

“ with a View of the Principles of Statistical
“ Philosophy,” a work which, I hope, it will be
in my power to lay before the public at the com-
mencement of the ensuing century.

THE most natural mode of obtaining informa-
tion, and the one which I originally adopted, was
that of printing and circulating Queries, as many
individuals might be inclined to send answers to
any questions put to them, who would not take
the trouble of drawing up a regular Report. I ac-
cordingly addressed a Letter to the Clergy, and in-
closed Queries in it, which will be found in Ap-
pendix B.

MANY people were at first surpris'd, at my using
the new words, *Statistics* and *Statistical*, as it was
suppos'd, that some term in our own language,
might have express'd the same meaning. But, in
the course of a very extensive tour, through the
northern parts of Europe, which I happened to take
in 1786, I found, that in Germany they were en-
gaged in a species of political inquiry, to which they
had given the name of *Statistics*; and though I ap-
ply a different idea to that word, for by *Statistical* is
meant in Germany, an inquiry for the purpose of
ascertaining the political strength of a country, or
questions respecting *matters of state*; whereas, the
idea I annex to the term, is an inquiry into the
state of a country, *for the purpose of ascertaining*
the quantum of happiness enjoyed by its inhabitants,
and the means of its future improvement; yet, as

I thought that a new word, might attract more public attention, I resolved on adopting it, and I hope that it is now completely naturalised and incorporated with our language.

HAVING received a number of returns in consequence of the Queries circulated, and some of them being drawn up in the form of a regular Report, I resolved to try the effect of publishing a volume of parochial accounts; and having returned from London, (where I had gone to attend my duty in Parliament), to Edinburgh, in January 1791, I commenced the undertaking, by printing the reports of the four parishes with which the first volume of the Statistical Account commences, namely, those of Jedburgh, Holywood, Port-Patrick, and Hounam, and having thrown off 1000 *extra* copies of those four parishes, sent them, by way of a specimen, to every Clergyman in Scotland, accompanied with another Letter, to be found in Appendix C.

By dint of great exertions, the first volume of the Work was published on the 25th of May 1791, exactly 12 months from the commencement of the undertaking. It gave, on the whole, very general satisfaction. Some of the Clergy, indeed, were dissatisfied, at the freedom used with their communications, (it being thought necessary to condense them as much as possible); and others, unaware of the difficulty of printing correctly, particularly from manuscripts written by so many different hands, were displeased with a few typographical