

mine the present value of a life estate, can have no concern, further than may be necessary to enable it to derive information by analogy.

There are few situations as to which any observations have been made, from which tables have been formed; and yet, without any allowances for differences, those few tables have been used as if they were alike applicable to all times and circumstances. This is a great error. Such tables, as regards other situations, can only be used by way of analogy, and can be relied on, in so far only as it can be shewn, by adverting to all the causes which materially affect human life, that the situation to which the tables are proposed to be applied for information are altogether, or very nearly similar to that for which they were made. Tables shewing the expectation of life at different ages over the whole of Sweden, for instance, could not be followed as safe guides for ascertaining the expectation of life, at the same ages, over the whole of Hindostan. And so too, it would be improper to take the tables of expectation formed for the city of London as rules for ascertaining the expectation of life in Wales. The causes materially affecting the duration of human life, at the time and place for which a table has been made, must, therefore, be understood and compared with those of the place where the life in question exists, before such allowances can be made for the differences, should there be any, as will warrant the use of such table as a means of ascertaining the value of each life.

But, as it is to those tables to which the modern English adjudications refer, in speaking of the means of ascertaining the present value of a life interest, it will be proper to advert to some of the principal circumstances of time and place from which the most approved among them have been formed. It seems, that the formation of tables of the expectation of life, at various ages, calculated from observations made, some time prior to the year 1679, at Breslaw in Lower Silesia, as to the duration of human life, originated with *Dr. Halley*, of England. But it is now admitted, on all hands, that those tables are so imperfect as to be wholly unfit for use; thus leaving to the Doctor no other merit, in this respect, than that of having been the first to shew the use of such tables, and how they might be constructed from correct observations. (c) The next tables are those which may be called the London tables,