}$  will be as the number of people after two years, and  $\frac{N + A|^3}{N^2}$  as the number after three years,

and so on. And if  $T$  be put to denote the years wherein the number will be doubled, we shall have this equation  $\frac{N + A|^T}{N \cdot T - 1} = 2 N$  and

$$\frac{N + A|^T}{N \cdot T} = 2 \text{ and } T = \frac{\text{Log. } 2.}{\text{Log. } N + A - \text{Log. } N.}$$

Now from Dr. *Hally's* observations on the bills of mortality at *Breslaw*, it appeareth, that of 29 persons one dies annually; and that the deaths are to the births as 1 to 1.055, consequently



by the *Tartars*, tho' great numbers of the natives were slain, yet was

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quently the number of people is to the annual increafe, as 29 to 0.055, fo that in this cafe  $N+A=29055$  and  $N=29000$ ; and the difference of their logarithms, viz. 8229 dividing the logarithm of 2, viz. 3010300 gives 366 for the number of years in which the inhabitants of *Breslaw* will be doubled. Again, from the best observations it appeareth, that throughout *England*, of 40 perfons one dies annually; and Mr. *Derham* tells us, that the deaths are to the births as 1 to 1.12. consequently the number of people in *England* is to the annual increafe as 40 to 0.12, and therefore  $N+A=4012$ , and  $N=4000$  and the difference of their logarithms, viz, 13009 dividing the logarithm of 2 as before, gives 231 for the number of years in which the people of *England* will be doubled; which is a little less than two thirds of the time requisite at *Breslaw*. The reason of this disparity is, that in *England* they are less mortal than at *Breslaw* in the proportion of 29 to 40; and more prolific in the proportion of 1120 to 1055.

And tho' we should suppose the inhabitants of some countries more mortal and less prolific than those at *Breslaw*, and others less mortal and more prolific than those of *England*, yet still 300 years may be estimated at a medium as the time in which mankind under the circumstances first laid down, will be doubled.

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that devastation more than made up by a vast influx of the conquerors from that inexhaustible hive of *Tartary*.

THEIR armies were mighty, many, and successive; and as they gained ground, they invited their friends to follow them; many of their wives attended them in the expedition ||; as others followed in great numbers \*, insomuch that in the last conquest of *China*, the imperial cities of *Pekin* and *Nankin* were wholly peopled anew by *Tartars*; the natives being forced out into other habitations †; and if we consider the incredible numbers of men said to dwell in these cities, the vast numbers of *Tartars* sent to guard the great wall, and to garri-

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|| Palafox's *Conquest of China by the Tartars*.  
p. 583.

\* Ibid. p. 554.

† Ibid. p. 455.



son all the other towns and cities of this mighty empire after the conquest, we shall have reason to believe, that *China* gained an increase of inhabitants by this revolution.

THIS point then is I hope sufficiently clear, that *China* doth not owe the number of its people to Polygamy.

LET us now consider the supposed excess of females above males in that empire, and see whether that (supposing it fact) can be accounted for upon other principles than the proportion of their natural increase.

IN the first place then, the number of males slain in the last conquest of *China* greatly exceeded (as it ordinarily happeneth) that of the females † ;

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† Palafox's *Conquest of China*, p. 578.



and we are told that the *Tartars* took none of the *Chinese* women to wife for three or four years after their conquest; † before which time they had women enough from their own country. And as some millions of men were slain in this conquest, and the civil commotions precedeing it, it is evident that great numbers of women must be left at this time destitute of husbands.

IN the next place, whereas there are three sects of Bonzi or Monks, who profess celibacy in *China*, we are assured that there were three millions of only one sect of those monks in *China*, at the time of the *Tartar* conquest || ; a number singly sufficient to create a great excess of unmarried females ; and at the same

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† Palafox's *Conquest of China*, p. 554.

|| Ibid. p. 460.



time greatly to check the increase of that people ; and this upon supposition that the other two sects made up no number worth mentioning, which however we have no reason to believe ; since the first of these, which is the learned sect, hath temples dedicated to *Confucius* in every town and city, besides those to *Ching - Hoang* the tutelar genius of the empire, those dedicated to the Spirit of fire, the God of the waters, and many others ; and all those temples must have priests to attend them\*.

WE are also told, that the second sect hath very many temples throughout all *China*||, but with this abatement, that some of their priests marry.

AS to the third, *viz.* the idol sect of *India*, their monasteries, pagodes,

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\* *Navarette*, B. II. ch. ix.

|| *Ibid.*



and priests are confessedly innumerable. *Their temples, saith Navarette ||, are innumerable, some have five hundred, some eight hundred, some a thousand Bonzes.* And if we add to all these the number of hermits dispersed throughout the whole empire, we shall have reason to believe that the whole of the recluses and monastics of *China* will amount to at least twice three millions; which I am satisfied is much more than the surplus number of wives indulged by the permission of a plurality throughout that empire.

THE last check (that I shall mention) upon the increase of people in *China*, and such as at the same time leaveth a great number of females of necessity unmated, is the great number of eunuchs made and maintained

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|| *Navarette*, B. II. ch. ix.



throughout that empire, to be a guard upon their seraglio's. An empire where the nobility and men of wealth are more numerous than in any other under heaven. We are informed from *Navarette*, that when *Xun. Chi*, the last *Tartar* conqueror died, (which was about eighty years ago) there were six thousand eunuchs turned out of the palace at once: and we are informed by *Purchas*, of sixteen thousand in the palace at once; and of three thousand chosen into it at one time out of twenty thousand presented. For as this is a great preferment, the poorer sort throughout the empire emasculate their handsome sons in hopes of this preferment ||.

