motion of the people, or an assembly of a number of ci­tizens without lawful authority, tending to disturb the peace and order of society. This offence is of different kinds. Some seditions more immediately threaten the supreme power, and the subversion of the present constitution of the state ; others tend only towards the redress of private grievances. Among the Romans, therefore, it was various­ly punished, according as its end and tendency threatened greater mischief. (See lib. i. *Cod. de Seditiosis,* and *Mat. de crimin.* lib. ii. n. 5, *Be Læsa Majestate.)* In the pu­nishment, the authors and ringleaders were justly distin­guished from those who, with less wicked intention, joined and made part of the multitude.

The same distinction holds in the law of England and in that of Scotland. Some kinds of sedition in England amount to high treason, and come within the statute 25 Edward III. as levying war against the king. And several seditions are mentioned in the Scotch acts of parliament as treasonable (Bayne’s Crim. Law of Scotland, p. 33, 34). The law of Scotland makes riotous and tumultuous assemblies a species of sedition. But the law there, as well as in England, is now chiefly regulated by the riot act, made 1 Geo. I. ; only it is to be observed, that the proper officers in Scotland to make the proclamation thereby enacted are sheriffs, stew­ards, and bailies of regalities, or their deputies; magistrates of royal boroughs, and all other inferior judges and magis­trates ; high and petty constables, or other officers of the peace, in any county, stewartry, city, or town. In that part of the island, the punishment of the offence is any thing short of death which the judges, in their discretion, may ap­point.

SEDATIVES, in *Medicine,* a general name for such me­dicines as weaken the powers of nature, such as blood-let­ting, cooling salts, purgatives, and the like.

SE-DEFENDENDO, in *Law,* is a plea used for him who is charged with the death of another, by alleging that he was under a necessity of doing what he did in his own de­fence ; as that the other assaulted him in such a manner, that if he had not done what he did, he must have been in hazard of his own life.

SEDLEY, Sir Charles, an English poet and wit, the son of Sir John Sedley of Aylesford in Kent, was born about the year 1639. At the restoration he came to London to join the general jubilee, and commenced wit, courtier, poet, and gallant He was so much admired, that he became a kind of oracle among the poets ; which made King Charles tell him, that nature had given him a patent to be Apollo’s viceroy. The productions of his pen were some plays, and several delicately tender amorous poems, in which the soft­ness of the verses was so exquisite, as to be called by the Duke of Buckingham Sedley’s witchcraft. Less pleasing opinions, however, have been expressed by others. “ There were no marks of genius or true poetry to be descried,” say the authors of the *Biographia Britannica ;* “ the art wholly consisted in raising loose thoughts and lewd desires, without giving any alarm ; and so the poison worked gently and irresistibly. Our author, we may be sure, did not es­cape the infection of his own art, or rather was first tainted himself before he spread the infection to others.” A very ingenious writer, however, speaks much more favourably of Sir Charles Sedley’s writings. “ He studied human nature,” says Langhorn in his Effusions, “ and was dis­tinguished for the art of making himself agreeable, par­ticularly to the ladies ; for the verses of Lord Rochester, beginning with, *Sedley has that prevailing gentle art,* so often quoted, allude not to his writings, but to his per­sonal address.” But whilst he thus grew in reputation for wit and in favour with the king, he became poor and de­bauched ; his estate was impaired, and his morale were cor­rupted. One of his frolics, however, being followed by an indictment and a heavy fine, Sir Charles took a more se­

rious turn, applied himself to business, and became a mem­ber of parliament in which he was a frequent speaker. We find him in the House of Commons in the reign of James II., whose attempts upon the constitution he vigorously withstood ; and he was very active in bringing about the Re­volution. This was thought more extraordinary, as he had received favours from James. But that prince had taken a fancy to Sir Charles’s daughter, though it seems she was not very handsome, and, in consequence of his intrigues with her, he created Miss Sedley countess of Dorchester. This honour, so far from pleasing, greatly shocked Sir Charles. However libertine he himself had been, yet he could not bear the thoughts of his daughter’s dishonour ; and with regard to her exaltation, he only considered it as rendering her more conspicuously infamous. He therefore conceived a hatred for the king, and from this, as well as other motives, readily joined to dispossess him of the throne. A witty saying of Sedley’s, on this occasion, is recorded. “ I hate ingratitude,” said Sir Charles ; “ and therefore, as the king has made my daughter a countess, I will endea­vour to make his daughter a queen meaning the Princess Mary, married to the Prince of Orange, who dispossessed James of the throne at the Revolution. He lived till the beginning of Queen Anne’s reign, and his works were print­ed in two vols. 8vo, 1719.

SEDRE Passage, a narrow channel of the Eastern Seas, on the north coast of Sumatra, between Pulo Nancy and King's Point

SEDUCTION is the act of tempting and drawing aside from the right path, and comprehends every endeavour to corrupt any individual of the human race. This is the im­port of the word in its largest and most general sense ; but it is commonly employed to express the act of tempting a virtuous woman to part with her chastity.

The seducer of female innocence practises the same stra­tagems of fraud to get possession of a woman’s person, that the swindler employs to get possession of his neighbour’s goods or money ; yet the law of honour, which pretends to abhor deceit and which impels its votaries to murder every man who presumes, however justly, to suspect them of fraud, or to question their veracity, applauds the address of a suc­cessful intrigue, though it be well known that the seducer could not have obtained his end without swearing to the truth of a thousand falsehoods, and calling upon God to witness promises which he never meant to fulfil.

The law of honour is indeed a very capricious rule, which accommodates itself to the pleasures and conveniences of higher life ; but the law of the land, which is enacted for the equal protection of high and low, may be supposed to view the guilt of seduction with a more impartial eye. Yet for this offence, even the laws of this kingdom have pro­vided no other punishment than a pecuniary satisfaction to they injured family; which, in England, can be obtained only by one of the quaintest fictions in the world, by the father’s bringing his action against the seducer for the loss of his daughter’s service during her pregnancy and nurtur­ing. (See Paley's Moral Philosophy, book iii. part iii. chap. 3.)

The moralist, however, who estimates the merit or de­merit of actions, not by laws of human appointment but by their general consequences as established by the laws of na­ture, must consider the seducer as a criminal of the deep­est guilt. In every civilized country, and in many coun­tries where civilization has made but small progress, the virtue of women is collected as it were into a single point which they are to guard above all things, as that on which their happiness and reputation wholly depend. At first sight this may appear a capricious regulation ; but a mo­ment’s reflection will convince us of the contrary. In the married state so much confidence is necessarily reposed in the fidelity of women to the beds of their husbands, and