

## LETTER IV.

THE severity of the long Swedish winter tends to render the people sluggish, for though this season has its peculiar pleasures, too much time is employed to guard against its inclemency. Still as warm clothing is absolutely necessary, the women spin and the men weave, and by these exertions get a fence to keep out the cold. I have rarely passed a knot of cottages without seeing cloth laid out to bleach, and when I entered, always found the women spinning or knitting.

A mistaken tenderness, however, for their children, makes them even in summer load them with flannels, and having a sort of natural antipathy to cold water, the squalid appearance of the poor babes, not to speak of the noxious smell which flannel and rugs retain, seems a reply to a question I had often asked—Why I did not see more children in the villages I passed through? Indeed the children appear to be nipt in the bud, having neither the graces nor charms of their age. And this, I am persuaded, is much more owing to the ignorance of the mothers than to the rudeness of the climate. Rendered feeble by the continual perspiration they are kept in, whilst every pore is absorbing unwholesome moisture, they give them, even at the breast, brandy, salt fish, and every other crude substance which air and exercise enables the parent to digest.

The women of fortune here, as well as everywhere else, have nurses to suckle their children; and the