FROM all which it appeareth, that the great number of females in *China*

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|| *Universal Traveller*, p. 672. of the *Dublin* Edition.



left to supply the seraglio's of pluralists is intirely owing to the *Tartar* conquest, to that superstitious celibacy and that cruel eviration which prevail there; the first of which destroyed so many native males, as the two latter daily cut off such an infinite number of men from their natural rights, and from discharging the duties they owe to society; and how much the increase of people in this empire is check'd by these abominations, let any man of common understanding judge.

FURTHER yet; That the increase of people in that country, is check'd by Polygamy, will appear clearly from another proof; and that is, shewing that in fact, notwithstanding the advantages it hath over all other countries, it is not the best peopled country in the world.

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SOME



SOME writers of good note make *China* as large as all *Europe* ; now, suppose it only half as large, it is evidently more than ten times as large as *England* ; the inhabitants of *China* are found by the exactest computation to be about fifty-eight millions||, those of *England* are estimated at eleven ; if this computation be right, it is evident that *China* is not half as well peopled as *England*.

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|| So *Salmon* computeth them after *Newhoff*, *Mod. Hist.* Vol. I. ch. i.

Tho' *Kircher* would have us believe that the very men are so many (*China Illustrata*, Part IV. c. ii.) by his account the men are ten to a family in several provinces of the empire ; and six and a half at a medium throughout, which is incredible.

Now, suppose the women as numerous, then every family in *China* will contain thirteen men and women one with another besides children, which is absolutely impossible in the nature of things, for then every man and wife must at their first going together into a house of their own, have eleven slaves to attend them.

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THE inhabitants of *China* have not been diminished, that we know of, for some thousands of years, by wars, by commerce, or by colonies, as those of *England* are and have been daily diminished by all these drains, in all parts of the habitable world; and yet they are more numerous in proportion; it is evident then that the natives of *England* || are and have been much more increased by Monogamy, than those of *China* by Polygamy.

THE case of *Japan* is, I own, wholly different from that of *China* in the business of Eunuchism; for no such custom prevaieth there that I can find, (for here women are attended by women slaves).

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|| If it be objected that the inhabitants of *England* have been greatly increased by foreign accessions; I answer, so hath *China* in proportion.



|| BUT then other abominations which are the natural and necessary consequences of Polygamy have the very same influence upon that people, and equally defeat the ends of society; I mean, those detestable and abominable prostitutions of both sexes publicly permitted and encouraged throughout that whole empire; to the infinite reproach of that reason whose sufficiency is so celebrated.

NOW, the consequences of these prostitutions are these.

FIRST, that great numbers of men indulged in this licentious way are diverted from regular marriages.

SECONDLY, that many of the unhappy creatures so exposed, espe-

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|| See Kemfer's *Hist. of Japan Eng.* p. 260, 416, 600.



cially of the male sex, perish young.  
And

THIRDLY, that they who live longer in this vile profession, are yet utterly useless to all the purposes of propagation.

AND that these prostitutions are the natural consequences of Polygamy is evident, inasmuch as a great number of women unnaturally shut up in seraglio's, of necessity leaveth a great number of men deprived of their natural rights; these men however must be indulged, and there is no possibility of indulging them but by public prostitutions.

AND thus (to say nothing of men) are all orders and degrees of women in that empire differently distressed: some by the craveings and miseries of natural wants unindulged; and others by all the abuses of brutality and  
K 3                      excess;



excess ; and can any man who hath the least remains either of virtue or humanity need ampler or more aggravated proofs of the evils of Polygamy, than such as this single consideration will suggest ?

Now, the infinite number of brothels throughout that empire, and the prodigious resort to them is, I think, a plain proof, that the men are a great majority there ; for this sheweth that a great part of the people hath a demand for prostitutes.

To illustrate this by a parallel instance ; the prostitutes licensed for the single city of *Ispahan* are, we are told, forty thousand † ; now, suppose one half of those that resort to these, to be married men, yet must we suppose at least eighty thousand

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† Fryars *Travels*, p. 395.



unmarried men in that city ; otherwise there were no occasion for such a number of licences ; and can we imagine that the women shut up in the seraglio's of that city amount to half that number ? No surely ; for the rich in all great cities are comparatively few ; and they only can keep a plurality of wives (which is the case of all countries where the women are shut up) ; whereas then there are more brothels licensed and encouraged in *Japan* than in any region of the earth, it is plain, that there must be more unmarried men in it, and this reasoning is strengthened by considering, that there hath been no destruction of men there for many ages, either by war or commerce, which in other countries greatly contribute to reduce the males to an equality with the females.

T H E R E is besides this, another check upon their increase ; and that



is, the power all men of fortune have over their slaves, whom they can slay at will, and whom they often call upon to slay themselves at their entertainments out of gaiety and gallantry ; as also the custom which prevaleth among those slaves, of sacrificing themselves in great numbers (from twenty to forty at a time) at the graves of their lords \*, who being very numerous (possibly more so in proportion to the extent of the empire than even in *China*) ; their deaths must create a great slaughter of males, and consequently a great number of widowed wives, and helpless orphans to be added to their brothels and se-raglio's.

BUT the principal check upon their increase here, as well as in *Chi-*

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\* Mandelso's *Travels*, p. 142.



*na*, is the celibacy of the priesthood, which is here incredibly numerous ||.

A N D whereas there are twelve sects in this empire, each of which are instructed by priests of their own, the ecclesiastics of eleven of these are prohibited to marry under pain of death †, but indulged in an abominable licence of another kind.

A N D we learn from *Kemfer*\*, that tho' two orders of the twelfth sect are permitted to marry, yet they seldom do so.

N O W, whereas these priests are in one part so numerous as to equal about a tenth part of the layety ‡,

|| *Mandelfo's Travels* p. 154. *Kemfer*, p. 486, 487, 238, 29.

