

Maryland and some other of the states complied. By an act of the General Assembly of Maryland, the assessors and commissioners of the tax of the several counties were directed to make returns of the number of inhabitants in their respective counties to the clerk of the house of delegates; (*i*) which returns, if ever made, are now lost. But it is believed, that in no country has there ever been taken a regular and periodical enumeration of all the people, like those taken under the constitution of the United States. (*j*) The census thus required to be taken every tenth year, might be so ordered as to collect a great variety of the most authentic and useful information, shewing, among other things, the average rate of mortality in each state, and indeed in each county of every state in the Union, as well as such other matters as are more immediately connected with its political objects. But hitherto little more has been done than to have returns made of the numbers of free persons and of slaves within certain specified ages. (*k*)

From such information, however, as we possess, it may be confidently assumed, that the average rate of mortality is, in general, not greater here than in any part of Europe; and that taking into consideration all political and natural causes, as compared with England, in this respect, the most favoured portion of Europe, (*l*) the circumstances of these United States are, in general, fully as favourable to the duration of human life as any other country of the world. For, after making the largest allowance for the accessions to our numbers by emigration; (*m*) and for the greater number of marriages here than elsewhere, it will be found, that in no country has the population increased so rapidly as in the United States. Marriages, although earlier and more numerous, are, on an average, not much more fruitful here than in other countries. (*n*) And the general ultimate term of human existence, although extended here as far as any where, not having been materially enlarged, the rapid increase of our population can only, therefore, be accounted for by admitting it to be a fact, that of those born here a greater proportion approximate to the ultimate term of life than in any other country; or, in other words, that the rapid du-

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(*i*) 1785, ch. 83, s. 25.—(*j*) Seybert Stat. Ann. 17.—(*k*) 2 Price Obser. 54, 210; 1 Malthus Popu. 457, note, 476; Seybert Stat. Ann. 17, 19.—(*l*) 2 Southern Rev. 153; 1 Malthus Popu. 477.—(*m*) Seybert Stat. Ann. 28, 30.—(*n*) 2 Sparks' Franklin's Works, 313; 2 Price Obser. 42; 2 Malthus Popu. b. 2, c. 9; 9 Westm. Rev. 419.