

**OBSERVATIONS**  
ON THE  
**CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH INFLUENCE**  
THE  
**CONDITION**  
OF THE  
**LABOURING CLASSES**  
OF  
**SOCIETY.**

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BY JOHN BARTON,

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## ERRATA.

- p 13. line 7 for *if* read *of*.  
last line for *has* read *had*.
14. line 8 dele the first *of*.  
line 17 for 1757 read 1756.
15. line 8 for *does however* read *does not however*.
55. line 23 for *of revenue* read *into revenue*.
- Appendix III,—line 5 for 1813 read 1803.



## OBSERVATIONS,

&c. &c.

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IT is an opinion received among political economists, that the demand for labour in all countries is measured by the national wealth,—that on the more or less rapid increase of this wealth depends the ordinary rate of wages,—and that the rate of wages regulates the progress of population.

“ The demand for those who live by wages,” says Dr. Smith, “ cannot increase but in proportion to the increase of the funds which are destined for the payment of wages.”—“ It is not, however, the actual greatness of national wealth, but its continual increase, which occasions a rise in the wages of labour. It is not, accordingly, in the richest countries, but in the most

thriving, or those which are growing rich the fastest, that the wages of labour are highest." "The liberal reward of labour, by enabling the poor to provide better for their children, and consequently to bring up a greater number, naturally tends to encourage the multiplication of the people. It deserves to be remarked, too, that it necessarily does this as nearly as possible in the proportion which the demand for labour requires. If this demand is continually increasing, the reward of labour must necessarily encourage in such a manner the marriage and multiplication of labourers, as may enable them to supply that continually increasing demand by a continually increasing population. If the reward should at any time be less than what was requisite for this purpose, the deficiency of hands would soon raise it; and if it should at any time be more, their excessive multiplication would soon lower it to this necessary rate. The market would be so much understocked with labour in the one case, and so much overstocked in the other, as would soon force back its price to that proper rate which the circumstances of the society required. It is in this manner that the demand for men, like that for any other commodity, necessarily regulates the production of men; quickens it when it goes on too slowly, and stops it when it advances too fast. It is this demand which regulates and determines the state of propagation in all the different countries of the

world, in North America, in Europe, and in China ; which renders it rapidly progressive in the first, slow and gradual in the second, and altogether stationary in the last. The liberal reward of labour, therefore, as it is the effect of increasing wealth, so it is the cause of increasing population.”\*

Following up these principles, the Committee of the House of Commons appointed last session to consider of the Poor Laws have observed —“ What number of persons can be employed in labour must depend absolutely upon the amount of the funds which alone are applicable to the maintenance of labour. In whatever way these funds may be applied or expended, the quantity of labour maintained by them, in the first instance, would be very nearly the same. The immediate effect of a compulsory application of the whole, or a part of these funds, is to change the application, not to alter the amount of them. Whatever portion is applied, under the provisions of the law, would have been applied to some other object, had the money been left to the distribution of the original owner ; whoever therefore is maintained by the law as a labouring pauper, is maintained only instead of some other individual, who would other-

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\* Wealth of Nations, book 1. chap. 8.

wise have earned by his own industry, the money bestowed on the pauper; as long as the amount of the funds remains the same, the effect of a compulsory distribution would not be such as materially to alter the number of labourers employed: but there are many modes by which the compulsory application, under the provisions of a statute, of the funds which provide the maintenance of labour, would tend most materially to place the labouring classes in a much worse condition than that in which they would otherwise be situated."

"An increased demand for labour is the only means by which the wages of labour can ever be raised; and there is nothing which can increase the demand, but the increase of the wealth by which labour is supported; if therefore the compulsory application of any part of this wealth, tends (as it always must tend) to employ the portion it distributes less profitably than it would have been if left to the interested superintendence of its owners, it cannot fail, by thus diminishing the funds which would otherwise have been applicable to the maintenance of labour, to place the whole body of labourers in a worse situation, than that in which they would otherwise have been placed."\*

"If the demand for labour increases faster

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\* Report, p. 34, 35.

than the supply, high wages are the natural result;—labourers are enabled to provide better for their children; a larger proportion of those born are reared;—the burden, too, of a large family is rendered lighter; and in this manner the marriage and multiplication of labourers are encouraged, and an increasing supply is enabled to follow an increased demand. If, on the contrary, the waste or diminution of wealth should reduce the demand for labour, wages must inevitably fall, and the comforts of the labourer will be diminished, the marriage and multiplication discouraged until the supply is gradually adapted to the reduced demand.”\*—

It has appeared to me, that this reasoning is not confirmed by the testimony of experience—There are facts which seem to indicate that at certain periods of our history, the progress of population by no means coresponded with the accumulation of wealth. One of these periods occurs about the reign of Hen. VIII. when the happy termination of the contests between two rival houses, the decline of feudal oppression, the dawn of commerce and arts, with the frugal and pacific temper of the preceding reign, present a concurrence of circumstances peculiarly favourable to the improvement of the national resources. Yet at no

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\* Report, p. 35.

time have there prevailed heavier complaints of depopulation. In the preambles to certain acts of that period, it is said that great numbers of houses have for a long time lain in ruins in almost every considerable town in the kingdom, (except the metropolis) “which houses are now fallen down, decayed, and at this time remain unedified, as desolate and vacant grounds, many of them nigh adjoining to the high streets, and replenished with much uncleanness and filth, with pits, cellars, and vaults, lying open and uncovered, to the great peril of the king’s subjects.”—The enactment is, that if the owners of these waste grounds do not within three years rebuild the edifices decayed, then the lord of whom the land is held may re-enter and seize the same.\*

Other acts might be referred to, containing similar complaints with regard to the state of country parishes.† The preamble to the 4th Hen. VII. c. 19. is as follows:—“The King remembreth that great inconveniences daily doe increase

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\* See 26th Hen. VIII. c. 8. and 9.—27th Hen. VIII. c. 1. and 22.—32nd Hen. VIII. c. 18. and 19.—33rd Hen. VIII. c. 36.—35th Hen. VIII. c. 4.

† See 4th Hen. VII. c. 16.—6th Hen. VIII. c. 5.—7th Hen. VIII. c. 1.

by desolation, and pulling downe, and wilfull waste of houses and townes within this realme, and laying to pasture lands which customably have beene used in tillage, whereby idlenesse, which is the ground and beginning of all mischiefes, daily doth encrease. For where in some townes, two hundred persons were occupied, and lived by their lawfull labours, now there are occupied two or three heardsmen, and the residue fall into idlenesse; the husbandrie, which is one of the greatest commodities of this realme, is greatly decayed; churches destroyed; the service of God withdrawen; the bodies there buried not prayed for; the patrons and curates wronged; the defence of this land, against our enemies outward, feebled and impaired," &c.

The expressions of contemporary writers are not unlike those of the acts here recited. "Your sheep," says Sir Thomas More, "that were wont to be so meek and tame, and so small eaters, now, as I hear say, be become so great devourers, and so wild, that they eat up and swallow down the very men themselves. They consume, destroy, and devour whole fields, houses, and cities. For look in what part of the realm doth grow the finest, and therefore dearest wool, there noblemen and gentlemen, yea, and certain abbots, holy men, no doubt, not contenting themselves with the yearly revenues and profits, that were wont to grow to their forefathers and predecessors of their lands,

not being content that they live in rest and pleasure nothing profiting, yea, much knowing the weale publique, leave no ground for tillage; they inclose all into pastures; they throw down houses; they pluck down towns, and leave nothing standing; but only the church to be made a sheep-house.”\*

After making all possible allowance for prejudice and error, for the difficulty of forming any exact estimate of past and present numbers, for the common failing of depreciating the advantages of the present times when compared with the past; I cannot bring myself to believe that at this period, the population of England was increasing in proportion to its wealth, nor even that it was increasing at all. And the less when I compare these acts with one passed half a century later, in the reign of Elizabeth,† which also speaks the language of complaint, but the alledged grievance is the excessive increase, and not the decay of population. The preamble runs thus; “For avoiding the great inconveniences which are found by experience to grow by the erecting and building of great numbers and multitude of cottages, which

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\* Introduction to Utopia.

† 31st Eliz. c. 2. An Act against the erecting and maintaining of Cottages.

are daily more increased in many parts of this realm," &c.

A second period in which the population of this kingdom appears to me not to have kept pace with the increase of national wealth, is from about the reign of Charles the first, to the latter part of the reign of George the second. This will perhaps be evident from the following considerations.—

1. Some notion may be formed of the progress of population from the quantity of food consumed, and consequently, from the quantity of land under cultivation at different periods. From a table of the number of Bills for the inclosing of land passed in each session since the revolution, given in the Lord's Report on the Poor Laws,\* it appears that in sixty-six years from 1688 to 1754, that number was 123; in the sixty-nine years from 1754 to 1813 it was 3,315.—The progress of cultivation was then about twenty-five times more rapid during the last period than the former. But during the first sixty-six years, more and more corn was grown continually for exportation; whereas, during the greater part of the last sixty-nine years, we not only consumed all that we had formerly sent abroad, but likewise imported an increasing, and at last a very large quantity, for our

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\* Report p. 135.

own consumption: it would seem therefore that the increase of population in the former period, as compared with the latter, was still slower than the progress of cultivation might appear to indicate.

2. The deaths throughout England and Wales in the years 1700, 1710, 1720, 1730 and 1740, as given in the returns from the parish registers under the population act, exceed the births by 2,018;—while in the years 1750, 1760, 1770, 1780, 1790, and 1800, the births exceed the deaths by 247,211. Mr. Malthus objects to this mode of reasoning, because we are not in possession of the number of births and deaths in the intermediate years, and the first five years which happen to be given in the returns, may, he thinks, have been particularly unhealthy seasons. The year 1710, he observes, we know to have been a time of great distress. It was so, certainly; and so was the year 1800, in the latter period. The London bills of mortality may shew that the first five years were not, upon the whole, peculiarly fatal.

It is not meant, however, to infer that an actual decrease of people took place at this period. There is reason to believe, that the omissions in the register of births are more numerous than in the deaths. Mr. Malthus has computed, on pretty good grounds, that the former amount to about one sixth, and the latter to one twelfth of the

whole. Adopting this estimate, it will be found that the annual increase at the beginning of the last century, amounted to about 6,400 persons, which, according to Euler's table,\* would double the population in 600 years nearly. At the present rate of increase it doubles in 55 years.

