

IX. *Farther Proofs of the Insalubrity of marshy Situations. In a Letter from the Rev. Dr. Price to the Rev. Dr. Horsley.*

DEAR SIR,

Redde, Jan. 13,
1774. **D**R. PRIESTLEY'S paper, on the noxious effects of stagnant waters, read last Thursday to the Royal Society, brought to my remembrance a table; exhibiting the rate of mortality in a parish situated among marshes, which I had seen in Mr. MURET'S Observations, published in the Memoirs of the Oeconomical Society at Bern, for 1766. I have since reviewed this table, and found that it affords a full confirmation of Dr. PRIESTLEY'S assertions. This parish is a part of the district of Vaud, belonging to the canton of Bern, in Switzerland; and contains 169 families, and 696 inhabitants. Mr. MURET'S table, of the rate of mortality in it, is formed from a register of the ages, at which all died in it for 15 years. With this table he has also given tables, from like registers, of the rates of mortality in seven small towns; in 36 country parishes and villages; in 16 parishes situated in the Alps; in 12 corn parishes, and in 18 vintage parishes.—
From comparing these tables, it appears, that
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the probabilities of life are highest in the most hilly parts of the province, and lowest in the marshy parish just mentioned. The difference is indeed remarkable, as will appear from the following particulars. One half, of all born in the mountains, live to the age of 47. In the marshy parish, one half live only to the age of 25. In the hills one in 20, of all that are born, live to 80. In the marshy parish, only one in 52 reaches this age. In the hills, a person aged 40 has a chance, of 80 to 1, for living a year. In the marshy parish, his chance for living a year is not 30 to 1.—In the hills, persons aged 20, 30, and 40, have an even chance for living 41, 33, and 25 years respectively. In the fenny parish, persons, at these ages, have an even chance of living only 30, 23, and 15 years.—In short, it appears, that, though the probabilities of life, in all this country except this one parish, are much higher than in London; yet here, after 30, they are much lower. Before the age of 30, they are indeed higher in this parish; the reason of which must be, that the London air and customs are particularly noxious to children*.

I am sensible, that observations, for only 15 years, in one small parish, do not afford as decisive and ample an authority, in the present case, as there is reason to wish for; and that, therefore, the perfect exactness, of the particulars I have recited, cannot be depended on.—They are, however, suf-

* In London, one half of all that are born, die under 3 years of age. But this is not peculiar to London. In Berlin the same proportion dies under three; and at Vienna under two.

ficiently near the truth to demonstrate, in general, the unhealthfulness of a marshy situation, and as the register from whence they are derived is the only one, in such a situation, which I have ever met with, and Dr. ALEXANDER's experiments may lead some to very wrong conclusions on this subject; I could not help thinking, that there would be no impropriety, in sending you the account, I have now given. If you think it of any importance, I shall be obliged to you for reading it to the Royal Society.

I cannot help taking this opportunity to add my wishes, that such registers of mortality, as those published by Mr. MURET, were established in every part of this kingdom. We might then determine immediately every such question, as that which has occasioned this letter; and know certainly, what influence different airs and different situations have on the duration of life. Two ingenious physicians, Dr. PERCIVAL at Manchester, and Dr. HAYGARTH at Chester, have lately, with much zeal, promoted institutions of this kind; and a great deal of useful information may be expected, from the accurate and comprehensive registers of mortality, which, under their direction, have been established in these towns. But the instruction arising from these establishments cannot be complete, till they become universal.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient
and humble Servant,

Newington Green,
Dec. 21, 1773.

RICHARD PRICE.

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