† *Mandelfo*, p. 154. *Canidius in Churchill's Collect.* Vol. I. p. 488.

\* *Ibid.* p. 305.

‡ *Ibid.* *Kemfer*, p. 486, 487.



how greatly this seclusion of such numbers of men from marriage must multiply the number of women above those of the married men in that part, and consequently provide supplies for stews and the seraglio's of the rich, is sufficiently obvious.

BUT then it must be remembered, that these monastics are only thus numerous at *Miaco*, the residence of their ecclesiastical emperor; and this supposed excess of females in one city can bear no proportion to that natural excess of males throughout an empire so extensive and so populous.

NOW, if we suppose the priesthood even half so numerous in other parts of the empire, which is a large supposition, this however in a nation where men are not exhausted either by war or navigation, will scarce bring the females to an equality with the marriageable males, and consequently



quently there can be no surplus of women for Polygamy.

AND indeed I think it evident from the best accounts of this empire, that there is rather a scarcity of women throughout it than any exceeding; consequently the increase of the natives is much more check'd than promoted by Polygamy; and one proof of this scarcity of women (besides the multitudes of their male and female prostitutes) is, that guards are kept upon the outroads of the imperial city, to hinder women from being carried away from it ||.

BUT, suppose the case otherwise, and suppose the married men in *Japan* to beget more children by their many wives than they could if confined to one, will this prove the number of mankind best increased by Po-

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|| *Kemfer*, p. 512.



lygamy? the plain question is, Whether they are more increased in that way, than they would be, if every man in that empire were indulged in the right of marriage with one wife? and I believe, no man of common sense, and knowledge in the state of that country, will insist that they are.

BUT still it may be urged, that the inhabitants of this empire are very numerous.

I own they are, and so must the inhabitants of every nation under heaven be in length of time, however their increase may be check'd by Polygamy, if we suppose that increase uncheck'd by ill government, ignorance of the arts of life, and the drains of war, pestilence †, com-

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† The plague is not known in *Japan*. See Salmon's *present State of Japan*.

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merce, and colonies : which hath been remarkably the case of *Japan* for many ages, (nay, they are generally believed to increase under all these disadvantages) tho' ill government always driveth them away.

LET us suppose *Japan* as full of inhabitants as it can hold, which I believe is not the case, since the inhabitants are prohibited to quit the empire upon pain of death ; whereas if they were overcharged, they would be glad to be eased ; however, suppose this to be really the case, Are mankind born only for one country ?

SUPPOSE *Japan* thoroughly peopled, Is the world so ? Most certainly it is not.

WHY then should the increase of its citizens be check'd, as it certainly is by Polygamy, and the consequence of it, Prostitution ? And by a superstitious



flitious seclusion of great numbers of males from marriage ?

GIVE me leave to add, that christian states are not altogether unconcerned in the consequences of such seclusions.

BY this time I hope it clearly appeareth, that the number of mankind is far from being increased either in *China* or *Japan* by the permission of Polygamy ; quite otherwise, the increase of the human species is manifestly check'd, and their miseries multiplied by that permission, not only in those regions, but in every region of the habitable world.

I speak this upon full conviction, the consequence of a long and careful inquiry into the best accounts I could meet with of all the parts and portions of this globe.

UPON



UPON the whole, if we consider the infinite evils derived from the practice of Polygamy in all parts of the earth, where it obtaineth, upon the men by the luxury of some, the eviration of others, and the exclusion of infinite numbers from their natural rights : upon the women by the distractions of envy and jealousy, by rageing appetites unindulged, by cruel confinement, by abject slavery, and a seclusion from the noblest rights of nature and society : and upon both, by that prostitution and brutality, to which great numbers of both are exposed by it : and lastly, by the seclusion of both from that right and regular commerce of the sexes, that true social union of affection and interests which God intended, and nature demandeth. I say, whoever considereth all these evils, and abhorreth not Polygamy the parent of them all, that man hath a soul utterly estranged



estranged from all social and benevolent affections ; from all true love of liberty, and reverence of virtue ; and from all awe, honour, and veneration of the Supreme Being.



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REFLECTIONS  
UPON  
POLYGAMY.

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DISSERTATION VII.



THE last proof of the multiplication of mankind by Polygamy, beyond that by single marriages, is taken from the prodigious increase of mankind in the ruder and more barbarous ages sufficiently evidenced by  
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those frequent and furious swarms from the northern hive; which have wholly ceased for some ages past, since the establishment of Christianity: that is, since Polygamy and promiscuous copulation ceased amongst them †.

THIS I own did for a considerable time appear to me a strong argument in favour of Polygamy: and upon inquiry I found it such as required more time carefully to discuss and clearly to determine than can well be supposed to have been employed upon it, by some very ingenious men who read only for their pleasure.

IN the first place then I think it evident, from the most antient and authentic accounts of the northern nations, that Polygamy never prevailed

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† See Sir *W. Temple's* observations on the *Netherlands*, p. 11. Fol. Ed.



much amongst them before the establishment of Mahometism.

FOR first, *Herodotus*, and *Trogus*, who seem to have carefully considered the manners of the *Scythians*, give us no hint of any such practice prevailing amongst them ; tho' their other singularities are carefully noted. But at the same time it must be owned, that they are mentioned by *Strabo*, as having their wives and children in common.

IN the next place, *Pomponius Mel-  
la*, who also should seem to have been a careful inquirer, found no such practice among any of the northern nations of *Europe*, except that of *Thrace* only ; who probably borrowed it from their *Asiatic* neighbours. And this nation only of all the *Europeans* is noted by *Strabo* (l. 7.) on the same account.



