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**ENCYCLOPÆDIA AMERICANA.**

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**POPULAR DICTIONARY**

OF  
ARTS, SCIENCES, LITERATURE, HISTORY, POLITICS, AND  
BIOGRAPHY,

BROUGHT DOWN TO THE PRESENT TIME;

INCLUDING

A COPIOUS COLLECTION OF ORIGINAL ARTICLES

IN

**AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY;**

ON

THE BASIS OF THE SEVENTH EDITION OF THE GERMAN

**CONVERSATIONS-LEXICON.**

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**VOL. III.**

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**NEW EDITION.**

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**Philadelphia:**

**THOMAS, COWPERTHWAIT, & CO.**

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1838.

CONSUMPTION, in political economy, is the use and wearing out of the products of industry, or of all things having an exchangeable value. This destruction, by putting things to the uses for which they are designed, is very different in different things; nor are the wants of society limited to the use of things having an exchangeable value. The air and the water are as necessary, in the economy of life, as the earth and its products; and yet neither the air nor water, ordinarily, bears a price. The latter, however, is sometimes a subject of commerce, especially in large cities; in the city of Madrid, for example. The earth, on the other hand, is a subject of monopoly in all countries where any progress has been made in civilization. But, unlike its products, it is not always deteriorated by use: on the contrary, if skilfully cultivated, its value is increased. In respect to the products, too, there is a difference; some are destroyed, or, in other words, reduced to their elements, by use, as provisions. Others, as the precious stones, are not necessarily destroyed by time or use. The metals, ordinarily, pass through various forms, in a variety of manufactures, before they are wasted and lost in rust; and some products, being destroyed in one form, are converted into materials for use in another. The remnants of linen and cotton fabrics, for instance, supply materials for paper; and so the wood and iron of a ship, on ceasing to be useful, in their combination, for the purposes of navigation, still supply, the one, fuel, the other, materials for the foundries of iron. The greater the advancement of the arts, the more extensively will the remnants of consumption of one kind supply the materials for the production of articles of another form. The arts will even convert the destruction of war into the materials for new production. The bones left on the field of Waterloo have been carefully collected, and transported to England, to manure the lands. The increase of population, and the progress of the arts, introduce a thousand ways of gleaning the relics of one kind of consumption to supply the materials of another. This is one of the absolute gains of resources consequent upon the advance of civilization. In regard to consumption, the remarks and reasoning of Adam Smith have led to some erroneous prejudices, though his positions are, in some respects, just. He assumes, for instance, that all the stock of society, including the improvements on the lands, are the result of savings, or the excess of

the results of labor over the demands for immediate consumption; and this is, no doubt, true; but the inference which is, and too often, made, that the great object of a nation should be to save the fruits of its labor, as the surest means of wealth and prosperity, is by no means true in its full extent. If, for instance, a community has saved the products of its labor to the amount of \$1000, for which sum it imports from abroad, and introduces into use, a more perfect kind of plough, and the art of making it, or the art of making a better hat, or screw, or saw, with the same labor,—the amount saved being expended for this purpose, the numerical possessions, or the computed capital stock, of that community, is thereby diminished; and yet the aggregate productive capacity is increased. This lets us into a principle of national economy, which is too frequently overlooked, namely, that the means of prosperity—the national wealth—consists more in the capacity for production than in actual possessions. As far as the capital, or nominal wealth, consists in the implements of production, and the accommodations for the shelter of the inhabitants, they are both a part of the individual wealth and national resources. But a vast proportion of the productive faculties of a people do not exist in the form of property, and are not marketable articles. Of this description are the arts, and those characteristics of a community, which enable the people to maintain good laws, and perpetuate their political institutions. All the consumption, directed to the promotion of these, is, in the strictest sense, economical, and all the saving of stock, which might be devoted to these objects, by a consumption for that purpose, is a wasteful and short-sighted economy. The great business of society, in an economical view, is production and consumption; and a great production without a corresponding consumption of products cannot for a long time be continued. The notions about the destructive tendency of luxury are, therefore, preposterous, as a general proposition, for it proposes thrift and saving for no purpose. Suppose a whole nation to act fully up to the notions inculcated by doctor Franklin, what would be the result but universal idleness? for, all being intent on saving, that is, on not consuming, there would, of course, cease to be any encouragement or demand for production. This is the condition of savage life, imposed by a necessity resulting from ignorance, improvidence and indolence. To keep the streams of production in ac-