3. In the year 1688, the population of England and Wales was computed by Gregory King, from the number of houses, at five millions and a half. There is reason to believe this computation was pretty accurately made; at any rate it could scarcely err on the side of excess.—Now the population in 1780 is put down by Mr. Malthus at 7,700,000. In ninety-two years then it had increased 2,200,000—in the succeeding thirty years it increased something more than 2,700,000. But of this first increase of 2,200,000 there is every probability, that the far greater part took place from 1750 to 1780. In 1750 the number of births was 185,816, which, multiplied by 30, the proportion that has been found to prevail in later years, gives 5,574,480, for the whole population. It would seem then that the people of this country has increased only 74,000 during a period of 62

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\* Given in the Essay on Population, B. 2. c. 9. Dr. Smith says, that in Great Britain the population is not supposed to double in less than 500 years. Sir W. Petty calculated the period of doubling at 360 years.

years. It is probable, however, that one in thirty is too high a proportion to assume. When population is nearly at a stand, the proportion of births cannot of course be so great as when it is rapidly increasing. If we take the births at one in thirty-two, instead of one in thirty, the number of inhabitants in 1750 will be 5,946,000, making an increase of since the revolution of 446,000, or 7,200 per annum, which agrees pretty nearly with the former computation.

At the lowest estimate, then, it can scarcely be doubted that the progress of population of late years has been ten times more rapid than a century ago. Yet it is impossible to believe, that the accumulation of capital has been ten times greater. The state of this country, from the peace of Utrecht, to the declaration of war in 1757, was certainly more favourable to the increase of wealth than during the late very expensive contest. Were any proof of this wanting, it is to be found in the fall of the market rate of interest during the former period from six to three per cent, and its rise during the latter period from three, to eight or ten per cent.

As the doctrine that the progress of population is measured by the increase of wealth does not appear to be true in fact, so on the other hand it seems to me not consistent with sound reason-

ing. It does not seem that every accession of capital necessarily sets in motion an additional quantity of labour. Let us suppose a case.—A manufacturer possesses a capital of 1,000*l.* which he employs in maintaining twenty weavers, paying them 50*l.* per annum each. His capital is suddenly increased to 2,000*l.* With double means he does however hire double the number of workmen, but lays out 1,500*l.* in erecting machinery, by the help of which five men are enabled to perform the same quantity of work as twenty did before. Are there not then fifteen men discharged in consequence of the manufacturer having increased his capital?

But does not the construction and repair of machinery employ a number of hands?—Undoubtedly—As in this case a sum of 1,500*l.* was expended, it may be supposed to have given employment to thirty men for a year, at 50*l.* each. If calculated to last fifteen years, (and machinery seldom wears out sooner) then thirty workmen might always supply fifteen manufacturers, with these machines;—therefore each manufacturer may be said constantly to employ two.—Imagine also that one man is always employed in the necessary repairs. We have then five weavers, and three machine makers, where there were before twenty weavers.

But the increased revenue of the manufacturer will enable him to maintain more domestic servants.—Let us see then how many.—His yearly revenue, being supposed equal to ten per cent on his capital, was before 100*l.*—now 200*l.* Supposing then that his servants are paid at the same rate as his workmen, he is able to hire just two more. We have then, with a capital of 2,000*l.* and a revenue of 200*l.* per annum.

5 Weavers,  
3 Machine Makers,  
2 Domestic Servants.

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10 Persons in all, employed.

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With half the capital, and half the revenue, just double the number of hands were set in motion.

The demand for labour depends then on the increase of circulating, and not of fixed capital. Were it true that the proportion between these two sorts of capital is the same at all times, and in all countries, then indeed it follows that the number of labourers employed is in proportion to the wealth of the state. But such a position has not the semblance of probability. As arts are cultivated, and civilization is extended, fixed capital bears a larger and larger proportion to circulating capital. The amount of fixed capital employed in the production of a piece of British muslin is at least a hundred, probably a thousand times greater than

that employed in the production of a similar piece of Indian muslin.—And the proportion of circulating capital employed is a hundred or a thousand times less. It is easy to conceive that under certain circumstances, the whole of the annual savings of an industrious people might be added to fixed capital, in which case they would have no effect in increasing the demand for labour.

Let us then enquire why a given increase of wealth does not always create an equal demand for labour. What are the motives which determine the manufacturer and the farmer sometimes to enlarge their fixed, at other times their circulating capitals;—sometimes to invest their accumulations in the construction of machinery, or in permanent improvements of the soil, calculated to give an equal produce with a smaller number of hands; at other times to hire additional workmen for the purpose of bringing to market a larger produce?

It is the proportion which the wages of labour at any particular time bear to the whole produce of that labour, which appears to me to determine the appropriation of capital in one way or the other. For if at any time the rate of wages should decline, while the price of goods remained the same, or if goods should rise, while wages remained the same, the profit of the employer would increase, and he would be induced to hire more

hands. If, on the other hand, wages should rise, in proportion to commodities, the labourer's share in the produce of his own industry would be increased at the expence of his master, who would of course keep as few hands as possible.—He would aim at performing every thing by machinery, rather than by manual labour.

If the supply of labour were incapable of being increased, a much larger part of the annual savings of the community would be devoted to increase fixed, than circulating capital. For in this case every increase of circulating capital would proportionally increase the labourer's share in the produce of his own industry, at the expence of his employer; since the larger the sum applicable to the payment of wages among a fixed number of workmen, the greater the share of each individual.

It seems to have been the opinion of Adam Smith, that the employer of labour is able to indemnify himself, when an advance takes place in the rate of wages, by raising the price of his commodity. But Mr. Ricardo has lately shewn, that a rise of wages cannot possibly raise prices. The *price* of any commodity is merely an expression of the quantity of money for which it exchanges. Now gold and silver require labour to raise them from the mine, and bring them to market; a rise

of wages therefore increases the exchangeable value of these metals as well as of all other commodities. Nor is this reasoning the less applicable because gold and silver are foreign productions: for imagine that our goods rise in consequence of a rise of wages; our neighbours would of course buy less of us in proportion as we sold dearer, and the comparative cheapness of foreign goods would cause them to be increasingly in demand here: now a decrease of exports, and an increase of imports, causes invariably an unfavourable state of exchange, a demand for bullion, a melting of the coin, a decrease of the amount of money in circulation—and consequently prices would quickly fall again to their former level.

Since then the manufacturer and the farmer cannot raise the prices of their commodities to indemnify themselves for a rise of wages, that rise must operate as a net deduction from profit. It is therefore evidently the interest of these persons to keep wages low. If the supply of labour could not be increased, the circulating capital of the community, whatever its amount, being always divided amongst a fixed number of workmen, a very trifling addition to that capital would cause a heavy deduction from profits. An addition of 1-10th. would of course raise wages 1-10th. and supposing the ordinary rate of profits to be ten per cent, this would absorb the gains of the employer altogether.

So far however is the supply of labour from being taken as a fixed quantity by political economists, that it is maintained this supply very quickly adjusts itself to the fluctuations of demand. *If, says Adam Smith, the reward of labour should at any time be more than sufficient for the necessary maintenance of the labourers, their excessive multiplication would soon over stock the market with labour, and lower it to this necessary rate.\** Let us examine this position a little. In no branch of employment, I believe, can a boy be considered an efficient and skilful labourer under the age of fifteen or sixteen years,—in many occupations a skilful workman cannot be reared under twenty-one years. And even after this period the effect of a rise of wages in increasing the supply of labour is small in amount, and very slow in operation. It must be rather a powerful cause which should increase the annual number of births one seventh during the remainder of the present century; yet the influence of such an event on the wages of labour would not come to a maximum in less than eighty or ninety years, and at last would not exceed eighteen per cent.†

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\* Wealth of Nations, Vol. 1. p. 121, 122.

† Let the annual number of births in England and Wales be 301,000—one seventh of this number is 43,000.

There is another way, undoubtedly, in which a rise of wages tends to increase the supply of labour, viz. by decreasing the number of deaths. This effect, however, like the former, is remote in operation. It is only by inducing better habits of living, by accustoming the poor to more wholesome and nutritious food, less confined habitations, and greater personal cleanliness, that high wages are favourable to longevity. Their immediate consequences are sometimes of an opposite description. Before custom has taught the labourer to consider these decencies and enjoyments as a

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To find the number of persons which will be added to the population by an increase of 43,000 per annum in the births, consider that 500 of these births will (according to the hypothesis of De Moivre, which is accurate enough for this purpose) become extinct every year, till the whole are dead at the end of 86 years. The deaths are then increased the first year by 500, the second year by 1,000, the third 1,500; and so on in arithmetical progression, until in 86 years they amount to 43,000, or equal to the additional births. Now the increase of population is evidently equal to the increase of births, deducting the increase of deaths; the first =  $43,000 \times 86 = 3,698,000$ . The last (being the sum of the arithmetical progression 500, 1,000, 1,500, 2,000, &c. up to 43,000) is  $500 + 43,000 \times \frac{86}{2} = 1,870,500$ , which deducted from 3,698,000, leaves 1,827,500, for the increase of population. The inhabitants being reckoned at ten millions, this increase is equal to about eighteen per cent.

mong the indispensable necessities of life, he too often contents himself with the same miserable accommodations which satisfied his ancestors, and squanders the surplus of his earnings in idleness or intemperance.

We have no direct evidence of the effect of a rise of wages on the rate of mortality—but the indirect evidence which our registers do afford is altogether unfavourable to Adam Smith's doctrine. They exhibit an uniform decrease of mortality during the last seventy or eighty years, even in those districts where the real wages of labour have been as uniformly falling during the whole of that period.

The tardiness with which the supply of labour accommodates itself to a change in the demand, is remarkably exemplified in the present state of the parishes of Halsted, Bocking, and Coggeshall. About thirty years ago these parishes enjoyed a flourishing woollen manufactory, which in the year 1800 almost entirely ceased; the workmen to whom this manufactory had given employment became in consequence dependent on the parish. Out of 803 families in the parish of Halsted, no less than 434 are paupers. So little effect, however, has the want of employment produced in diminishing the population, that it is calculated the inhabitants are, within

two or three hundred, as numerous as twenty years ago, when the manufactory distributed annually 13,000*l.* or 14,000*l.* in the form of wages among the labouring classes.\*

“ Where prudent habits are established, the poor avail themselves of a high rate of wages to better their condition, rather than greatly in-

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\* Commons Report on the Poor Laws. Evidence of Mr. John Vaizey.