IT is true we are told by *Tacitus* in his account of *Germany*, that this (*Germany*) was almost the only nation among the *Barbarians*, where single marriages were in use ||: but in this I think he must be mistaken for the reasons now mentioned. Besides that, this nation are supposed by *Strabo* to have been called *Germans* by the *Romans*, because they were *Germani*, that is, brethren to the *Gauls*. And indeed the *Gauls* we hear so often of in the *Roman* historians before the times of *Cæsar*, seem to have been in all respects the same people. *Cæsar* † we know hath given a particular account of their manners, as they stood at that time;

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|| He hath also observed, that there were some few of this nation, who thought the marriage of more wives than one a distinguishing pre-eminence of their nobility.

|| Bell. Gall. l. vi.

and



and yet without the least mention of their being Polygamists : which could not have been well avoided, especially when he described their manners in contradistinction to those of the *Germans*. We are also told by *Strabo*, (l. 7.) that the *Germans* are in their manners like the *Gauls*.

B U T these writers will easily be reconciled, if we suppose that *Tacitus*, considering *Gaul* as now a *Roman* province, did not place its inhabitants among the number of the *Barbarians*.

I T is observable however, besides all this, that it is made matter of doubt even by *Tacitus* himself, whether the *Aravisci* migrated from *Germany* into *Pannonia*, or the *Osi* descended into *Germany* from them ; inasmuch as their language, manners, and institutions were still the same.



BUT, supposing the *Germans* were the only nation among the *Barbarians* that abstained from Polygamy, it is evident to a demonstration, that they multiplied faster than any other nation of the known world. And of this we need no other proof than the accounts we have of their incredible numbers, their continued contentions with the whole *Roman* power, and their almost as continued slaughters from *Marius* to *Gratian*; notwithstanding which they at last prevailed over the whole force of the empire, and were established into an empire of their own, at least as much by the advantage of their numbers as their prowess.

THE numbers vanquished by *Marius* were prodigious: and yet those subdued and slaughtered by *Cæsar* were much more considerable. Under the reign of *Augustus*, *Drusus* we  
are



are told subdued the greatest and strongest nations † of *Germany*; and yet notwithstanding this every one knows with what excess and bitterness of grief that emperor was wont, after this, to call upon *Quintilius Varus* to restore those legions, which this people had intirely cut off.

IN the succeeding reign *Germanicus* the son of *Drusus*, after many hard and dangerous conflicts, triumphed over the *Germans*, who yet vexed the *Roman* territories before the end of it. His son *Caligula* undertook an expedition against them, but returned without either conquest or glory.

IN the reign of *Vespasian*, *Pliny* the elder found materials enough for an ample history of the *Roman* wars with the *Germans*, which he composed

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† *Maximas fortissimasque gentes Germaniæ.*



in twenty books. *Plin. Ep. l. iii. Ep. V.*

AND it is observed by *Tacitus*, that from the consulate of *Cæcilius Metellus* to the second consulate of *Trajan*, (a space of about 210 years) the *Romans* were employed in subduing the *Germans*: in which space I think it evident that they sustained more damage from that nation than from all the rest of the world besides. It is true, *Tacitus* hath touched but lightly upon these losses; yet he cannot help owning that they were greater than those sustained from the *Samnites*, the *Carthaginians*, the *Spaniards*, the *Gauls*, or the *Parthians*; that they lost five consular armies together, besides the legions under *Varus*; that neither *Marius*, *Cæsar*, *Drusus*, *Nero*, or *Germanicus* subdued them with impunity; that after this they became the invaders, and drove the legions from their stations,  
and



and grasped at *Gaul*; in a word, that of late years they were more triumphed over than subdued.

FROM this time we hear little of them till the reign of *Marcus Aurelius*, who was successful against them but not without infinite slaughter, and loss of his armies ||. In honour of whose conquests over them and the *Sarmatæ* their allies, that noble pillar which bore his name was erected to him by decree of the senate. And from this pillar it sufficiently appeareth, that the *Romans* themselves then thought the deliverance of their emperor and armies, and the destruction of their enemies wrought by the miraculous interposition of Almighty God \*.

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|| Universi exercitus Romani perierunt.  
*Eutrop.* l. viii.

\* See *Rubens's* delineation of this pillar.  
N. xv.



BUT whether this were obtained by the prayers of the christians, or the piety of the emperor, is no part of my present purpose to determine.

*COMMODUS* who succeeded him is observed by historians to have had no resemblance of his father, but in his success against the *Germans*.

THE *Germans* began again to be troublesome under the reign of *Maximin* ; and were again subdued. And yet about twenty years after they ravaged the empire under the reign of *Valerian* ; and penetrated as far as *Ravenna* ; and in the next reign as far as *Spain*. Not long after, *Claudius Gothicus* slew fifteen thousand of them in one battle : and soon after, *Aurelian* (the rapidity of whose conquests made him not unworthily to be compared to *Alexander*) recovered the empire from them, and all other  
*Bar-*



*Barbarians* ; and yet in the compass of a very few years they possessed themselves of all the *Gauls*, and were expelled by *Probus*, who slew four hundred thousand of them, and took sixteen thousand into pay.

IN the reign of *Dioclesian* they infested the empire by sea ; and in the same reign *Constantius* slew sixty thousand of them in one day by land : and yet from this time to the reign of *Gratian*, which was about ninety years, they found the *Romans* more work to subdue and keep them within bounds, than all *Barbarians* of all other denominations : as any man will find, who will be at the trouble of perusing *Ammianus Marcellinus* ; who observeth of them, that || *They were a nation who by their restless commotions confounded the Ro-*

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|| L. 28. c. v. *Ed. Gronov.*



*man affairs without measure or end ; and altho' they were often diminished from the very beginning by a variety of chances, yet they often sprung up again so fast, that you would imagine they had been unhurt for many ages.*

FROM hence I think it evident to a demonstration, that the *Germans*, who were strangers not only to Polygamy, but to promiscuous copulations, strict observers of chastity, and the obligations of the marriage union ||, were yet the most prolific people of any in the then known world. Consequently that the swarms of the northern hive were not owing to those practices.