tive flow, consumption is necessary; and the consumption, which directly and steadily promotes production is, in fact, promotive of public wealth. We do not mean to deny, that the expenditures of a man who exceeds his means of payment will be injurious, not only to himself, but also to the community; for he may annihilate the capital of those who give him credit, and, since their industry may depend on their capital, which supplies them with tools to work with, materials to work upon, and a stock of clothing, food and accommodations, until they can obtain the returns of their industry by a sale of its products, the loss of this capital, by trusting it to one who never pays them, is a destruction of their industry. Hoarding, on the other hand, though not so injurious, yet, if too generally prevalent, may have the effect of paralyzing production, and stifling and enfeebling the economical energies of a people, by diminishing the motives to industry. In a healthy state of the national industry, therefore, the consumption of products should bear a just proportion to production. As long as enough is saved to supply all the increase of demand for a stock of implements and materials, and make all the improvements, of a permanent nature, of which the country is susceptible, such as canals, roads, bridges, &c.,—which are, indeed, all of them, only different modes of present consumption of the fruits of labor of various kinds to reproduce others,—it is much better, as a general rule, that the remainder of the products of industry should be expended in luxuries, than that they should not be produced at all. In regard to luxuries—including in this term all the expenditures made for the gratification of appetite, taste or vanity—the dispositions of men, in general, will sufficiently incline them to these. There is no necessity of inculcating the utility of such expenditures as encouragements to industry. Against the importunity of the appetites and desires of men, and against improvidence and thoughtlessness of the future, doctor Franklin's lessons of economy are of great utility. But, looking at the whole mass of society as a great engine of production and consumption, we should inculcate a different set of maxims, based on more comprehensive principles. The example of doctor Franklin himself would be a practical lesson, in this respect; for he was not illiberal of his time, or labor, or money, in promoting those expenditures which had the advancement of society for their object. These are often

such as gratify no immediate appetite or taste. They look to the future. Their greatest encouragement is the honor which is paid to them by the public opinion; for if a man gains more distinction by encouraging a useful or ornamental art, founding a school, or contributing to the construction of a public work, than by riding in a coach, a generous motive is held out to him to turn a part of the general consumption, of which his resources give him the control, into those channels. The tastes and habits of thinking of a people determine the direction of a vast proportion of the general consumption; and the direction and amount of this consumption again determine, in a great degree, those of production. When we say that production should be encouraged, it is only inculcating, in other words, the maxim that consumption should be encouraged; for the one will, in every community, bear a pretty near proportion to the other; and the object of a liberal, enlightened policy is, to swell the amount of both; and the object of a wise and philanthropical policy is, to direct them to objects promotive of the physical comfort and moral and intellectual improvement of a people. We are, however, to avoid the error of supposing, that all the causes which go to swell the aggregate of production and consumption, are beneficial in their operation. If, for example, all the rents of the lands, as under the feudal system, are assigned to a few, who, by a luxurious and expensive style of living, consume the greater part of the produce of the labor of the other members of the community, leaving them no more than barely enough to sustain life, and defend them against the elements, though such a community may present a gorgeous exhibition of individual wealth, yet the condition of a great part of its members is little better than that of savages. This was the tendency of society under the feudal system, and all the ecclesiastical systems founded under the auspices of the church of Rome. In such communities, every tax, and every superfluous product, passes into a vortex remote from the interests, comforts and wants of the mass of the population. The consumption ought to be so distributed, as to give every one some just share, in proportion to his labor and services. A precisely equal and just apportionment of the fruits of labor, and the profits of the use of the earth, cannot be made in any country; for the rights of property must be guarded, or industry will dwindle away. But the laws may do much, and the pre-

habits of thinking, motives of action, of industry, and every species of consumption, and in such a way, but to augment, the things produced and consumed of commerce do much in the mass of wealth, the means of accumulation, directly employing a great mass of the facilities it gives to the general mass of production; and, in this manner, commerce, in a country, and variety of products, is more important than foreign, and changes of the production among the inhabitants of the world, much greater, in amount, than between the whole of other nations.

