red, denying that the proposition, that the demand is materially varied by the amount of the supply, except within narrow limits, altogether disproportioned to the fluctuations in supply, is warranted by experience.

What experience is here referred to, I am unable to discover. It is from our every-day experience, that we are compelled to draw the opposite conclusion.

My object in making these observations is to eradicate an erroneous opinion which has the weight of authority with it; not any wish generally to find fault with the report, which altogether is evidently far the most sensible and able document which has appeared upon the subject.

From the foregoing, it will at least appear, that it is not the demand for food which creates and regulates the supply as with other commodities, but that it is the supply which creates and regulates the demand. In every country the supply has created an average demand equal to itself, and when any temporary variation takes place in consequence of superabundant or deficient crops, consumption is increased or diminished in equal proportion, by a rise or fall in prices.

CHAPTER XII.

Labour.

Corn can only create its own Demand by furnishing Mouths to consume it.

Mr Malthus, in his admirable essay on the principles of population, has shewn, that it always keeps pace with the means of subsistence. When labour is scarce, wages high, and families easily maintained, population increases; and when population is too great, and labour too plentiful, wages fall below what is necessary to support a family, and population decreases.

These principles are perfectly natural; but the genius of Mr Malthus has rendered them obvious. Without this, indeed, the right application of principles can seldom be either seen or safely adopted. Men are animals, and propagate their species in the same manner as other animals. Were all to marry at the age of puberty, each couple would, on the average, it has been calculated, produce not less than eight or ten children. If food and cloathing

were as plentiful, and acquired with the same ease at that age by men, as by other animals, it is probable that we should act like other animals in that respect. The feeling or sentiment of love is, perhaps as strong, if not stronger, at sixteen or seventeen, than at any other period; and if, at that age, persons could provide for themselves and families, plenty of food, shelter, and cloathing, without care or foresight, there can be little doubt but they would marry, and multiply as other animals do, under the same circumstances. At this rate, population would necessarily increase four or five fold, every twenty or thirty years.

Men, however, do not marry at this age; and for this very obvious reason,—they could not provide for themselves and families if they did. Though they are animals, they are endowed with reason, which has rendered this evident. In an advanced state of society, to provide for a family requires in general all the forecast and exertion of a mind and body at full maturity.

In no state of society, however, could men marry so early as at the age mentioned. If the means of human subsistence were ever so plentiful, it is never acquired, as by other animals, without labour. Both labour, and the exercise of knowledge and experience in its application, are necessary to the production of the necessaries of

life; for which, the strength, neither bodily nor mental, at the ages of sixteen or seventeen, is sufficiently matured. As it is, population, under favourable circumstances, will double itself in twenty-five years, as has been proved in America, if not even in much less time.

When population has arrived at that point beyond which it can advance no further,—when the world, or any particular nation, has as many people as it can produce food to support, more children cannot be reared, than are necessary to supply the waste of life among its existing inhabitants. Instead of eight or ten to each couple, which mankind are capable of producing, there cannot be more than two brought to maturity, upon the average of the whole community. This renders a prudent restraint with respect to marriage absolutely necessary.

Mr Malthus has shewn, that when this prudence is departed from, the children which are brought into the world, perish for want of proper nourishment. In many countries, where such restraint is not practised, disease, pestilence, and famine are the periodical consequences; and in all countries, its neglect is attended with the most baneful effects.

Having, on the other hand, shewn the beneficial results of a prudent restraint with respect to marriage, he recommends the practice of it; and condemns our present poor laws, the effects

of which are to create the evils which they are intended to cure.

As the law now stands, if a man cannot provide for his family, the parish must. This removes the fear of starving, the only check to early marriages which exists. The consequences of this are, that more children are brought into the world than can be supported—a great part of the lower classes is reduced to a state of pauperism—and the parishes are at a great annual expence in dealing out a scanty and insufficient support to those wretched beings, who are rendered so, by the miserable and mistaken system of laws, under which the charity they receive is granted.