NOR is this so much to be wondered at, if we consider that the *Antient Germany* contained according to

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|| *Tacit.*



the accounts of the most antient geographers, particularly *Pomponius Mela*, (besides the country now so called) *Denmark*, *Norway*, and the greatest part of *Sweden* and *Poland* as far as the *Weyffel*. And to these *Cluverius* adds *Bohemia*, and all that region from the fountains of the *Vistula* to the *Euxine* sea : that is, it contained those countries which from their fruitfulness in men, were antiently called *Officina Gentium*||.

AND this reasoning will be farther strengthened if it be found upon enquiry that neither were the *Goths* and *Vandals* Polygamists. And this is apparent,

FIRST, Because they are charged by no historian with this practice.

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|| The workhouse of nations, *i. e.* the workhouse where men are made.



SECONDLY, Because they so easily became christians : whereas it is notorious that Polygamy hath always remarkably obstructed the conversion of those nations to christianity, who were infected with this custom.

THIRDLY, Because their chastity is celebrated by christian writers, in contradistinction to the *Roman* christians of those times \*. And,

LASTLY, Because I think it sufficiently evident, that the *Goths* and *Vandals* were no other than different tribes of the *Germanic* nation : and that for these reasons ;

FIRST, Because the *Boutones* are numbered by *Strabo* among the people of *Germany* ; and critics agree that

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\* *Salvian de gubernatione Dei*, l. 7. sub finem.  
p. 154, 160.



these are the *Guttones* of *Pliny*, (called *Boutones* thro' the mistake of a letter, in the manuscript of *Strabo*, instead of *Guttones*) mentioned in his account of that nation ||.

AND these are mentioned by him as a part of the *Vandili* (i. e. the *Vandals*) who are named foremost in the list of the *Germanic* tribes. And here it is remarkable, that as the *Goths* are here accounted a part of the *Vandals*; so the *Vandals* are accounted by *Procopius* as part of the *Goths*. *Bell. Van.* l. 1. c. ii.

*TACITUS* found two of these nations, the *Gothini* and the *Gothones* among the *Germans* in his time: but the former he deemeth to have been originally *Gauls*. In one word, I know no one point more agreed

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|| *Nat. Hist.* l. 4. c. xiv.



among learned men, either antient or modern, than that the *Goths* and *Vandals* were derived from the same source with the *Angles*, *Swedes*, *Teutones*, and *Cimbri*; that is, that they were *Germans*.

THE only difficulty now remaining is, to know why these nations have for several centuries past (that is, since the establishment of christianity) ceased to swarm.

AND *tho'* this enquiry hath I own cost me more trouble than almost any of the preceding dissertations, yet as it is properly no necessary part or appendix of the question before me, the reader will I hope excuse me, if my answers *are* very short.

IN the first place then let it be observed, that no empire ever rose gradually to great grandeur in the midst of other surrounding states and kingdoms,



kingdoms, without the expence of a great number of lives : at least, I am sure, that of *Rome* did not.

IN the next place I take it for granted, that no empire so raised ever was ruined without a like expence of lives. This also must be allowed to have been the case of the *Roman* empire.

THAT state, as I apprehend, was in its most flourishing condition towards the close of the commonwealth. And from that time its inhabitants were, I think, gradually diminished, to the end of *Justinian's* reign.

*MARIUS* lost great numbers of *Roman* soldiers in the slaughter of the *Teutones* and *Cimbri*. *Cæsar* lost many more in his slaughters of more than a million || of *Gauls* and *Ger-*

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|| He is said to have destroyed ( besides those slain in the civil war ) 1,192,000 enemies. *Plin. Hist. Nat. l. 7. c. xxv.*

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*mans ;*



*mans* ; the civil wars that ensued weakened the *Romans* to such a degree, as to encourage the invasion of *Barbarians*, particularly the *Germans*. *Augustus* lost his legions ; *Drusus* and *Germanicus* won honour against them ; but still the empire was weakened. The incredible luxury and cruelty of all the emperors, from *Augustus* to *Vespasian*, added to the destructions by famines, pestilences, and earthquakes, weakened and wasted it yet more. From *Vespasian* to *Adrian* were destroyed (to say nothing of other subjects) more than two millions of *Jews* ; nor did they fall with impunity ; they sold their lives at the dearest || rate ; and tho' they seemed at this time brought to the brink of destruction, yet still they found work for *Antoninus Pius* his

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|| They slaughtered, besides the *Roman* forces, about half a million of people, in *Cyrene* and *Cyprus*.



successor to subdue them : as did the *Britons*, the *Picts*, the *Germans*, and the *Dacæ*.

HIS successor *Marcus Aurelius* was in the end successful against the *Parthians*, (under the conduct of his brother, who led the *Roman* army) but not till after he had first lost his lieutenant and his legions ||.

THE losses and distresses he sustained against the *Germans* are well known, and have been already mentioned ; nor were those inconsiderable which were sustained from all the barbarous nations leagued in arms against him, from *Pannonia* to *Gaul* inclusive, tho' they were in the end triumphed over.

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|| After this the *Romans* wasted *Media* and *Mesopotamia*, and murdered about half a million of people, in the sacking of *Seleucia*.



AND to all these may be added the destruction of an infinite number of men, in the ruin of *Ephesus* and *Nicomedia* by earthquakes.

