

brought so low, as that on the best of soils, the produce extracted by the most strenuous efforts of human toil, could no more than repay the cultivation bestowed on them—or that the food, thus laboriously raised, would barely suffice for the maintenance of the labourers. It is obvious that a fertility beneath this point would have kept the whole earth in a state of perpetual barrenness and desolation—when, though performing as now its astronomical circuit in the heavens, it would have been a planet bereft of life, or at least unfit for the abode and sustenance of the rational generations by whom it is at present occupied. But even with a fertility at this point, although a race of men might have been upholden, the tenure by which each man held his existence behoved to have been a life of unremitting drudgery; and we should have beheld the whole species engaged in a constant struggle of penury and pain for the supply of their animal necessities. And it is because of a fertility above this point, the actual fertility of vast portions of land in most countries of the earth—that many and extensive are the soils which yield a large surplus produce, over and above the maintenance of all who are engaged, whether directly or indirectly, in the work of their cultivation. The strength of the possessory feelings on the one hand, giving rise to possessory rights recognised and acquiesced in by all men; these rights investing a single individual with the owner-