

lived altogether in Italy. The lands were generally cultivated by the slaves of the Roman citizens, but when the seat of empire was established in the east, all Rome was in a manner transplanted to that situation. Thither did the grandees send their slaves, or, in other words, the greatest part of the people, and Italy was almost exhausted of its inhabitants.

It was Constantine's intention that the new city should not be inferior in any particular to the old one; and therefore he took care to have it sufficiently supplied with corn, commanding all the harvest of Egypt to be sent to Constantinople, and consigning that of Africa to Rome, which does not seem to have been a very judicious proceeding.

Whilst the republic subsisted, the people of Rome, who were then the sovereigns of all other nations, became naturally intitled to a proportion of the tribute: this circumstance induced the senate to sell them corn, at first, for a low price, and afterwards to make a gratuitous distribution of it among them; and when monarchy itself was introduced, this latter custom was still continued, though entirely opposite to the principles of that form of government. It is true, the abuse remained unrectified through an apprehension of the inconveniencies that would have risen from its discontinuance; but when Constantine founded a new city, he established the same custom without the least appearance of reason.

When Augustus had conquered Egypt, he conveyed the treasure of the Ptolemies to Rome; and this proceeding occasioned much the same revolution, which the discovery of the Indies afterwards effected in Europe, and which some ridiculous schemes have since accomplished in our time. The