

EFFECT ON THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

the spoils of those who attacked him or ruled over him, the riches of any privileged class whose strength enabled them to live on others' labour. In less fertile regions the margin was less, and the toll exacted from the ordinary man compelled him to the most arduous toil and the most meagre existence. Under these conditions population was restricted by an ever-near margin of subsistence; starvation, actual or imminent, was the most potent force in determining the size and character of all human societies. The inexorable fate of the vast proportion of mankind was almost unceasing struggle for bare necessities. No virtues or wisdom, individual or collective, could fundamentally change the hard limits set to man's possible total of material wealth. If just and wise government were added to individual skill and industry, all might be happy and a few rich. But even then the population of the world must have been relatively small; men must have lived in small communities, with few and slow opportunities of inter-communication; the riches of distant climes must have been rare luxuries; the experiences of distant races, cultures, and civilizations known mainly to each other only by indirect report. Man might of course achieve a level of general happiness still unknown to him; an individual quality not