Dr. Smith's opinion that the rate of profit is measured by the greatness of the national wealth, may perhaps be thus reconciled with Mr. Ricardo's doctrine that profit is exclusively regulated by wages. Of the annual savings of the community, while the value of money remains unaltered, the greater part is added to the fixed capital, but a certain portion goes to increase circulating capital, which portion of course augments the demand for labour, and raises wages. Now an extension of the demand for labour cannot produce an enlargement of the supply for at least fifteen or sixteen years. During the whole of that period wages must necessarily stand above their former level, and a new generation growing up in the mean time, habituated to such improvement of circumstances, the advanced price of labour comes to be regarded by this new race of workmen as indispensable. Thus the accumulation of capital depresses profits *by raising wages.*

crease their numbers.”\* A rise of wages then does not *always* increase population; I question whether of itself it *ever* does so.—For every rise of wages tends to decrease the effectual demand for labour,—it induces the manufacturer and the farmer to lessen their circulating and enlarge their fixed capitals.—Suppose that by a general agreement among farmers the rate of agricultural wages were raised from 12s. to 24s. per week;—I cannot imagine any circumstance calculated more effectually to discourage marriage. For it would immediately become a most important object to cultivate with as few hands as possible; wherever the use of machinery, or the employment of horses could be substituted for manual labour, it would be done; and a considerable proportion of the existing labourers would be thrown out of work. If, indeed, a young man could step at once into a place, with 24s. per week, he would marry without scruple: but the probability is that the older labourers would obtain a preference in finding employment, and that the younger ones would be unable to earn any wages at all.

It is true this state of things could hardly subsist long, because the competition of the labourers out of employ would soon bring the price of labour down again. But if the rise were gra-

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\* Report on the Poor Laws, p. 36.

dual, instead of sudden, it would certainly operate to discourage the multiplication of labourers, without throwing any of the existing hands out of work. This reasoning is confirmed by experience. For we have good evidence that population advanced much more slowly under a gradual rise of wages during the earlier part of the last century, than during the latter part of the same century while the real price of labour fell rapidly.

We have no information of a very precise kind respecting the rate of wages at the former period, but the universal complaints to be found in the writers of those days that the high rate of wages stunted the growth of trade and manufactures, combined with the known fact that the profits of capital were lower than ever before or since, may convince us that the labourer enjoyed an unusually large share of the produce of his own industry. Supposing the money price of wages to have remained the same, the real command of the working classes over the necessaries and conveniences of life certainly increased from the middle of the seventeenth, till near the middle of the eighteenth century, for the price of corn declined within that space of time not less than 35 per cent.

The following statement will shew what proportion the wages of husbandry labour have

borne to the price of corn, at different periods during the last seventy years.

Periods	Weekly Pay.	Wheat per Quarter.	Wages in pints of Wheat.
1742 to 1752....	6s. 0d.....	30s. 0d.....	102
1761 to 1770....	7s. 6d.....	42s. 6d.....	90
1780 to 1790....	8s. 0d.....	51s. 2d.....	80
1795 to 1799....	9s. 0d.....	70s. 8d.....	65
1800 to 1808....	11s. 0d.....	86s. 8d.....	60

The price of labour in the two first periods is from Mr. A. Young's *Farmer's Tours*.—The third and fifth from *Communications to the Board of Agriculture*.\*—The fourth from Sir F. Eden *On the State of the Poor*.† The price of wheat is taken from the *Windsor Returns*.—

A rise of wages, of itself, then, never increases the labouring population;—a fall of wages may sometimes increase it very rapidly. Suppose that the English poor should experience such a change in their habits as to be content with a mud cabin and potatoes, like the Irish; can it be doubted that the employers of labour would be willing and desirous to engage more hands, when wages should be reduced in proportion to the diminished expence of maintenance? Every young man who had attained to a tolerable proficiency in

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\* Vol. 5, Part 1, p. 18.—† Appendix No. 12.

his business would find it easy to obtain full employment at the accustomed rate of wages. Under such circumstances he would undoubtedly marry early.—It is not by any nice comparison of the recompense of labour with the expence of living that the poor are discouraged from undertaking the charge of maintaining a family : uneducated man is guided very little by abstract reasoning, very much by custom : if a youth can get the same wages that his father and his neighbours obtain, he concludes that he is in a situation to marry, seldom thinking much of the expence of living : it is the difficulty of finding employment, much more than the insufficiency of the rate of wages, which discourages marriage.

Nor does the number of deaths depend always on the proportion between the price of labour and that of provisions : it may even happen that when labour is comparatively low, if at the same time the demand for hands is brisk, the mortality shall be considerably less than when labour is comparatively high. The returns of the last census afford an extraordinary confirmation of this remark.—On adding together the number of deaths in ten of the principal agricultural counties, it will be seen that those years in which corn was the lowest have proved by far the most fatal,—that in 1802, for instance, when wheat averaged at 67s. per quarter, the deaths exceeded by nearly one-tenth the num-

ber in 1801, when wheat was at 118s. The difficulty of finding employment in agricultural districts, more than compensated, it appears, the cheapness of provisions.\*

It is admitted that every increase of wealth has a *tendency* to create a fresh demand for labour; but as labour, of all commodities, requires the greatest length of time for its production, so, of all commodities, it is the most raised in price by a given increase of demand; and as every rise of wages produces a ten-fold reduction of profits, it is evident that the accumulation<sup>6</sup> of capital can operate only in an inconsiderable degree in adding to the effectual demand for labour, unless preceded by such an increase of population as shall have the effect of keeping down the rate of wages.

Mr. Malthus has, in one part of his late edition of the *Essay on Population*, approached so nearly to this mode of reasoning, that I am surprised he should continue to think high wages encourage marriage.—He observes that when commodities are rising, wages do not *always* rise in proportion; that this apparent disadvantage to the labourer is sometimes more than counterbalanced by the brisk demand for labour with

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\* See Appendix I.

which it is accompanied,—that on this account the progress of population does not appear to be always regulated by the real wages of labour,—and that in fact, population did not increase by any means so fast from 1735 to 1755, when a day's labour would purchase a peck of wheat, as from 1790 to 1811, when it would not purchase *quite* so much.\* The extent of the fall in wages is here evidently under-rated: it has been seen that fall between 1750 and 1803 was equal to forty per cent.

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The remarkable increase of population which has taken place, not only in England, but in almost every European state, during the last fifty or sixty years, has perhaps proceeded chiefly from the increased productiveness of the American mines. An increased abundance of the precious metals raises the price of commodities in a greater proportion than the price of labour; it depresses the condition of the labourer, and at the same time increases the gains of his employer, who is thus induced to enlarge his circulating capital to the utmost of his ability, to hire as many hands as he has the means to pay;—and it has been seen that

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\* Additions to Book 3, chap. 14.

this is precisely the state of things most favourable to the increase of people. That a fall in the value of money lowers the recompense of labour has been incidentally pointed out by several late writers. The Bullion Committee, advertng to various ill effects flowing from an excessive issue of paper, represent, as the most important of them all, the tendency of such an operation to depress the condition of country labourers.\* Mr. Malthus observes, that “the discovery of the mines of America, during the time that it raised the price of corn between three and four times, did not nearly so much as double the price of labour.”† This had been before noticed by a writer in the Edinburgh Review.‡ And we have seen that a similar peculiarity has marked the progress of that second depreciation in the value of the precious metals commencing about the accession of the present king; for while corn has risen about three-fold, labour has not quite doubled in price.

It is not necessary to shew *why* a fall in the value of money operates thus unfavourably on the condition of the labourer, in order to prove that an influx of money stimulates population. The fact, as pointed out in the passages just referred to, rests on the evidence of history; and has not, indeed, so far as I am aware, been called in question. But

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\* Report, p. 73. † Observations on the Corn Laws, p. 14.

‡ No. 43, p. 189, 190.

as the subject is highly curious, it may be interesting to enquire for what reason wages do not rise in equal proportion with commodities.

If, through the increased productiveness of the mines, Spain is enabled to purchase more of our manufactured commodities, the increased demand for these commodities of course raises their price:— Now this advance of price does not proportionally raise wages, because circulating capital cannot be suddenly increased in any considerable degree. Fixed capital can never be converted into circulating capital. The manufacturer can only increase his circulating capital by adding thereto his future savings; that is, by employing those savings in hiring additional hands; now, as the demand for labour absolutely depends on the amount of the revenue and circulating capital of the community, that demand can of course increase only in a slow degree. The price of commodities intended for home consumption, (of corn for instance,) does not immediately rise in consequence of an influx of money; but as the rate of profit in agricultural employments is thus depressed below the rate of profit in manufactures, capital will gradually be withdrawn from the former to the latter: thus all capital comes to yield higher profits than formerly, and a rise of profits is always equivalent to a fall of wages.

This, it will be said, perhaps, is merely the repetition of a principle laid down by Adam Smith in the 9th chapter of the *Wealth of Nations*, that an extension of trade may sometimes raise profits even in a country fast advancing in the acquisition of riches. But it appears to me that the importation of gold and silver is the only branch of trade which raises profits. For the amount of the trade that we carry on with other countries is limited by our demand for their productions. If we export more broadcloth to France, we must take more wine and brandy in return;—the question then recurs, have we a demand for more wine and brandy?—If we import double the quantity of those commodities, their price will fall one-half;—will this reduced price repay the cost of production? But the precious metals never fall, like other commodities, in proportion to their increased quantity; at least not until after the lapse of so many years as may be sufficient to terminate all existing contracts. A fall in the value of those metals is equivalent to a rise in that of all other commodities, labour included. Now unless an importation which doubles the amount of gold and silver doubles also the demand for labour, it cannot double its price. And that it does not, in the first instance, increase the demand in that proportion, may appear from considering how small the value of the money circulating in any country is, compared with the

amount of its annual revenues and circulating capital. The demand for labour, says Adam Smith, is in proportion to the joint amount of capital and revenue.\* Suppose then the revenue and circulating capital of a nation are together equal to four hundred millions sterling, and the gold and silver in circulation equal to forty millions : let this last be increased by importation to sixty millions : labour will not rise as 60 to 40, but as 420 to 400 ; not fifty per cent, but five per cent. Imagine for a moment that wages did advance fifty per cent, the funds destined for the maintenance of labour remaining just what they were before, only excepting those belonging to the particular merchants or manufacturers who have exported broadcloth or other goods to Spain in return for the gold and silver imported ; the wealth of these persons is increased, we will admit, by twenty millions. If then the price of labour should advance fifty per cent, all other persons, excepting those merchants or manufacturers, must retrench the number of hands in their employ one-third. The wealth of those merchants is undoubtedly increased fifty per cent, for they sent out broadcloth to the value of forty millions, and received in return gold and silver to the value of sixty millions. Those persons can therefore purchase just

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\* Vol. 1. p. 104.

as much labour as they could before, and no more ; their sixty millions go as far now, and no farther, than their forty millions went before. The demand of all other persons is lessened one-third ; their's remains the same. It is plain therefore that if wages should rise as supposed, they must immediately fall again, or one-third of the number of labourers must remain unemployed.