CONSUMPTION, in medicine

CONTAGION (*contagium*) is a disease which meets or touch each other, and properly imports the disease, or poisonous matter to the patient, by the medium of touch. It is a disease of those very persons laboring under a disease, which communicate the disease, as the contagion of the virus of dead animals, and the *miasmata* of small-pox, *lu*. The principal diseases which are *miasmata* are, influenza, yellow fevers, dysentery, and the last is generated by itself, and is sometimes. Some *miasmata* are from moist vegetable matter, and the state of decomposition of the contagious virus of small-pox, measles, chicken-pox, and scarlet fever, and the jail fever, and the much more limited medium of the atmosphere, and the *miasmata*. A person is said to be infected by the communication of a disease, within two or three days of the typhus. The *W*ashed their pestilential anchor, from the shore. These poisonous effluvia they undoubtedly co-

ailing habits of thinking, and principles and motives of action, of a people, still more, towards assigning to every kind of industry, and every species of talent and skill, its fair proportion of the general consumption, and in such a way as not to check, but to augment, the general mass of things produced and consumed. The benefits of commerce do not consist so much in the mass of wealth, which it may be the means of accumulating, or in its directly employing a great many persons, as in the facilities it gives for augmenting the general mass of production and consumption; and, in this respect, internal commerce, in a country of considerable extent and variety of products, is far more important than foreign, since the mutual exchanges of the products of labor made among the inhabitants of such a country are much greater, in amount, than those made between the whole country and other nations.

CONSUMPTION, in medicine. (See *Atrophy*.)

CONTAGION (*contagio*; from *contango*, to meet or touch each other). This word properly imports the application of any poisonous matter to the body through the medium of touch. It is applied to the action of those very subtle particles arising from putrid substances, or from persons laboring under certain diseases, which communicate the diseases to others; as the contagion of putrid fever, the effluvia of dead animal or vegetable substances, the *miasmata* of bogs and fens, the *virus* of small-pox, *lues venerea*, &c., &c. The principal diseases excited by poisonous *miasmata* are, intermittent, remittent and yellow fevers, dysentery and typhus. The last is generated in the human body itself, and is sometimes called the *typhoid fomes*. Some *miasmata* are produced from moist vegetable matter, in some unknown state of decomposition. The contagious *virus* of the plague, small-pox, measles, chincough, *cynanche maligna*, and scarlet fever, as well as of typhus and the jail fever, operates to a much more limited distance through the medium of the atmosphere than the marsh *miasmata*. Contact of a diseased person is said to be necessary for the communication of plague; and approach within two or three yards of him for that of typhus. The Walcheren *miasmata* extended their pestilential influence to vessels riding at anchor, fully a quarter of a mile from the shore. The chemical nature of all these poisonous effluvia is little understood. They undoubtedly consist, however, of hy-

drogen, united with sulphur, phosphorus, carbon and azote, in unknown proportions and unknown states of combination. The proper neutralizers or destroyers of these gasiform poisons are, nitric acid vapor, muriatic acid gas and chlorine. The two last are the most efficacious, but require to be used in situations from which the patients can be removed at the time of the application. Nitric acid vapor may, however, be diffused in the apartments of the sick without much inconvenience. Bed-clothes, particularly blankets, can retain the contagious *fomes*, in an active state, for almost any length of time. Hence they ought to be fumigated with peculiar care. The vapor of burning sulphur or sulphurous acid is used in the East against the plague. It is much inferior in power to the other antiloimic reagents. There does not appear to be any distinction commonly made between contagious and infectious diseases. The infection communicated by diseased persons is usually so communicated by the product of the disease itself; for instance, by the matter of the small-pox; and therefore many of these diseases are infectious only when they have already produced such matter, but not in their earlier periods. In many of them, contact with the diseased person is necessary for infection, as is the case with the itch, syphilis, canine madness; in other contagious diseases, even the air may convey the infection, as in the scarlet fever, the measles, the contagious typhus, &c. In this consists the whole difference between the fixed and volatile contagions. A real infection requires always a certain susceptibility of the healthy individual; and many infectious maladies destroy, forever, this susceptibility of the same contagion in the individual, and, accordingly, attack a person only once, as the small-pox, measles, &c. Other contagious diseases do not produce this effect, and may, therefore, repeatedly attack the same person, as typhus, itch, syphilis, and others. Sometimes one contagious disease destroys the susceptibility for another, as the kine-pock for the small-pox. In general, those parts of the body which are covered with the most delicate skin, are most susceptible of contagion; and still more so are wounded parts, deprived of the epidermis. Against those contagious diseases which are infectious through the medium of the air, precautions may be taken by keeping at the greatest possible distance from the sick, by cleanliness and fearlessness; but most completely by the vigilance of the health-officers, by fumigations according to the