

links in the chain of society from dragging in dishonor and wretchedness : but there is a point of view in which the picture is at least materially altered in its expression. In comparing society, on its present immense scale, with its infant or less developed state, we must at least take care to enlarge every feature in the same proportion. If, on comparing the *very* lowest states in civilized and savage life, we admit a difficulty in deciding to which the preference is due, at least in every superior grade we cannot hesitate a moment; and if we institute a similar comparison in every different stage of its progress, we cannot fail to be struck with the rapid *rate of dilatation* which every degree upward of the scale, so to speak, exhibits, and which, in an estimate of averages, gives an immense preponderance to the present over every former condition of mankind, and, for aught we can see to the contrary, will place succeeding generations in the same degree of superior relation to the present that this holds to those passed away. Or we may put the same proposition in other words, and, admitting the existence of every inferior grade of advantage in a higher state of civilization which subsisted in the preceding, we shall find, first, that, taking state for state, the proportional numbers of those who enjoy the higher degrees of advantage increases with a constantly accelerated rapidity as society advances; and, secondly, that the superior extremity of the scale is constantly enlarging by the addition of new degrees. The condition of a European prince is now as far superior, in the command of real comforts and conveniences, to that of one in the middle ages, as that to the condition of one of his own dependants.

(62.) The advantages conferred by the augmentation of our physical resources, through the medium of increased knowledge and improved art, have this peculiar and remarkable property,—that they are in their nature diffusive, and cannot be enjoyed in any exclusive manner by a few. An eastern despot may extort the riches and monopolize the art of his subjects for his own personal use; he may spread around him an unnatural splendor