An influx of money does not proportionally raise wages, because the diminished income of the land-owner and annuitant lessens the demand for domestic servants nearly in the same proportion as the increased property of the manufacturer (arising from the advanced rate of profits) adds to the demand for productive labourers.\* The demand for

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\* “Syr, as I knowe it is true that yee complayne not without cause, so it is as true that I and my sorte, I mean all gentlemen, have as great yea and farre greater cause to complayne then any of you have, for (as I sayd) now that the pryces of thinges are so rysen of all handes, you may better liue after your degree than we, for you may and do rayse the pryce of your wares, as the prises of vittayles, and other your necessaries do ryse ; and so cannot we so much, for though it be true that of such landes as come to our handes, eyther by purchase, or by determination and ending of such terms of years, or other estates, that I or mine auncestors had graunted them in time past, I doe either receiue a better fine than of old was vsed, or enhance the rent thereof, being

labour, Adam Smith has truly stated, depends absolutely on the joint amount of revenue and circulating capital. But the demand for commodities is not limited in the same way, at least not in the case of an influx of the precious metals, because the demand for foreign countries is super-added to the demand for home consumption.

An influx of money, then, always tends to increase population, by raising profits, and increasing the demand for labour. But this tendency

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forced thereto for the charge of my householde that is so encreased ouer that it was, yet in all my lyfetye I looke not that the thyrd parte of my land shall come to my disposition, that I may enhaunce the rent of the same, but it shalbe in men's holding, either by leases or by copy graunted before my time, and still continuing, and yet lyke to continue in the same state for the most part during my lyfe, and percase my sonne's: so as we cannot rayse all our wares as you may your's, and as me thinketh it were reason we did: and by reason that we cannot, so many of vs (as yee know) that haue departed out of the countrey of late, haue been driuen to geue ouer our housholds, and to kepe either a chamber in London, or to wayte on the court uncalled, with a man and a lackey after him, where he was wonte to kepe halfe a score of cleane men in his house, and twenty or twenty four other persons besides euery day in the weeke."

*A Compendious or Briefe Examination of certuyne ordinary complaints of diuers of our Countrymen.*—Published in 1581.

may be counteracted sometimes by other circumstances. The value of the precious metals certainly began to decline slowly as early as the reign of Henry VII. But the stimulus which might thus have been given to population was more than compensated, it appears, by the decline of the feudal custom of subdividing the land into numerous small portions: these small tenures, when consolidated into farms of a larger size, and cultivated with the assistance of capital, requiring of course fewer hands in proportion to the produce raised. It was not till the reign of Elizabeth that the rise of prices produced its usual and natural effect. That decline in the value of money which commenced towards the middle of the last century, seems first to have given rise to a demand for manufacturing labour; and the price of that species of labour rose, for a time, as compared with corn, though not, perhaps, as compared with its own produce. The increase of population in manufacturing districts, from 1740 to 1800, was accordingly much greater than in farming districts. In agriculture the rise of prices seems to have acted on population in rather a peculiar way. The money prices of husbandry labour experiencing little variation, the reward of an in-door servant, who is boarded by his employer, became of course higher in proportion than that of an out-door labourer, who receives all his wages in cash. The first kind of service therefore fell gradually into

disuse. Every practical farmer can testify to the striking change in this respect of late years; and there can be little doubt, I think, that the increased expence of subsistence is the principal cause of the alteration.—Now the present arrangement affords vastly increased facility to marriage.—Mr. Malthus has observed, that the difficulty of finding habitations forms the principal check to the multiplication of our peasantry; and the preference given to out-door labourers affords a strong inducement to build cottages. A young man in farmer's service formerly could not marry with the smallest chance of maintaining a family till he procured an out-door labourer's place; and in proportion as places of this kind became more numerous, room was of course made for a greater number of marriages. Accordingly, since 1800 the increase of agricultural population seems to have been greater than that of the manufacturing population.\*

It would be exceedingly desirable to compare the progress of population with the value of money at different periods and in different countries.—But this is an enquiry of great difficulty and complexity. We have few registers of population to be depended on; and our information as to the value of money is perhaps still more defec-

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\* Appendix II.

tive. That value depends not only on the produce of the mines, but partly on the state of the coin, and the quantity of paper currency in circulation. In England, however, the standard of the coin has been unaltered since the reign of Elizabeth, and we have had no excess of paper currency, excepting for a short period about the end of the 17th century, and again about the beginning of the present. In this country the progress of population may therefore be expected nearly to coincide with the more or less abundant supply of the precious metals.

The Baron de Humboldt has collected a great deal of interesting information respecting the produce of the American mines. The results of this information are brought together in the following statement, compiled principally from authentic documents, and the remainder from conjectural computation. Though not to be depended on for exact accuracy, it contains by far the best information we have on the subject.\*

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\* Essai politique sur le Royaume de la Nouvelle Espagne, vol. 4, p. 259.

Periods.	Produce of the Mines in Piastres.
1500 to 1545 .....	£3,000,000
1545 to 1600 .....	11,000,000
1600 to 1700 .....	16,000,000
1700 to 1750 ... ..	22,500,000
1750 to 1803 .....	35,300,000

On comparing this table with the progress of population, making due allowance for the length of time that must elapse before an additional supply of the precious metals can produce any considerable effect on the demand for labour here, and again before that demand can add sensibly to the number of people, I think it will be found to afford the true solution of those remarkable irregularities before noticed. The increase from 1700 to 1750, it may be proper to observe, was almost exclusively in gold;—it did not therefore affect prices materially in the continental states, silver being their principal measure of value.

The present state of things in this country may be thought, perhaps, to afford some evidence of a connection between the value of money and the progress of population.—Since 1812 that value has risen thirty or forty per cent, and we have experienced a corresponding diminution in the demand for labour, a diminution certainly not proceeding from a want of capital, which is unusually abundant.

About the middle of the last century, an excessive issue of paper money in Sweden was attended with effects similar, in many respects, to those which have been witnessed here since 1809. While the amount of notes continued increasing, commodities advanced in price; the rate of exchange became highly unfavourable; and population increased in such proportion as would have doubled itself in about eighty years.—In 1766 the excess of paper currency began to be withdrawn, but it did not rise to the level of its value in specie till 1769, and from that period population was at a stand.\*

The extraordinary prosperity of Spain, for a short time after the discovery of the American mines, and her subsequent decline, may perhaps be traced to the great and rapid changes which have taken place there in the value of money. It has been often said, that the passion for gold impoverished the Spaniards, by drawing their attention from more durable sources of wealth, and wasted their numbers by leading them into unhealthy employments.—But this language is more figurative than correct.—The inhabitants of the mother country could have very little temptation to consume their properties or lives in mining

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\* *Memoires pour servir a la Connaissance du Royaume de Suede.*—Sect. 12, and Sect. 6, p. 184, 186.

operations; and great opulence is proved, by the example of Britain, to be rather an incitement than a discouragement to industry. It seems more rational to conclude that the influx of the precious metals, which at first depressed their value in Spain more than in the surrounding states, was succeeded by a change in the opposite direction as these countries gradually improved,—and that this change proved ruinous.—By an account preserved in the Report of the Bullion Committee \* of the prices of corn in Spain since 1675, it appears that a progressive, though irregular, fall took place from that period till near the middle of the last century, after which prices began to rise in all European countries. Had we any records of an earlier date, it would, in all probability, be found that the fall commenced as early as the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella;—now Laborde informs us that the population of Spain at that period was.....15,000,000

In	the year 1688.....	10,000,000
	1700, at the death of Charles II.....	8,000,000
	1715, under Phillip V.....	6,000,000
	1768, under Charles III.....	9,307,804
	1787 and 1785, ditto.....	10,143,975
	1798, somewhat above.....	12,000,000†

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\* Appendix 29.

† View of Spain, vol. 4, p. 25.

THE pressure of taxation is so generally held to be one principal cause of the increase of pauperism, that it would be improper to pass over the subject without enquiry.—Taxes are supposed to operate in two ways,—

*First*—In decreasing the demand for labour.

*Secondly*—In raising the price of the necessaries of life.

1.—So far as taxes are drawn from the yearly revenues of individuals, they cannot possibly lessen the demand for labour. If private persons retrench their expenses in proportion to the amount they are required to contribute to the wants of the state, neither the income nor the expenditure of the nation, taken collectively, are altered at all.—For instance, if I am called on for additional taxes to the amount of 100*l.* per annum, in consequence of which I sell my horse, and discharge my groom: in the meantime this very man may be enlisted for a soldier, and the horse bought for the service of the cavalry. My 100*l.* a year is still employed in maintaining this horse and man, only that it passes through another channel, and goes under a different name.

Even though taxes should prevent accumulation; though private persons, instead of retrenching their expenditure, should defray the taxes out of that part of their revenue which they would

otherwise have laid by to add to their capitals, still the demand for labour is not *lessened*, it is only prevented from increasing. It has been seen that of the amount annually saved from revenue, the greater part goes to increase fixed capital; it is employed in the construction of machinery, or the improvement of the soil; it therefore sets in motion a certain quantity of labour at first, namely, during the progress of these improvements, and ceases ever after to affect the demand for labour at all. Now a sum expended by government in the purchase of clothing and provisions for an army, or in any other manner, finds employment for as many persons as if the same sum had been expended in paying the wages of workmen employed in draining and inclosing land, or in constructing machinery.

But taxes may not only prevent accumulation, they may encroach on existing capital. It is true such an event is not likely to happen when the amount expended by government is all raised by taxes within the year: this however is seldom the case when that expenditure is large,—a part of the capital of the nation is directly taken by loans. It does not follow that the wealth of the community is diminished every year that a loan is raised, because the savings of individuals may exceed the amount of that loan: it cannot be doubted, how-

ever, that there have been years in which the collective expenditure of the nation has actually exceeded its revenue.—Let us examine what are the effects of such a state of things on the demand for labour.

The circulating capital withdrawn from the hands of merchants or manufacturers to be expended by government, still finds employment (as before observed) for as many persons as in its original destination. But a considerable part of these persons being soldiers or sailors, who produce nothing, instead of manufacturers or plowmen, a material decrease takes place in the quantity of commodities brought to market, and the collective income of the individuals composing the nation being, thus far, undiminished, the demand for goods comes to exceed the supply. An excess of importation over exportation is the result: a fall of exchange, remittances of specie abroad, and a rise in the value of money.

There appear to me to have been three instances, in modern times, in which the expenditure of this country exceeded its revenue. The first was towards the close of the American war, a contest unexampled at that time in expense as well as disasters. In 1781 the balance of trade, according to the Custom-house ledger, was more than a

million sterling against Great Britain.\* The exchanges with foreign countries in the two succeeding years fluctuated from 6 to 8 per cent below par; and in 1783 the amount of cash and bullion in the coffers of the Bank of England were reduced to a very low ebb by the want of specie for remittance.†

In 1796 the pressure of two loans, far exceeding in amount what had ever been raised before in one year, was greatly enhanced by the failure of the preceding harvest, which compelled us to import a large quantity of foreign corn for the subsistence of the people. The exchange varied from 4 to 6 per cent below par during the years 1795 and 1796. The demand for specie which ensued, and the consequences which resulted from it, are well known.