IT were endless to recount the destruction of mankind wrought from this period to the establishment of the empire under *Constantine*, by fire and earthquakes, by christian persecutions, by frequent and cruel contentions of competitors for the empire, by wars over the face of the whole earth, from east to west, and from north to south, by the ravage and waste of provinces, from the incursions of *Barbarians*, and the consequences of these, pestilences and famines: one pestilence particularly under *Gallus* and *Volusianus*, which lasted fifteen years; of which *Zozimus* relateth, (*Hist.* l. 1.) that whilst war raged on all sides, every nation subject to the *Romans* being invaded  
and



and wasted by the *Scythians*, a plague came both upon cities and villages, which destroyed all that was left of human kind, and made more havock than any that had ever gone before it.

WITHIN this period the tyrant and monster *Maximin* destroyed, besides his cruelty to his own subjects, *Germany* for three or four hundred miles, and many inhabitants ; and *Claudius* slew three hundred and twenty thousand *Goths*, thence named *Gothicus* : and *Decius* lost his life and his army against the *Scythians*.

WITHIN this period it was, that *Valerian* was circumvented and cruelly tortured to death by the *Persians*; and *Gallienus* his son (a second *Nero*) brought the empire to the brink of destruction; and besides all the other blood spilt in his reign, (more than in any other from the foundation of



the empire) he is said to have destroyed from three to four thousand a day of his own soldiers (*Trebell. Poll. in Gal.*) during a reign of ten years. In his time the empire was preserved by those very means which most naturally tended to destroy it. The contempt of his effeminacy, and terroure of his cruelty, created many rebellions against him, many usurpers of the empire, (no fewer than thirty) who defended on their own account what they would have neglected on his.

THE most eminent among these were *Odenatus* and *Æmilianus*, and above all, the greatest woman of her own, or perhaps of any other age, *Zenobia*.

WITHIN this period *Aurelian* recovered the empire in some measure at the expence of much blood and slaughters, and as it ran fast to ruin after him, *Dioclesian* in foresight and  
in



in terrour of its impending destruction retired from grandeur.

N O R were almost all these fore-mentioned evils less continued, or less consumeing, from the death of *Constantine* the Great, to the re establisshment and re-union of the empire, under *Theodosius* the Great.

WITHIN this period, the *Germans* wasted *Gaul*, the *Sarmatæ Pannonia*, the *Picts England*, and the *Goths* to the very walls of *Constantinople*; against whom *Valens* lost his life, with such a miserable slaughter of his forces, as the *Romans* had never sustained since *Cannæ*, and the victors were soon after defeated to an utter excision. by *Theodosius*, as the *Germans* were expelled from *Gaul* by *Gratian*; and yet so exhausted was the empire at this time, that it was as much as both these emperors could do with the united forces of *Europe*,  
M 4 *Asia*,



*Asia*, and *Africa*, to repress them ; and at length *Theodosius* was glad to buy their friendship by the assignment of lands in the provinces, and taking their best troops into pay, by which means the peace of the empire was secured from that quarter.

THIS however could not secure it from the irruptions of other *Barbarians*, who from the heart of *Scythia* crouded to the banks of the *Danube*, which is still an additional proof, that the empire was now exhausted.

THE truth is, more populous nations seem as naturally to migrate to such as are more thinly inhabited, as the grosser air gravitates to those parts where it happeneth by any accident to be rarefied.

*THEODOSIUS*, it is true, had the felicity to repress and to vanquish these and all his other enemies, he  
repressed



repressed these with great slaughter of their forces, and his other enemies with great slaughter of his own, so great slaughter of his own forces, and subjects of the empire, in his conflicts with *Marcellinus* and *Maximus*, with *Eugenius* and *Arbogastes*, and the slaughter of the seditious at *Thessalonica*, that however the reputation of the empire was raised under him, the number of its inhabitants, which are its natural strength, was, I think, considerably impaired at his death. And that it daily and visibly decayed both in strength and reputation from this time to the reign of *Justinian*, is, I think, out of all doubt ||.

WITHIN this period (to omit other calamities) *Attila* the *Hun*, the

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|| *Procopius* relateth (*Bell. Pers.* l. i.) that in the reign of *Justin* three hundred thousand inhabitants of *Antioch* perished in one earthquake.

terroure



terror of the world, or, as he more properly stiled himself, *the scourge of God*, ravaged the east, and made *Theodosius* the younger, tributary; wasted *Mæsia*, *Macedon*, and *Thessaly*, and subjected the *German* nations of all denominations; which we may well believe could not be effected without infinite bloodshed; and pouring in upon the empire with an army of 700,000 men, wasted *Gaul*; and tho' his fury was awhile arrested by the united forces of the *Goths* and the empire under the conduct of *Theodoric* and *Aetius*, and the loss of a dreadful battle, in which 200,000 of his forces fell, yet he soon after destroyed *Pannonia*, and sacked almost all the cities of *Italy*; at length being diverted from the destruction of *Rome* by the intercession of *Leo* the Great, he returned home: where this man of blood died by a bleeding at his nose.



NOT long after *Genferic* took *Rome*, and carried many thousands of the citizens into captivity to *Carthage*.

WITHIN this period *Odoacer* also took *Rome*, and was afterwards defeated with great slaughter of his armies by *Theodoric*, tho' not without considerable loss.

HERE then I lay down these positions as truths, which I apprehend will not be long contested by the thinking and learned reader:

FIRST, That the numbers of mankind in that which hath since been known by the name of the *Roman* world, were considerably impaired from the first *Carthaginian* war to the end of the *Roman* commonwealth.

SECONDLY, That the numbers of mankind were very considerably impaired



paired throughout the *Roman* world, from that period to the reign of *Justinian* ||.