" Poverty," Dr Smith states, " though it " no doubt discourages, does not always pre- " vent marriage. It seems even to be favour- " able to generation. A half-starved High- " land woman frequently bears more than 20 " children, while a pampered fine lady is often " incapable of bearing any, and is generally " exhausted by two or three. Barrenness, so " frequent among women of fashion, is very " rare among those of inferior station. Lux- " ury in the fair sex, while it inflames perhaps " the passion for enjoyment, seems always to " weaken, and frequently to destroy altogether " the powers of generation.

" But poverty, though it does not prevent

" the generation, is extremely unfavourable to " the rearing of children. The tender plant " is produced, but in so cold a soil, and so se- " vere a climate, that it soon withers and dies. " It is not uncommon, I have been frequently " told, in the highlands of Scotland, for a mo- " ther who has borne 20 children, not to have " two alive. Several officers of great experi- " ence have assured me, that so far from re- " cruiting their regiment, they have never " been able to supply it with drummers and " fifers from the soldiers' children that were " born in it. A great number of finer chil- " dren, however, is seldom seen any where " than about a barrack of soldiers. Very few " of them, it seems, arrive at the age of 13 or " 14. In some places, one half of the chil- " dren born die before they are four years of " age; in many places before they are seven; " and in almost all places before they are 9 or " 10. This great mortality, however, will " everywhere be found chiefly among the " children of the common people, who cannot " afford to tend them with the same care as " those of better station. Though their mar- " riages are generally more fruitful than those " of people of fashion, a smaller proportion " of their children arrive at maturity. In " foundling hospitals, and among the children " brought up by parish charities, the mortality

" is still greater than among those of the com-
" mon people.

" Every species of animals naturally multi-
" plies in proportion to the means of their sub-
" sistence, and no species can ever multiply
" beyond it. But in civilized society, it is
" only among the inferior ranks of people that
" the scantiness of subsistence can set limits to
" the further multiplication of the human spe-
" cies; and it can do so in no other way than
" by destroying a great part of the children
" which their fruitful marriages produce."

When Dr Smith made this last remark, Mr Malthus had not written. By thus proving that improvident marriages are, in fact, nothing less than premeditated infanticide, such consequences ought to induce mankind to think, that prudence with respect to marriage, is as necessary as with any other act of their lives; and that it is even in the highest degree criminal to bring children into the world, for any personal gratification whatever, with the chance of starving them to death. The poor laws, as they now stand, in as much as they promote these dreadful effects, are little better than legal enactments for the encouragement of misery and child murder.

In recommending restraint with respect to marriage, Mr Malthus only recommends that to be done a little longer from prudence, which

almost every one does more or less from necessity. It is not considered any hardship to exercise restraint in this respect, when a departure from it would not only be considered want of prudence but want of sanity. This restraint is exercised for 6 or 7 years, or longer, perhaps, upon the average, by every man, without its being thought any thing more than natural. If mankind would voluntarily add 6 or 7 years more to it, they would probably remove a great part of that misery produced by abject poverty at present in the world. This effect the laws ought surely rather to encourage than destroy.

It is at least obvious, that there is a sufficient tendency in mankind, to increase up to the means of subsistence. This means, with the mass of mankind, consists of the wages of labour. " The liberal reward of labour" says Smith, " by enabling them to provide better
" for their children, and consequently to bring
" up a greater number, naturally tends to
" widen and extend those limits," that is, the limits to which population is confined.

Now, it is the scarcity of labour which increases the wages of it, the same as the price of other commodities are enhanced by a diminished supply, or improved demand for them. It is, likewise, the over supply by which its wages are reduced. When, therefore, labour is in demand, an additional supply is acquired,

in the only way in which an additional supply of men, or any other animals, can be obtained—by more being produced and reared, from the encouragement and support which the increased demand for labour gives. When, on the other hand, there is more labour than demand for it, the supply is diminished in the only way in which the supply of men can be diminished, by fewer being born, or brought to maturity; as well as from the ranks of mankind being thinned by the diseases incident to poverty. The supply of labour is therefore governed by the demand, upon the same principles as every other commodity except food; the supply of which, as it is our object to shew, creates the demand. In the present case, they cannot both be the cause, or both the effect.