The recurrence of similar circumstances in 1809, seems to have arisen from the confiscation of British property on the Continent, to a very large amount,—the loss of this property operating precisely in the same manner as an increase of expenditure. The result, with regard to the demand for specie, was exactly like that of an unfavourable

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\* Report of the Secret Committee of the House of Lords in 1797—Appendix, 40.

† Ibid

balance of trade :—The payments due from British merchants to the Continent were still to be made ; the payments which ought to have been received from the Continent were, in many cases, cancelled by the confiscation of the goods ; a large balance was therefore to be paid by this country. Exchanges fell 8 to 10 per cent below par, and had the bank not been restricted from paying in specie, no doubt the same demand for cash would have taken place as in 1782 and 1796.

An excess of expenditure over revenue always causes then a decrease of the quantity of money in circulation, and a rise in its exchangeable value. In short, it produces effects precisely the reverse of those before attributed to an influx of the precious metals ;—a fall of prices, and a decrease in the demand for labour. But these effects are usually temporary, because the loss of capital is generally made up by the savings of the ensuing year. There is no reason to believe that in any of the cases just mentioned the wealth of the nation suffered any permanent diminution. It is impossible to admit, therefore, that the want of employment for the labouring classes at the present moment \* proceeds from taxation.

2.—We have next to examine whether taxa-

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\* June 1817.

tion tends to raise the price of subsistence. This enquiry presents considerable difficulties, not so much from its natural obscurity, as from the vague notions often put forth on the subject of taxation. That the high price of corn during the late war arose from this cause, appears to me an opinion so groundless, that were it not sanctioned by names of great and well-founded respectability, it would seem scarcely worth combating.

“ Three circumstances,” says Mr. Arthur Young, in his examination before the Committee of the House of Commons on the Corn Laws, “ have contributed very materially to raise the price of corn ; these are the increase of population, taxes, and national wealth, as marked by the commerce of the kingdom : if we compare these circumstances for the 21 years from 1790 to 1810, with 23 years immediately before 1790, we shall find the increase to be,

In population .....	27 $\frac{1}{4}$
Taxes and loans.....	212 $\frac{1}{4}$
Trade, that is exports and imports	96 $\frac{1}{2}$
	Mean <u>112</u> per cent.

But the rise in the price of wheat, in the same period, was only 71 per cent ; that of barley and oats only 68 $\frac{1}{4}$  ; while national wealth, or the power of consuming, increased 96 $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent, and the public burdens 212 $\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. It does not seem

necessary to seek for other causes for the rise in the price of corn.”\*

Now, to confine the question at present to the subject of taxation, I must remark, in the first place, that this doctrine is altogether of modern date. None of our writers on Political Economy, previous to 1792, have taught that taxation raises the price of corn.—Locke † holds that taxes mostly fall on the land; that is, they diminish the landlord’s share of the produce; in which opinion he is followed by the economists of France.—Hume ‡ calls in question this doctrine: taxes on commodities, he thinks, fall on the consumer only: he does not appear to suppose they affect the price of any other article than that on which the tax is laid. Adam Smith maintains that taxes on necessaries, such as salt, leather, soap, and candles, raise the price of labour; but in the case of husbandry labour, he says, this rise falls on the landlord, by diminishing his rent, and therefore does not raise the price of the commodity produced. § And so also of taxes imposed on the profits of agricultural capital, he expressly

\* Commons Report p. 172, 173.

† Works, Vol 2. p. 29, 30.—4th edit.

‡ Essay 8, Part 2.

§ Wealth of Nations, Vol. 3. p. 323, 324.

says the final payment of such taxes falls on the landlord.\*

I do not mean to say that because the modern opinion differs from that of Locke, Hume, and Smith, therefore it is necessarily wrong. But I do not remember to have met with any attempt to controvert their arguments; and if we have nothing to set against them better than vague assumption, it must be admitted that the received doctrine rests on slender foundation.

This doctrine is also at variance with fact. In the three wars preceding that which broke out in 1792, the average price of corn was something lower than in the years of peace immediately preceding and succeeding. During the American war, when taxation pressed as heavily, perhaps, on the resources of the country, as at any period during the last hundred years, wheat was about ten per cent, barley and oats about fifteen per cent lower than in peace.

Mr. Young, and those who think with him, seem to forget that gold and silver are commodities just as liable to be raised in their exchangeable value by taxation as any others. We consume

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\* Wealth of Nations, Vol. 3. p. 293.

annually a certain quantity of those metals, which we purchase from the possessors of the mines with articles of our own production. If, by taxation, or any other cause, the value of such articles should be enhanced, as compared with gold and silver, this exchange of our goods for bullion would be diminished, or perhaps entirely cease. If our broad-cloth should rise from 30s. to 40s. per yard, the Brazilians might find it more to their interest to purchase in France or Germany than in England. But the consumption of gold continuing, and the supply being cut off, it would inevitably rise in value; that is, all other commodities, being measured in gold, would appear to fall.

On attentive scrutiny, the reason may perhaps be apparent why corn is generally lower in war than in peace. The necessity of resorting annually to loans raises the rate of profit on circulating capital: now corn requires less circulating capital for its production than manufactured commodities: and since the prices of goods, taken collectively, cannot rise while the amount of money remains unchanged, raw produce necessarily falls in proportion as manufactures advance.

It appears to me that the only taxes which fall on the labouring classes are the customs and excise. A tax imposed on any particular commodity of course raises its price; and inasmuch as the

poor are consumers of these commodities, they contribute towards the expenditure of the state. I would extend this observation, not only to articles of luxury, such as beer and tobacco, but to articles of necessity, such as salt and leather. For if wages should rise in consequence of the increased expense of living, the equilibrium between the profits of fixed and circulating capital would be disturbed, and the manufacturer or farmer would substitute the use of horses or machinery for manual labour. Thus a portion of workmen would be thrown out of employ, and competition would soon reduce wages to their former level.

It is not evident, indeed, even on Dr. Smith's own principles, why a tax on any particular commodity should invariably operate in reducing the consumption of that very commodity. If a tax on tobacco, for instance, compels the labourer to use less of that article, might not a tax on bread also induce him to use less tobacco, or less of some other luxury?

The price of labour, like that of every thing else, is regulated by supply and demand. The increased price of the necessaries of life can operate in no other way on the rate of wages than in diminishing the supply of workmen, either by increasing mortality, or discouraging marriage. Now

I have before endeavoured to shew that a decrease of population does not generally follow from a gradual rise in the expense of subsistence, because the process is so slow that the labouring classes acquire in the meantime new habits, and are content with a worse mode of living. I conclude, therefore, that taxes on consumable commodities, such as the customs and excise, fall ultimately, as well as immediately, on the consumer.

I have been desirous to give a statement of the amount which an agricultural labourer pays yearly in these taxes, but have not yet been able to do it to my own satisfaction. I however subjoin an account of the average expenses of sixty-six families of labourers in different parts of England, collected by Sir F. Eden in 1796,—this will shew what proportion of a peasant's earnings is laid out in the purchase of taxed articles.\* For the sake of comparison, I add a statement of the items of a labourer's expenditure, and the taxes payable thereon, in 1762, which I have extracted from a letter in the London Magazine for that year,† signed William Temple.

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\* On the State of the Poor, Appendix 12. † p. 717.

EXPENSES

*Of the Family of an Agricultural Labourer*

CONSISTING OF  $5\frac{4}{5}$  PERSONS.

	Per Week.		Per Annum.		
	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Bread, flour, or oatmeal....	6	5	16	13	8
Yeast and salt.....	0	2	0	8	8
Bacon or other meat .....	1	2	3	0	8
Tea, sugar, and butter ....	1	$2\frac{3}{4}$	3	3	11
Soap .....	0	$3\frac{3}{4}$	0	16	3
Candles .....	0	4	0	17	4
Cheese .....	0	$4\frac{1}{4}$	0	18	5
Beer .....	0	3	0	13	0
Milk .....	0	3	0	13	0
Potatoes .....	0	7	1	10	4
Thread and worsted .....	0	$2\frac{1}{2}$	0	10	10
Rent .....			1	13	3
Fuel .....			1	13	3
Clothes .....			3	10	11
Births, burials, and sickness.....			0	10	10
			<hr/>		
			£	36	14 4
			<hr/>		

## EXPENSES

*Of the Family of an Agricultural Labourer in 1762.*

	Per Week.		Per Annum.		
	s.	d.	l.	s.	d.
1. Bread, flour, oatmeal . . . . .	2	6	6	10	0
2. Roots, greens, beans, pease fruit . . . . .	0	5	1	3	10
3. Firing 6d., candle 3d., soap $2\frac{1}{2}$ . . . . .	0	$11\frac{1}{2}$	2	9	10
4. Milk $1\frac{3}{4}$ d., butter $1\frac{3}{4}$ d., cheese 5d. . . . .	0	$8\frac{1}{4}$	2	0	1
5. Flesh 6d., rent 6d., pins, worsted, thread, &c. 1d.	1	1	2	16	4
6. Clothes, repairs, bedding, shoes . . . . .	1	0	2	12	0
7. Salt, beer, exotics, vinegar, spices . . . . .	0	$8\frac{1}{2}$	1	11	5
8. Midwives, churching, lying-in . . . . .			0	12	6
			£20 0 0*		

Taxes on the above consumption:—On malt, 4s. 2d.; salt, 1s. 8d.; soap and candles, 3s.; leather, 2s.; sundries, 2d.—Total, 11s.

N. B. Tax about 1-36th."

\* I have copied the items as they stand—they do not appear quite to agree with the total amount.

As some persons are of opinion that the present want of demand for labour arises from the pressure of taxation, others maintain that the increased expenditure of government during the war gave an extraordinary stimulus to population, and that the subsequent distress is owing to the cessation of that expenditure.—These two doctrines, if the changes in our circulating medium be left out of the question, appear to me equally erroneous.

If we enquire how a given sum operates on the demand for labour, when occupied respectively in maintaining unproductive or productive hands, we shall find that, in the first instance, it always gives employment to the same number of persons. The whole amount of the circulating capital of the nation is annually expended in providing subsistence for the labouring class of the community;—if converted into revenue, it still continues to perform the same function, with only this difference, that it now maintains unproductive, instead of productive, labourers. It would seem, then, that Mr. Malthus is mistaken in supposing “the conversion of revenue of capital, which is the effect of loans, must necessarily increase the proportion of demand to supply.”\*

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\* Additions to the Essay on Population, p. 67.

Even though a loan should leave the amount of circulating capital undiminished, being drawn exclusively from that portion of the savings of the community which would have gone to augment fixed capital, it would not create any new demand for labour. Fixed capital, it is true, when once formed, ceases to affect the demand for labour, but during its formation it gives employment to just as many hands as an equal amount would employ, either of circulating capital, or of revenue.