THIRDLY, I apprehend that the northern hive, at least the *European* part of it, was now thoroughly exhausted, nor can any man make this a doubt, who considereth that they had now been incessantly swarming for six hundred years, that they had now spread and settled themselves not only all over *Europe*, but made considerable establishments even in *Afric*. These settlements and establishments were not made at less expence than the destruction of at least one half of their own people, as well as of those whom they conquered, at least in *Europe*.

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|| In his reign the *Persians* over-ran all the east as far as *Antioch*, which they sack'd with an infinite slaughter.



MY sincere opinion is, that not one fourth part of their number, I mean, of those numbers with which they overspread *Europe*, and invaded *Afric*, was now in being, when *Justinian* undertook to recover *Afric* from the *Vandals*, and not one half of these after his attempts to recover *Italy* out of the hands of the *Goths*; and tho' he went a great way towards effecting this by the uncommon wisdom, virtue, fortitude and felicity of *Belizarius*, yet the little armies he led, and even those made up for the most part of *Barbarians*, sufficiently shew how thoroughly the empire was exhausted at this time.

ALL these considerations lead me to the same conclusion, viz. That the numbers of mankind throughout the north of *Europe*, and both the *European* and *Asiatic* part of the *Roman* empire, were at the Time of *Justinian's*



*Justinian's* accession to the empire, or at least at the time of the destruction of *Antioch* by *Cosroez*, reduced to less than one half of what they were at *Augustus's* accession to it ; so that had the northern hive been left unmolested from that time, it had not been capable of swarming with its antient vigour in less than two centuries at soonest.

SOON after the third expedition of *Cosroez* against the *Romans*, came that remarkable plague upon the earth, so exactly and so judiciously described by *Procopius* || ; which traversed every part and portion of the earth with a regular and equable destruction ; and if we may judge by the numbers destroyed at *Constantinople* †,

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|| Bell. Perf. l. ii.

† Where it raged four months, and destroyed first five thousand, and then ten thousand a day, and it is remarkable that there are records of a plague raging in *Ireland* about this time.



(and I think we may, inasmuch as we are assured it destroyed equably and alike in all climates, in all seasons of the year, in city and in country) it could not cut off less than one half of the human species then subsisting.

SUPPOSE then the northern hive disabled at the beginning of this plague from swarming for two centuries, it is evident that at the end of it they were disabled from swarming with their wonted vigour in less than four centuries, that is, before the tenth || century of the christian æra; and before that time christianity introduced civility, and civility culture, which enabled the earth to support more than double, I may say, more than ten times its antient inhabitants.

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|| I think, from the calculations before laid down, they could not swarm with their antient vigour before the twelfth century.

THAT



THAT the inhabitants of *Germany* are now more than double, I may say, more than quadruple the number they were in the days of *Cæsar* and *Tacitus*, is, I think, past all doubt.

I think it evident from the most antient account of these northern nations, that they led a kind of pastoral life, like the *Nomades* of *Scythia*, and it is evident from the nature of the thing, that all countries where the people do so, must be thinly inhabited.

THE *Germans*, we are expressly told, then had little culture, no cities, and but occasional houses. It was then their glory (as the prophet *Isaiah* expresseth it) *to be placed alone in the midst of the earth*, to be defended by desolations all around them; and one of these, as *Cæsar* relateth, was six hun-



hundred miles over. These desolations are now vanished, much culture and many ample cities have succeeded them.

THEY were then defended by lakes, and marshes, and impenetrable forests of incredible extent ; they are now defended by strong and populous cities, their marshes and their lakes are drained, and their forests destroyed.

WHAT we now call the *Netherlands*, in the days of the *Barbaric* incursions were utterly desolated ; they are now covered with uncountable multitudes of men.

AND how are these numbers made up ? Beyond all contradiction from insensible swarms of the northern hive ; it being notorious that both their cities and ships are filled with *Danes*, *Swedes*, *Norwegians*, *Poles*, *Muscovites*



*vites* and *Germans* of all sorts, who amount in the whole to numbers equivalent to the most numerous swarms of many centuries in antient times.

*ENGLAND* is also a receptacle of the same kind. Sir *Matthew Hale* || hath computed and proved I think plainly enough, that the inhabitants of *England* were before the Revolution more than twenty times as many as they were at the time of the Conquest. Now in the course of their natural increase they could not then be multiplied more than sixfold ; to what then can we ascribe this great additional excess, but partly to insensible swarms from other countries for the advantages of trade and liberty ; and partly to more sensible

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|| See his moral evidence of the origination of mankind, §. 2. c. 10.



causes, as the setting up the inquisition in the *Netherlands*, and persecuting the *Hugonots* in *France*?

THAT regions seemingly barren can and actually do contain tenfold the number of inhabitants that antiently possessed them, is put out of all doubt by the account we have of the numbers of the antient *Helvetii* compared with those of the present *Swiss*, who inhabit the same country.

THIS country was thought too narrow, as well for the numbers as the martial spirit of the inhabitants in the times of *Cæsar*, and therefore they migrated in search of a better; their intire number is exactly transmitted to us by *Cæsar*: they and their allies, men, women and children, made up in all but three hundred and sixty-eight thousand souls, of which ninety thousand are com-

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puted



puted to be men capable of bearing arms. One of the thirteen *Swiss* cantons (*Bern*) can now send out one hundred thousand fighting men into the field : and *Zurich* will engage to raise fifty thousand fighting men in the space of twenty-four hours.

To all this may be added,

FIRST, That the increase of mankind within the limits of the *Roman* empire was considerably retarded within this period, by the celibacy of the christian priesthood, and the establishment of so many monasteries and nunneries, by which considerable numbers were shut out from social commerce, and the world deprived of the advantages of a regular propagation from them ||.