"It deserves to be remarked," says Dr Smith, "that it necessarily does this," that is, the liberal reward of labour, enables the labourers to provide better for their children, and bring up a greater number, "as nearly as possible in "the proportion which the demand for labour "requires. If this demand is continually in-"creasing, the reward of labour must necessari-"ly encourage in such a manner the marriages "and multiplication of labourers, as may en-"able them to supply that continually increas-"ing demand by a continually increasing po-"pulation. If the reward should at any time

"be less than what was requisite for this pur-"pose, the deficiency of hands would soon "raise it; and if it should at any time be "more, their excessive multiplication would "soon restore it to this necessary rate. The "market would be so much understocked with "labour in the one case, and so much over-"stocked in the other, as would soon force "back its price to that proper rate which the "circumstances of society required. It is in "this manner that the demand for men, like "that of any other commodity, necessarily re-"gulates the production of men; quickens it "when it goes on too slowly, and stops it when "it advances too fast."

This of course does not refer to the money price, but to the wages of labour in the necessaries of life. "The power of the labourer," says Mr Ricardo, "to support himself, and "the family which may be necessary to keep "up the number of labourers, does not depend "upon the quantity of money which he may "receive for wages; but on the quantity of "food, necessaries, and conveniences, become "essential to him from habit, which that mo-"ney will purchase."

Consequently, a reduction in the price of provisions, or of the necessaries and conveniences essential to him from habit, is as much

an increase of the wages of a labourer as the increase of his wages in money.

Any increase in the money price of labour, which is accompanied with a corresponding increase in the monied price of provisions, makes no alteration in the real recompence of labour; nor does any reduction in the price of provisions, which is accompanied by an equal reduction in the wages of labour, in the least improve the situation of the working classes. It is only when the money price of labour rises, and the necessaries of life remain the same, or do not increase in the same proportion; or when the necessaries of life are reduced, and wages either remain as before, or do not fall in a corresponding degree, that the wages of the labourer are improved. But they are just as much improved by the necessaries of life falling, and wages remaining the same, as by wages rising, while the necessaries of life continue unaltered. These effects, however, are produced by very different causes; the one is the result of a diminished supply of labour; the other of an increased demand for it.

Mr Malthus has shewn, that when the ranks of mankind are thinned by war, pestilence, or famine, it is followed by a rise in the price of labour. This must necessarily be the case. These causes, though they may reduce the population, do not decrease the quantity of money

in a country; and the money price of commodities depends upon the quantity of it in circulation. Neither do they, except in extreme cases, reduce the demand for provisions. They only increase the consumption of the existing inhabitants. The money in circulation, therefore, being the same, a greater quantity of it is applied to the purchase of a smaller quantity of labour; and this enables the labourer to purchase a larger supply of the necessaries of life. Thus the incomes of the proprietors of the soil continue to be the same in money, but become less in the produce of labour. The first and immediate effect of a diminished supply of labour, therefore, is to increase the price of it.

On the other hand, an increased demand for labour is produced by an increased supply of the means of subsistence. If the necessaries of life, produced in any country, were to be doubled,—if the soil was rendered twice as productive as before, all experience points out to us, that in time the population would double itself also. Now this is always done through the medium of a demand for labour, and it follows that such an increase of the produce of the soil would produce this demand.

It would produce it, however, not by an increased demand for the quantity of labour. The income from the soil would command no

more labour than before. But it would increase the recompence of labour in the necessaries of life, and thereby increase the supply; and as the supply increased, the power of commanding it by means of the income from the soil, would increase in proportion. Though the money in the country would not command more labour than before, the price of provisions would be reduced one half at least, if not more, by which the real recompence of labour would be increased in nearly, though not quite the same proportion.