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**BEFORE** we attempt to remedy an evil, it is of great importance to acquire a correct notion of its nature and extent. Previously to any further enquiry into the tendency and operation of the poor laws, let us examine, then, in the first place, how much pauperism has increased since the year 1776, when the first authentic statement was published relative to the amount of parochial taxation. The returns in that year, and in the year 1785, do not mention the number of paupers relieved, which would afford the most accurate means of comparison, but merely give the amount of the money expended in the relief of the poor. This does not present an accurate view of the subject, on account of the progressive fall in the value of the precious metals. As the price of most commodities has doubled since 1776, it is fair to infer

that an equal sum would not now relieve more than half the persons which it relieved forty years ago. Taking the price of corn as a fair criterion of the expense of subsistence, and comparing the increase of poor's rates with that of population, the account will stand thus:—

Average Price of Wheat per Quarter.		Expended on the Poor.	Population.*	Expenditure per head on the population expressed in pints of wheat.
s.	d.			
1772--	50 8	<i>s. d.</i> In 1776, £1,556,804	7,500,000	44
3--	51 0			
4--	52 8			
5--	48 4			
6--	38 2			
1781--	44 8	Average of 1783, 4, and 5. £2,004,238	7,876,000	53
2--	47 10			
3--	52 8			
4--	48 10			
5--	51 10			
1799--	67 6	In 1803, £4,267,965	9,438,000	54½
1800--	113 7			
1--	118 3			
2--	67 5			
3--	56 6	In 1815, £5,072,028	11,139,000	50
1811--	94 6			
2--	124 8			
3--	107 10			
4--	74 7			
5--	64 3			

\* The population, in this and the subsequent calculations, is taken agreeably to Mr. Malthus's estimate, which appears to me formed on very good grounds.—See Additions to the Essay on Population, p. 27.

Viewing the question in this light, the increase of pauperism does not appear so formidable as generally apprehended. It does not seem that we are burdened with a much larger proportion of poor than formerly, and the evil even appears to have decreased from 1803 to 1815.

Whether the condition of the poor has grown better or worse within the above space of time admits of being answered in the most satisfactory and decisive manner, by comparing the annual mortality at different periods with the number of people: An increase of deaths invariably indicates an increase of misery; a decrease of deaths as certainly proves that the condition of the lower orders is ameliorated.—For proof of this I may refer to almost every page of the *Essay on Population*. The following table will shew a very considerable decrease since 1780.

Periods.	Average Population.	Average number of Deaths.	Proportion.
1780 to 1784	7,824,000	192,813	1 in 40,6
1785 to 1789	8,157,000	187,029	1 in 43,6
1790 to 1794	8,597,000	192,373	1 in 44,7
1795 to 1799	9,022,000	193,932	1 in 46,5
1800 to 1804	9,463,000	199,458	1 in 47,4
1805 to 1809	10,105,000	190,555	1 in 53,3

In spite of the assertion sometimes made, that the poor continually grow more miserable and depra-

ved, this statement proves, I conceive, with the force of absolute demonstration, that vice or misery, or both, have decreased one-fourth within the last forty years.

I will not say these facts prove that the poor laws have no tendency to deteriorate the condition of the labouring classes; I mean only to infer that the general reasoning which leads to such a conclusion should be strictly scrutinized. It is *possible* that the condition of the poor would have improved still more rapidly had these laws never been enacted.

Independently of various collateral ill effects, the existence of which I am fully prepared to admit, the poor laws are supposed to afford an unnatural stimulus to marriage, and thereby to create an excessive population, which in its turn depresses the wages of labour. It is supposed that if the certainty of finding subsistence for a family were removed, young people would be more cautious how they ventured upon marriage. But do we find that the prospect of remote and contingent evils has, in point of fact, any considerable influence upon human actions?—Is it not observable that the very magnitude of a remote danger sometimes conveys an indistinct notion of its improbability?—And is not this more particularly the case where no instance of the danger apprehended

occurs to operate on the senses?—Unless then a certain number of families were annually allowed to starve, by way of example, it is to be feared the apprehension of such an event would not check marriage in any sensible degree. If it were found that the hand of private benevolence interposed to prevent so terrible a calamity, is there not reason to think that young and sanguine dispositions, under the influence of a powerful passion, would instinctively believe that *they* too should be rescued from actual want, even though no legal or certain provision existed for their relief?—Those who are of opinion that moderate punishments, uniformly inflicted, more effectually deter from improper conduct than severer enactments, whose very harshness generally prevents their being carried into execution, ought, I think, to agree with me, that the *certain* prospect, if overtaken by ill health or misfortune, of enduring the misery of a workhouse, a prospect well known to be sufficiently revolting to the poor, is more likely to prevent a young couple from marrying imprudently, than the *possibility* of perishing for want.

It is from observing that a great increase of population has, in fact, taken place of late years, accompanied by a fall in the recompense of labour, that political economists are led, principally, I suspect, to attribute to the poor laws the effect of encouraging marriage. But if it should be thought

that these events are sufficiently accounted for by the change in the value of money, the necessity for resorting to a different mode of explanation will cease. Indeed it will be found on enquiry that the increase of population has not been accompanied by an increased proportion of marriages, as the following table will shew :—

Periods:	Average Population.	Average number of Marriages.	Proportion.
1780 to 1784	7,824,000	65,274	1 in 120
1785 to 1789	8,157,000	71,543	1 in 114
1790 to 1794	8,597,000	72,567	1 in 118½
1795 to 1799	9,022,000	74,795	1 in 120½
1800 to 1804	9,463,000	81,518	1 in 116
1805 to 1809	10,105,000	81,976	1 in 123

} 1 in 117  
} 1 in 119½  
} 1 in 119½

The writer of a very interesting article in the *Edinburgh Review*, before referred to, appears to me to have fallen into a singular misapprehension. After taking great pains to shew that a fall in the value of money is always accompanied by a decline in the real wages of labour, he suddenly changes the argument, and in the following eloquent strain of indignation lays the whole blame on the poor laws :—

“ A change in the value of money, similar to what happened in the 16th century, has taken place in our times. The precious metals have been depreciated throughout Europe, in consequence of the increased productiveness of the American mines during the last 40 years; and in our own

country the rise of prices which this necessarily produced has been aggravated by a depreciation of our currency, occasioned by the excessive issue of paper not convertible into specie.—What have been the consequences? The price of labour has not risen in proportion to the price of commodities. But the labourer has the difference made up to him in the shape of poor's rate. An unmarried man can still support himself by his nominal wages. But a married man, who has two children to maintain, receives, as a matter of course, assistance from his parish. A calculation is made of his wages and the price of bread. So much bread is allowed to him, according to the number of his family. What his wages will not furnish the parish provides. This beneficent system, as it has been called, turns out to be an engine in the hands of masters to keep wages as low as will suffice for the maintenance of the labourer and his wife, with a provision in the shape of charity for the support of his children.—It cannot be doubted that if such a provision had never existed, the wages of the labourer would have been higher; that what he now receives as charity, he would then have received as his own; and that the operation of this scheme of benevolence is to increase the gains of the rich, and to deprive the poor of that share in the good things of this life, which the provisions of nature, and their own industry, might otherwise have given them. In thus keeping down the wages

of labour, the poor laws have accomplished, under the mask of charity, what the old statute of labourers had vainly attempted by the infliction of pains and penalties. It is the pride of the Leicestershire farmer, that with the smallest consumption of food, he can produce the heaviest carcase for the shambles, and the greatest quantity of manure for his fields. It matters not to him that the flesh is coarse, and the animal that bears it sickly and deformed. If it sells in the market, he has executed what he undertook.—So it is the boast of our modern advocates for the poor laws, that they have found an instrument, and an efficacious one, it must be confessed, for breeding labourers at the smallest possible expense, who shall perform the drudgery of society, with the least possible chance of emerging from the situation in which they are born, or of ever enjoying a larger portion of the bounty of nature than is necessary to preserve their existence, and maintain them in strength and ability to toil for their employers.—And for what object are three-fourths of the world thus degraded and kept down?—The immediate gain is the master's; but that is only a temporary advantage, followed by a train of bad consequences, from which the master and the whole community suffer. We do not intend at present to pursue this subject further. There is no practical question in political economy which is so important; and while we must all acknowledge that the evil is great, we confess

that we are not prepared to say in what manner it can or ought to be remedied." \*

If the poor laws have any influence at all on the rate of wages, it is not, I think, by encouraging marriage, † but by giving a sort of monopoly, or at least a right of pre-emption, of the services of the labourer, to the employers of labour in the parish where he happens to be settled.—Sir F. Eden mentions a case of this sort, which came under his personal observation in the year 1796.—A labourer, settled in one parish, and working in another, applied to the overseer of the former for a certain weekly allowance, to make up his earnings to a scale which had been laid down by the magistrates.

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\* No. 43.—Art. Guarinos on Poor Laws, p. 197, 198.

† We have the authority of Mr. Malthus for doubting whether the poor laws tend to increase population. "The most favourable light in which the poor laws can possibly be placed, is to say, that under all the circumstances with which they have been accompanied, they do not encourage marriage; and undoubtedly the returns of the *Population Act* seem to warrant the assertion."

Essay on Population, vol. 2, p. 473.—4th Edition.

Since this note was written, I find, on referring to the 5th edition, that the author has qualified the above assertion, "that they do not *much* encourage marriage."—Vol. 3, p. 374.

The overseer, being himself a farmer in want of hands, refused to grant this allowance unless the labourer would enter *his* service at a reduced rate of wages, promising to make up the difference from the parochial funds.\*—Whether or not this practice ever prevailed so generally as to exert any sensible influence on the ordinary price of labour, cannot be ascertained but by a more extensive acquaintance with facts than I possess.

But once admitting that the poor laws do not lower the price of labour, it certainly follows that they contribute in a most important manner to the comforts of the poor.—Five millions a year, however injudiciously laid out, cannot fail to relieve a vast deal of distress, supposing it to form a net addition to the sum annually distributed among the labouring classes of society.

It is probably true that a great part of the amount raised by parochial assessments is expended on the most worthless part of the community. When employment is scarce, those labourers who are least steady and industrious are of course first discharged, and first become burdensome. The absence, too, of the finer and more generous feelings destroys all repugnance to asking for relief,

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\* On the State of the Poor, vol. 1, p. 583.

and all dread of dependence. But it does not therefore follow that this want of right feeling is attributable to the poor laws, nor that the repeal of those laws would create that “*fineness of moral complexion*,”\* which has been beautifully said to form the immediate barrier against the growth of pauperism in Scotland. There, as well as here, the *law* has provided a compulsory maintenance for the poor; but the constant reciprocation of good offices, and close intercourse between the higher and lower ranks of society, the peculiar affection subsisting between the ministers and their flocks, the superior tone of information, and the feelings of self-respect consequently prevailing among the peasantry in that part of the kingdom, have generally superseded the necessity of carrying the law into effect. Of late, indeed, compulsory assessments have been introduced in many parishes, particularly in large towns, and it is observed that in these parishes more distress prevails than elsewhere. But may not the loss of better feelings have preceded, and in fact led to the necessity of these assessments?