SE-

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|| This might be illustrated by many instances; I shall mention but one:

When



SECONDLY, That from the days of *Justinian*, the *Roman* empire grew every day weaker and weaker, till that of the *Saracens* was established upon its ruins in the east and south ; and those of the *Franks*, *Lombards*, and *Goths* of various denominations (all *Germanic* bodies) in the west ||.

IN the very next reign the *Lombards* possessed themselves of *Italy* ;

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When *Gregory* the Great would deprecate the divine vengeance, in order to avert the plague which infested *Italy* ; in consequence of the deluge hereafter noted, (towards the close of the sixth century) he composed a seven-fold litany ; to perform which service he divided the whole people of *Rome* into seven chorus's, of which the secular clergy made one ; the abbots with their monks a second ; and the abbesses with their nuns (which to shew their numbers are called congregations) a third. Vide *Landulphi Sagacis Additamentum Hist. Miscell.*

|| All these are reasons why the northern hive, if it swarmed at all after this period, must swarm later.



*Tiberius* was successful against the *Persians* in the east, but the west was given up.

IN the reign of *Mauritius*, the *Barbarians* rose in their demands of tribute under the title of pension, and soon after, *Thrace* was wasted by the *Sclavonians*, and tho' 30,000 of these and other *Barbarians* were slain by the *Romans* in one battle, yet they prevailed in the end; and both they and the *Persians* destroyed the *Roman* armies: and soon after forty cities of *Dalmatia* were laid waste, and an infinite number of captives taken; all which the emperor (tho' very rich) refusing to redeem at the lowest rate, *Chajanus* in a rage massacred.

IT would be endless to pursue the detail of miseries that awaited this wretched empire in its decline: it is sufficient to observe, that all the  
omens



omens and indications of approaching ruin attended it from the days of *Justinian*; and therefore I shall beg leave to conclude this head with a very remarkable incident of this reign, I mean *Mauritius's*, which was this: A kind of second deluge (followed by a dreadful pestilence) overspread *Italy*, from the swelling of its several rivers; the waters pour'd in thro' the highest windows of their churches, and over the tops of their city walls; the villages were destroy'd, and men and animals swept away; and the country was covered with immense lakes, for a considerable time after.

IT might now be said of *Italy*, as it antiently was of the land of *Israel*, in the days of *Shamgar*; *the highways were unoccupied*; nay more, they were defaced and lost: and among these the *Flaminian* way was now in all probability partly torn away,



away, and partly covered with those *strata* of earth, which concealed it from sight for so many succeeding ages ||.

THE curious reader will, I hope, think this digression pardonable.

IT may probably be thought an objection to the positions last laid down, that the *Danes* and *Norwegians* are found to have swarmed into *England* and *Ireland* towards the beginning of the ninth century.

TO which I answer, First, They had three hundred years to recruit from the time of the forementioned *Procopian* plague; nor were civility and culture yet introduced amongst them by the christian religion \*.

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|| And possibly the *Appian* irrecoverably flooded.

\* Their conversion to christianity began with *Gothburn* their king in the reign of *Alfred*, towards the end of the ninth century.

SE-



SECONDLY, As they were intirely out of the reach of the *Roman* arms, and out of the road of those northern incursions which crossed the *Danube*. And,

THIRDLY, As there is reason to believe that *Denmark* was antiently better cultivated than other northern regions \*, in all probability they suffered less waste from invasions, and less diminution from migrations. And,

LASTLY, Their swarms were now very little and inconsiderable, compared with those of the *Teutones* and *Cimbri* their ancestors.

THEY were established in *Ireland*, by means of the intestine discords

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\* There are great heaps of stones now found in their woods, of which their grounds were carefully cleared in the earlier ages.



and divided interests of their petty princes ; yet not till after a course of continual supplies for near two centuries, and they gained ground in *England* by the same means and measures, before the claims and contentions of the heptarchy were thoroughly decided and reconciled under one monarch ; tho' not without the advantage of greater numbers, and a contention of equal continuance.

Now, altho' these drains were not so strong and so sudden, yet being so long continued, I apprehend, that about the time of their establishment in *England*, their country was thro'ly exhausted ; so exhausted, that it could not be rightly recruited in less than 300 years, dureing which time they were employed in bloody and almost continued contests with their neighbours, and before the end of it, *viz.*

A.



A. D. 1282 \* greatly diminished by a dreadful pestilence, and before that could be well recovered, by another, A. D. 1370 ||, attended † with a famine, and before that could be recovered, by another, A. D. 1484 ‡, much more dreadful and destructive than either of the precedeing, which swept off one half of the human species; and which consequently they cannot have recovered to this day: and I am well assured, that the late prince *George of Denmark* was wont to assign this plague as the reason why the northern hive had not swarmed for some centuries.

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\* *Meursii Hist. Dan.* l. 2.

|| This was probably the same plague mentioned by Sir *Matthew Hale*, *ibid.* c. ix. x. to have wasted *Italy* in 1359; for as it lasted fifteen years, and destroyed the north and south alike, the *Italian* writers probably date it from the year in which the south suffered most, and *Meursius* in that wherein it fell heaviest upon the north, inasmuch as the compass of fifteen years takes in both the dates.

† *Meursii Hist. Dan.* l. 4.

‡ *Ibid.* pars secunda, l. 2.



IT were easy to deduce the histories of other northern nations in the same manner, and account for their not overflowing even under the advantages of a greater increase till the discovery of *America*, and the way to the *East Indies* by the cape of *Good Hope* ; both which have since drained *Europe* of more than her natural overflowings, and will in all probability be sufficient to do so to the end of the world.

FROM what hath been said, I hope, it is now sufficiently apparent, that neither the antient nor the present world hath been peopled by Polygamy ; quite otherwise : that the increase of mankind hath in all ages and regions of the world been best promoted by single marriages.

F I N I S.























