from the knowledge of the whole neighbourhood. The cal­culation therefore reſpecting Kent we may receive as true, while we must increaſe the average number in London very conſiderably. Mr Moore computes the average number of suicides in England every year at a thousand ; but the prin­ciples on which he founds this opinion are ſo imperfect and vague, that we do not think it can be depended on as co­ming near the truth.

It might lead to ſome intereſting concluſions to compare together, not only the number of suicides in different coun­tries, but also the rank and principles, the ſex and age, of thoſe unhappy persons by whom it has been committed. Mercier ſays, that at Paris it was the lower ranks who were moſt commonly guilty of it ; that it was moſtly committed in garrets or hired lodgings ; and that it proceeded from po­verty and oppreſſion. A great many, he says, wrote letters to the magiſtrates bcfore their death. Mr Moore’s correſpondent from Geneva informed him, that from the year 1777 to 1787 more than 100 suicides were committed in Geneva@@; that two thirds of theſe unfortunate persons were men ; that few of the clerical order have been known to commit it ; and that it is not ſo much the end of an im­moral, irreligious, diſſipated life, as the effect of melancholy and poverty. By the information obtained from the coro­ners of Kent, it appears, that of the 32, three-fourths have deſtroyed themſelves by hanging ; that the proportion of males to females has been about two-thirds of the former ; that no one ſeason of the year is more diſtinguished tor this crime than another ; and that suicide is upon the increaſe. Our accounts reſpecting the city of London are very im­perfect ; but we think ourſelves intitled to conclude, that suicide is more common among the great and wealthy than among the lower ranks, and that it is uſually the effect of gaming and diſſipation.

Thoſe who have inquired into the cauſes of suicide in Britain have enumerated many phyſical as well as moral cauſes. They have aſcribed it to the variableneſs of our cli­mate, to the great uſe of animal food, to ſtrong ſpirituous liquors, to tea, and to the ſulphureous exhalations of the pit-coal uſed as fuel, which are ſaid to produce a depreſſion of ſpirits and nervous affections. Of our climate, we have no cauſe to complain, nor have we any reaſon to impute any of our vices to its influence. There are many climates much more unfavourable where suicide is ſcarcely known. That an exceſſive quantity of groſs animal food, or of ſtrong liquors, or of tea, will powerfully affect the human conſtitution, we will not deny : but before we conſider theſe as cauſes, it muſt firſt be determined, whether thoſe who are guilty of self-murder be much addicted to them ; and if they are, whether there be not other cauſes much more violent in their nature which have operated on their mind ; for we ought not raſhly to attribute vicious effects to any of thoſe things which ſeem to have been created on purpoſe for the comfort or convenience of man. We are rather ſurpriſed to find that coal is mentioned even as a diſtant cauſe of ſuicide ; for it is one of the bleſſings of our iſland : and a good coal fire we have always found rather conducive to good ſpirits than injurious to them.

Among the moral cauſes which are ſuppoſed to co ope­rate in producing ſuicide in Britain, the freedom of our conſtitution and laws is reckoned one. That rational liber­ty ſhould have any tendency to encourage crimes of any kind, a Chriſtian philosopher can never allow ; for ſuch an opinion is totally diſcountenanced by enlightened views of nature. Mercier has aſeribed the frequency of ſuicide in Paris to the oppreſſion of the late government. Now it ap­pears ſomewhat extraordinary, that suicide in one country ſhould be occaſioned by liberty, and in another by the want oſ it. One of theſe opinions muſt be falſe, and it is ſurely not difficult to diſtinguiſh which.

Humanity would in moſt caſes diſpoſe us to to conclude, that ſuicide is the effect of inſanity, were there not ſo many inſtances of cool deliberate ſelf-murder. That ſuicide is an unnatural crime, which none but a madman would commit, compaſſion indeed may ſuppoſe : but the murder of a wife, a father, or a child, are also unnatural ; yet compaſſion does not teach us in all caſes to aſcribe ſuch a crime to madneſs. Paſſion may often ariſe to ſuch a height of outrage as to be ſcarcely diſtnguiſhable from madneſs in its ſymptoms and its effects; yet we always make a diſtinction between that madneſs which ariſes from diseaſe and that which is owing to a violent perturbation of mind. If a person be capable of managing his wordly affairs, of making a will, and of diſpoſing of his property, immediately before his death, or after he formed the resolution of dying by his own hands, ſuch a man is not to be conſidered as inſane.

But though a regard for truth prevents us from aſcribing ſuicide in all caſes to inſanity, we muſt aſcribe it either to inſanity or to vicious passion. Theſe two diviſions, we imagine, will comprehend every ſpecies of it, whether ariſing from melancholy, *tædium vitae* or *ennui,* diſappointment in schemes of ambition or love, pride, gaming, or a deſire to avoid the ſhame of a public execution ; paſſions which are of­ten increaſed by falſe views of God, of man, and of a future ſtate, arising from deiſm and infidelity. If theſe be the cauſes of ſuicide in modern time, what a disgraceful contrail do they form to thoſe principles which actuated many of the ancient philoſophers,the Gentoos,the Japaneſe, and the worshippers of Odin ? When they committed ſuicide, they committed it from principle, from a belief of its lawfulneſs, and the hope of be­ing rewarded for what they judged an honourable ſacrifice. But in modern times, we are sorry to ſay, when it is not the effect of madneſs, it is the effect of vice : and when it is the effect of vice, it proves that the vicious paſſions are then indulged to the higheſt degree ; for there is no crime which a man can commit that is ſo ſtrong a ſympton of the vio­lence of particular paſſions. It is from not attending to this circumſtance, that it has been found ſo difficult to refute the arguments in favour of ſuicide. If the criminality of ſui­cide be confined merely to the violent action, many apologies may be made for it ; but if it be conſidered solely as the effect of vice, as the ſtrongeſt ſymptom of ungoverned paſ­ſion, he who undertakes its defence muſt undertake the de­fence of what all men will loudly condemn @@(a).

It is unneceſſary then to enter particularly into the argu­-@@@[mu] Moore's Full Inquiry into the Causes of Suicide.

@@@(a) Several of the heathens entertained a very juſt ſenſe of the atrocity of ſuicide. Quintus Curtins introduces Da­rius with the following ſpeech, when he had loſt his empire : “ I wait (ſays the unfortunate monarch) the iſſue of my fate : you wonder, perhaps, that I do not terminate my own life ; but I chooſe rather to die by the crime of another than by my own.

We cannot refuſe ourſelves the pleaſure oſ preſenting to our readers the following beautiful paſſage upon this ſubject from Fitzoſborne’s letters@@\* : “ I am perſuaded (ſays this elegant writer) this diſguſt of life is frequently indulged out of a principle of mere vanity. It is eſteemed as a mark of uncommon refinement, and as placing a man above the ordinary

@@@[m]\*Letter lv.