If we should attempt to introduce here that mode of relieving the poor which prevails in parts of Scotland, under a more simple state of manners,

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\* Edinburgh Review, No, 55, p. 21.

we should probably find ourselves in a dilemma. Either we must leave the idle, extravagant, and vicious part of the poor to be gradually exterminated by want, or we must return to compulsory assessments. That they would reform, in consequence of having the fear of want before their eyes, appears to me very improbable.

If it should be found possible, however, to provide for the necessities of the poor, and at the same time to avoid those contests, clamorous on one side, and unfeeling on the other, so unhappily calculated to obdurate the hearts both of givers and receivers ; if the aged and infirm, accustomed to decent and orderly habits, and orphan children, untingered with the rudiments of vice, can be maintained without crowding them into comfortless and filthy work-houses, inhabited by every species of profligacy, it surely will not be argued that the evils of the present system are to be preserved, because that system has upon the whole done good.

In endeavouring to provide a substitute for parochial relief, it is requisite to keep in view the different circumstances under which that relief is granted.—The candidates for parish allowances may be divided into four classes:—1. Persons out of employ.—2. Labourers whose wages are supposed insufficient for the maintenance of their families.—3. Persons incapable of earning a liveli-

hood from sickness, accident, or old age.—4. Widows and orphans.—With regard to the two first sets of allowances, it is the opinion of the Committee of the House of Commons that they do not contribute in any degree to increase the means of subsistence of the poor, because the money so disbursed by parishes “ would have been applied to some other object had it been left to the distribution of the original owner ; *and however applied, it must pass into the hands of the labouring classes, either in the form of wages, or of parish allowance.*” But if it be true that whatever is laid out in the formation of fixed capital ceases to find employment for the labourer, it follows that the argument of the Committee is unsound.—It cannot be doubted that the wages of a *roundsman*, for instance, would be much more profitable to the farmer if employed in the keep of an additional horse.—One of the witnesses examined by the Committee says, that the money paid to this description of labourers is considered as almost entirely unproductive.\* Of course, therefore, farmers would not maintain them unless compelled to do so.

Since the demand for labour has experienced so remarkable a reduction, the distress of the poor would have been great indeed but for the operation

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\* Joseph Sabine, Esq., p. 106.

of the poor laws. I cannot but think that in this instance the effect of the parochial system has been almost unmixed good. The best method that has been devised for alleviating the pressure of the present deficiency of work, is to raise subscriptions for employing the poor, in making roads, or in such other ways as least interfere with existing occupations. This is exactly what has been done by parishes on a larger scale. The total amount of these subscriptions has not perhaps exceeded one or two hundred thousand pounds. The amount that has been expended by overseers in the same way is probably five or ten times as much.

With regard to allowances of the second class, those to agricultural labourers, in proportion to the number of their families, and the price of bread, it would seem from the evidence of two of the witnesses (Joseph Sabine, Esq., and the Rev. Richard Vivian) that they have in some instances been disused, without producing any sensible distress. Yet looking at the very low rate of husbandry wages in some parts of England, it is difficult to believe that the labourer can maintain a wife and five or six children on his earnings alone. The best method, perhaps, to reduce, and ultimately to do away these allowances, is to employ all indirect means to check that excessive demand for labour which flows from the declining value of money. In this view the alteration of the mode of

raising parish assessments, suggested, but rejected, by the Committee, that each householder should be rated in proportion to the number of persons he employs,\* would be exceedingly salutary. The proposed alteration of the law of settlement, whereby a man would become a parishioner after five years residence,† also appears to me likely to be salutary, for the very reason which is alleged to form the only serious objection against it, viz., its tendency to reduce the number of cottages. The want of a habitation is perhaps the easiest and least oppressive check that can be devised against an excessive growth of population. On this ground the general adoption of a regulation which has been introduced in certain districts by local acts, and which consists in levying the poor's rate from the landlord of small tenements instead of the occupier, would be attended with good effects.

These regulations are proposed with a view prospectively to remedy the ill consequences of an excessive demand, creating an excessive supply of labour, while the value of money is on the decline. But if it should be found that the present want of demand arises from permanent, and not from temporary causes; from the decreased productiveness of the gold mines of Brazil,‡ and not merely from

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\* p. 13.

† p. 46.

‡ Report of the Bullion Committee, Appendix 21.

the restoration of our own currency to its natural state, a different set of measures would require to be adopted.—Some channel must be found for drawing off the excess of population, without resorting to the cruel alternative of suffering it to be reduced by actual want. It is undoubtedly a wise and humane policy which prompts the Committee to recommend that every facility should be given to such labourers as may be desirous of emigrating to our colonies.—It is remarkable that most of these colonies were planted and peopled just at the period after the rapid fall in the value of money during the reigns of the Tudors had been succeeded by a gradual rise, when the rate of profits began to decline, and the supply of labour consequently became in excess over the demand.

But perhaps it might deserve consideration whether colonies could be established on our waste lands at home, less expensive to defend, and contributing more to the national strength than distant possessions. I am persuaded that the nature of our laws and habits, and not the comparative infertility of the soil, forms the principal obstacle to a more extended cultivation. If small portions of waste land were to be sold at the American price, viz. from 5s. to 10s. per acre, and exempted from direct taxes for a certain number of years, I cannot entertain a moment's doubt that the powerful stimulus which the possession of property never

fails to afford, would cultivate them like a garden. Mr. A. Young observed in France spots on the sides of the hills where nature had denied a soil, brought to produce abundantly by the indefatigable industry of the small proprietors, who had carried earth in baskets to the place, and supported it by walls, built at intervals on the slope.—The proposed arrangement, I am persuaded, would rather check than encourage the excessive growth of population. From the facts stated by Mr. Malthus,\* there seems every reason to believe that the proportion of births and of marriages in France has considerably diminished since the sale of the national domains afforded to the peasantry the means of acquiring portions of land on moderate terms.

THE two last sets of allowances, viz., to the infirm and aged, and to widows and orphans, admit of being completely superceded by Friendly Societies. These admirable institutions possess advantages quite distinct from those of Savings Banks; it is therefore to be regretted that the admirers of the latter should usually think it necessary to exalt them by decrying the former. A man with an unhealthy constitution, or who has the misfortune to be rendered permanently incapable of earning a livelihood by the loss of sight, a stroke of palsy,

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\* Addition to the Essay on Population, b. 2, c. 7.

or otherwise, and who is therefore peculiarly an object of relief, is wholly incapable of partaking of the benefits of a Savings Bank.

Sir F. Eden informs us, that in 1797 no instance had been known of a member of a Friendly Society becoming burdensome to his parish; and even at the present day, it appears, from the evidence before the Committee on the Poor Laws, that such instances are rare. This is remarkably confirmed by comparing the proportion, in each county, between the number of paupers and the number of persons members of Friendly Societies.—It will be found in most cases that one is inversely as the other.\*

There are two objections popularly urged against Friendly Societies,—that they promote intemperance,—and that they do not afford adequate security to the contributors.—The first of these objections may, I think, be effectually removed. It is true the meetings of Friendly Societies are commonly held at public houses, and the members are too often led thereby into excess. But if a room were provided elsewhere, no conceivable reason can be assigned why the members would not meet there to pay their contributions

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\* Appendix III.

and transact their business, as readily as to make their deposits in a Savings Bank. If they can be satisfied without beer in the one case, why not in the other? It should be remembered that Friendly Societies owe their origin entirely to the prudence and good sense of the labouring classes themselves, and the large room at a public house affords the readiest, perhaps the only means for the whole society to meet together under one roof. When met in such a place, it is not very surprising, perhaps not very unpardonable, that uncultivated minds, with their very limited stock of enjoyments, should fall into occasional excess. At any rate we need not blame them severely till we have provided other places of meeting.

The second objection is undoubtedly a formidable one. The evil may be almost termed universal; it is uncommon for a Friendly Society to last more than fifty years; *very* uncommon to last fifty years without beginning to exhibit symptoms of decline. I have taken great pains to discover the causes of this fatal tendency to decay, by an examination of the accounts of different societies, and am prepared to say that in the great majority of cases it arises from a defect in the original plan, and not from mismanagement or knavery.—Extracts from the records of several Friendly Societies will be found in the Appendix, selected from among many others as best suited for

the basis of calculation, on account of the period of their establishment and the regularity of their proceedings.

From these it will appear that even Dr. Price did not estimate correctly the proportion of sick members to well in these societies. He supposes that in a society where the age of admission is limited to 32 years, the proportion of sick will be 1-48th of the whole.\* But it will be seen that in the first of these societies, situate in the outskirts of the metropolis, the proportion of members in the receipt of pay is 1-31st; in the three next, situate in provincial towns, 1-35th; and in the last, situate in a country village, 1-40th. It is the more important that the result of these enquiries should be known, as Mr. Morgan has said in his examination before the Committee on the Poor Laws, that all the experience he has had confirms in his mind the accuracy of Dr. Price's tables.†—I am unable to state, even loosely, the proportion of members superannuated, that is, rendered permanently incapable of earning a livelihood. The accounts of different societies vary incredibly in this particular, and I suspect that claimants of this description are in many cases used very ill by their more fortunate

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\* On Reversionary Payments, Appendix, Tab. I.

† Report, p. 203.

associates, in being debarred from that relief to which they are fairly entitled. Dr. Price has substituted allowances after a certain age, as 65 or 70, for allowances to superannuated members. But this does not at all meet the wants or wishes of the poor. Some men are permanently incapacitated from labour at five and twenty,—others are quite able to maintain themselves at seventy-five.

Dr. Price has conjectured that the chance of sickness at every period of life, bears a certain proportion to the chance of death. The ninth table was framed with a view to discover how far this suggestion is correct, and the result shews that it is very nearly so.\*

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\* It is a curious question, in what length of time the annual demands on a Friendly Society are likely to arrive at a maximum. Supposing it to consist from the first of a fixed number of members, say 60, each being of the age of 26 years on admission, the chances of death in the first year will be (on De Moivre's hypothesis)=1; in the 60th year =2,65, which is a maximum, for in the 61st year they will be only=1,69.—In the 104th year they will be=2,01696, which is again a maximum. And thus the chances will continue to oscillate; continually approaching nearer to 2, which is the true probability of death among 60 persons of twenty-six years of age and upwards, but never precisely fixing there.

