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XXIII.14 On the products of the earth that require more or fewer men

- The Spirit of Law - Book XXIII. On laws in their relation to the number of inhabitants -

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XXIII.14 On the products of the earth that require more or fewer men

Countries of pasture lands are sparsely populated, because few men find anything to do there ; fields of grain occupy more men, and vineyards infinitely more.

In England it has often been complained that the increase in pasture lands reduced the population [\[1\]](#) ; and we observe in France that the great quantity of vineyards is one of the main reasons for the abundance of men.

Countries where coal mines furnish combustible matter have the advantage over others that there is no need for forests, and all the land can be cultivated.

In places where rice grows, great earthworks are required to manage the water ; many men can therefore be employed in that. Moreover, less land is required to provide subsistence for a family than in places that produce other grains ; finally, the land which elsewhere is used to feed animals there serves directly to provide food for men ; the work which elsewhere is done by animals is done there by men ; and cultivation of the land becomes, for the men, a gigantic manufactory.

[\[1\]](#) Most landowners, says Burnet, finding more profit by selling their wool than their grain, fenced in their property ; the communes which were dying of hunger rose up ; a new agrarian law was proposed ; the young king himself wrote about it : proclamations were made against those who had fenced in their lands (*History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, p. 44 and 83).