

already provided, she feels that her wisest part is but to act as an auxiliary, and to ratify that prior constitution which nature had put into her hands.

15. In this exposition which we have now attempted of the origin and rights of property, we are not insensible to the mighty use of law. By its power of enforcement, it perpetuates or defends from violation that existent order of things which itself had established, or, rather, which itself had ratified. Even though at its first ordinations it had contravened those natural principles which enter into the foundation of property, these very principles will, in time, reappear in favour of the new system, and yield to it a firmer and a stronger support with every day of its continuance. Whatever fraud or force may have been concerned at the historical commencement of the present and actual distribution of property—the then new possessors have at length become old; and, under the canopy and protection of law, the natural rights have been superadded to the factitious or the political. Law has guaranteed to each proprietor a long-continued occupation, till a strong and inveterate possessory feeling has taken root and arisen in every heart. And secure of this occupation, each may, in the course of years, have mixed up to an indefinite amount, the improvements of his own skill and labour with those estates which, as the fruit whether of anarchy or of victorious invasion, had fallen into his hands. So