In most Friendly Societies a very bad practice prevails, of raising an extra contribution at a member's death, for the purpose of defraying the stipulated allowance to the widow, instead of originally fixing the monthly payment at such a sum as would include the chances of death. The consequence is, that at first, when the members can best afford it, this extra contribution is rare; but afterwards, when they grow old, it occurs more frequently. This operates as a great hardship on the infirm contributors, and accompanied, as it generally is, with the decline of the funds, deters young men from entering into old societies, and thus accelerates their ruin. A society constructed on sound and correct principles can never experience a decline of its funds, while it keeps up it's numbers of members; and even should the whole of the young members at any time secede, the stock in hand, together with the interest accruing thereon, would last out the lives of the remaining contributors, and make good all the original engagements.

Societies granting annuities to the widows and orphans of deceased members, or allowances on the death of a member's wife, ought to be kept entirely distinct from those which are intended to make provision against the sickness or death of the members themselves; otherwise young unmarried men would be deterred from becoming

contributors. A rate of contribution sufficient to make good these two classes of allowances, must be at least double what is necessary to make good the last only ; it cannot be expected that a youth without any immediate prospect of marrying will knowingly submit to pay such an increased demand. Nor indeed is it desirable. So far from putting the married and unmarried man on the same level, we ought to take care that prudence and forethought are not deprived of their natural reward. The necessity of paying an extraordinary contribution for the support of widows and orphans would form a very proper and salutary check against improvident marriages ; it would point out to a young man the precise point at which he might with propriety yield to his wishes, viz. when his earnings would allow him to pay this contribution, over and above the necessary expences of his family.

The Committee of the House of Commons, with very benevolent intentions, have proposed a measure, which, I am persuaded, would be attended with most disastrous consequences to Friendly Societies. This is to secure the funds of those institutions by making good any deficiency, if such should occur, out of the parochial assessments. The strong personal interest which every member of a Friendly Society feels in the permanence of the establishment to which he belongs, and conse-

quently in the detection of any attempt at imposition or fraud, is the very basis and groundwork of the whole system; any regulation, therefore, tending to impair the full force of this principle would threaten to destroy all the good effects derived from such Societies. Their rules evidently display the most anxious care to prevent imposition, by limiting the allowance to a considerably lower sum than the usual rate of earnings in the time of health, by the most rigid prohibition of all profitable employment while in the receipt of pay, and by the immediate expulsion of any member who is detected in feigning sickness. The bare apprehension of a fund in reserve to supply the deficiencies of the box would put an end to these salutary and indispensable fears and precautions, and the allowances would degenerate into parish relief under another name.

It appears to me that Friendly Societies can only be extended with advantage by the exertions and recommendations of private benevolence: and if measures were taken to collect the records of a number of old societies, from which an accurate computation might be made of the rate of allowance in sickness and infirmity that a given contribution can afford, and their funds thus placed on a secure foundation, it is to be hoped, that a conviction of the invaluable benefits which these institutions are capable of conferring on the poor,

would induce persons who take an interest in their welfare in every part of the kingdom, to set on foot such establishments. And it is further to be hoped, that those benevolent individuals will keep in mind that admirable maxim, too often forgotten by modern philanthropists, *pas trop gouverner*; prudently imitating the conduct of the Athenian lawgiver, who left his country after he had promulgated that code which appeared to him most suited to the genius of his countrymen, lest what he had already done should be unsettled by his presence.

# **APPENDIX.**





## APPENDIX.

II.—Comparison of the number of Births in the Ten Agricultural Counties of Bedford, Berks, Bucks, Cambridge, Essex, Hertford, Huntingdon, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Sussex, with the Births of the whole Kingdom, at different Periods.

	Births in Ten Counties.	.	Births in the Kingdom at large.	.	Proportion.
1700 } 1710 } 1720 } 1730 }	107,027	.	627,462	.	170 to 1000
1740 } 1750 } 1760 } 1770 } 1780 }	154,743	.	994,755	.	155 to 1000
1781 to 1785	166,326	.	1,151,558	.	144 to 1000
1786 to 1790	169,557	.	1,245,581	.	136 to 1000
1791 to 1795	175,540	.	1,300,717	.	135 to 1000
1796 to 1800	177,847	.	1,317,043	.	135 to 1000
1801 to 1805	219,495	.	1,391,767	.	157 to 1000
1806 to 1810	231,758	.	1,487,139	.	156 to 1000

## APPENDIX.

### III. Comparison of the number of paupers in each County, with the number of persons members of Friendly Societies.

*From the Abstract of Answers and Returns relative to the  
Expense and maintenance of the Poor, 1813.*

	In each hundred of the population.			In each hundred of the population	
	paupers	members of F. S.		paupers	members of F. S.
Bedford,	12	4	Cornwall,	7	9
Berks, -	21	3	Cumberland,	7	7
Buckingham,	18	4	Derby,	8	14
Cambridge,	13	4	Durham,	10	7
Chester,	12	8	Lancaster,	7	16
Devon, -	13	9	Lincoln,	9	4
Dorset, -	14	3	Middlesex,	8	9
Essex, -	17	6	Monmouth,	10	8
Gloucester,	15	8	Northumberland	9	8
Hereford,	13	3	Nottingham,	7	11
Hertford,	14	9	Rutland,	8	10
Huntingdon,	13	5	Salop,	10	11
Kent, -	14	4	Stafford,	9	14
Leicester,	15	8	York, E. Riding,	7	8
Norfolk,	16	5	Ditto N. Riding,	9	6
Northampton,	16	6	Ditto W. Riding	10	11
Oxford, -	20	5			
Somerset,	12	7	Average	<u>8,4</u>	<u>9,6</u>
Southampton,	15	2			
Suffolk,	17	5			
Surry, -	13	7			
Sussex, -	23	3			
Warwick,	15	8			
Westmoreland,	12	5			
Wilts, -	23	6			
Worcester,	13	9			
Average,	<u>15,3</u>	<u>5,6</u>			

## APPENDIX.

### IV.—Extract from the Accounts of a Friendly Society in the Environs of the Metropolis.\*

	No. Members.	New Admissions.	payments to the sick.				
			<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>		
1807	61	6	53	10	0	}	At the rate of 10s. per week.
1808	61	4	62	0	0		
1809	61	10	27	10	0		
1809			18	0	0	}	At the rate of 12s. per week.
1810	61	12	64	4	0		
1811	61	5	50	8	0		
1812	61	6	35	6	0		
1813	61	7	39	19	0		
1814	61	3	57	16	0		

Instituted in 1774.—Age of admission limited to 35.  
Members free in 12 months.—The proportion of members in  
the receipt of pay is 1-31.

### V.—Extract from the Accounts of a Friendly Society at a Town in Hampshire.

June	No. Members	New Admissions	payments to the sick.				
			<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>		
1810	197	6	91	5	9	}	At the rate of 10s. 6d. per week.
1811	198	4	123	2	0		
1812	198	6	181	19	6		
1813	195	3	159	14	6		
1814	189	2	135	19	2		
1815	186	5	157	12	9		
1816	181	3	92	0	3		
1817	199	5	146	0	0	at the rate of 9s. pr. wk.	

Instituted in 1754.—Age of Admission limited ori-  
ginally to 43, in the year 1761 to 36, in 1784 to 30.—Mem-  
bers free in 12 months.—The proportion in the receipt of  
pay is 1-35th.

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\* In this and the following cases, the place of meeting is  
not specified more particularly, to avoid giving offence or alarm to  
any of the members, if by chance these pages should fall into their  
hands.

## APPENDIX.

### VI. Extract from the Accounts of a Friendly Society, at a town in Suffolk.

Year	No. Mem- bers	Payments to the sick.			
		l.	s.	d.	
1798	43	40	9	0	} At the rate of 9s. per week.
1799	49	31	4	0	
1800	43	22	4	0	
1801	43	20	18	0	
1802	43	36	16	6	
1803	50	54	18	6	
1804	53	32	12	6	
1805	57	24	7	0	
1806	52	19	7	6	
1807	56	35	1	10	
1808	56	34	4	0	} At the rate of 10s. per week.
1809	55	27	15	0	
1810	61	22	11	0	
1811	61	29	3	6	
1812	59	41	7	0	
1813	58	52	2	0	
1814	57	42	11	0	
1815	60	40	19	0	

The proportion of Members in the receipt of pay is computed at 1-35th.

### VII. Extract from the accounts of a Friendly Society, at a town in Somerset.

Year	No. Members	New adm.	payments to the sick			
			l.	s.	d.	
1808	120	3	104	10	0	} At the rate of 10s per week.
1809	116	8	70	0	0	
1810	123	4	56	10	0	
1811	123	4	62	10	0	
1812	124	2	75	10	0	
1813	123	2	127	10	0	
1814	122	0	127	10	0	

Instituted in 1749, age of admission limited to 35, Members free in twelve months. The proportion in the receipt of pay is 1-34th.

## APPENDIX.

### VIII.—Extract from the Accounts of a Friendly Society at a Village in Surrey.

Year. No. Members. New Admissions. payments to the sick.

			<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>	
1791	79	3	22	3	0	} At the rate of 7s. per week.
1792	81	3	27	0	0	
1793	84	7	13	15	0	
1794	91	7	12	4	0	
1795	95	3	23	17	0	
1796	96	7	27	4	0	
1797	102	7	43	0	0	
1798	105	5	69	15	0	
1799	106	3	52	5	0	
1800	104	1	64	2	0	
1801	85	0	61	12	0	

Instituted in 1760.—Members free in 30 months.—Pro-  
portion in the receipt of pay 1-40th.

## APPENDIX.

### IX. Statement of the sums paid annually during sickness or incapacity to eighty persons, Members of Friendly Societies, during forty years.

Year	payments			year	payments			year	payments			year	payments						
	<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>		<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>		<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>		<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>				
1	18	19	0	9	18	11	0	17	21	9	0	25	30	8	0	33	12	2	0
2	17	6	0	10	37	7	0	18	47	13	0	26	16	7	0	34	8	11	0
3	21	10	0	11	38	14	0	19	14	8	0	27	44	10	0	35	15	8	0
4	24	13	0	12	47	7	0	20	40	18	0	28	20	12	0	36	54	0	0
5	29	16	0	13	15	0	0	21	31	18	0	29	23	12	0	37	56	12	0
6	36	3	0	14	26	8	0	22	28	14	0	30	33	12	0	38	32	1	0
7	33	12	0	15	30	10	0	23	23	4	0	31	13	4	0	39	26	12	0
8	34	19	0	16	21	5	0	24	24	6	0	32	4	3	0	40	26	10	0
<hr/>				<hr/>				<hr/>				<hr/>							
	216	18	0		235	2	0		232	10	0		186	8	0		231	16	0
<hr/>				<hr/>				<hr/>				<hr/>							

This table shews that the number requiring relief in sickness, among a given set of persons, is nearly uniform, the cessation of demand from those who yearly die off, being about compensated by the increased unhealthiness of those who survive. The payments to superannuated members are not included.