Part of the necessaries required by every person, consists in the produce of labour, capital, &c. not immediately dependant upon the price of provisions. The wages of labour, therefore, must not only be equal to the purchase of provisions, but of other articles, formed of materials which every individual consumes. That part of those commodities, the value of which was determined by labour and profits, would continue at the same price as before. The recompence of labour would only be increased in proportion to the reduced price of provisions and commodities the produce of the soil.

As the supply of labour increased, the monied price of it would fall. By this means the monied income from the soil would command a larger quantity. In all cases, as we have shewn, the whole income of society is spent; and it

will command labour, not in proportion to the supply of provisions, but in proportion to the price of labour; and this price is regulated by the supply. If the produce of the soil was doubled, and the quantity of labour in the first instance was the same, as it commanded all there was before, it could not command more by this increase; but there would be an increased natural demand for labour, the real wages of it would rise, and this would immediately have the effect of promoting an increase of supply.

Although in the event of a war, pestilence, or famine thinning the ranks of mankind, the first effect would be an increase in the monied price of labour, this effect would be only temporary. The causes which reduce the supply, and increase the demand for labour, in any particular nation, do not operate in the same manner with the other nations that trade with it. It is of no consequence to them what a change in the price of labour arises from. If the wages of labour are increased, the price of commodities will rise with it, and their demand will be diminished in proportion. The balance of trade will be determined against the country, and money will be abstracted from it, until the price of commodities fall so as to restore the balance of trade to its equilibrium. This reduced demand for commodities would reduce,

in the first instance, the demand for labour; and this again would reduce the demand for provisions. The price of labour and of provisions would consequently both fall, but they would fall parallel with each other, and the real wages of labour, increased by the diminished supply of it, would remain the same. The same quantity of labour would still command the increased quantity of the necessaries of life, until an increase of population took place. As this, however, occurred, the money price of labour would fall, which would reduce the price of commodities, increase the foreign demand for them, produce an influx of money into the country, and gradually restore, with the increased supply of labour, the price of both in money to what they were previous to the loss of population which had been sustained.

An increased demand for labour by an increased supply of provisions would, on the other hand, have no immediate effect upon foreign trade. The price of labour, and the price of commodities, the produce of labour, would remain as before. The foreign demand for commodities, by which the national prices and money in circulation are determined, would not be altered. As, however, the supply of labour increased, and the wages of it and the price of commodities fell, the balance of trade would be determined in favour of the country, and an

increased supply of money would be brought into it. This would continue until population had increased to its natural standard, when in the case supposed the monied income from the soil would be doubled, and its real income in the necessaries and luxuries of life would be doubled also.

Thus corn creates its own demand. Population is necessary to wealth. No country can be rich until it is populous. When population is thin, as in the back settlements of America, the land is in reality not worth any thing. The present price which it bears is a speculative one, in anticipation of an increase of inhabitants. On the contrary, countries which are thickly populated are always rich.

The advantage of increased fertility, however, is always immediately felt. Population keeps so close upon the means of subsistence, that an increased demand for labour is very soon supplied.

But individuals would, always immediately gain by any improvement which they might make in the fertility of their estates, even were this not the case; unless all improved alike, which never happens. Suppose two persons are each in the habit of bringing a bushel of wheat to market, and selling it for one pound per bushel. If one of them is enabled to double his quantity, and the three bushels

sell only for the same money that the two did before, on the aggregate they are not richer, but he who has the two bushels gains 6s. 8d. out of his neighbour's income. The wheat sells for 13s. 4d. per bushel, and the one is 6s. 8d. richer, and the other 6s. 8d. poorer by the increased supply. The condition of the consumer is, however, improved fifty per cent. in the quantity of provisions which his money will command.

The present agricultural distress has been attributed to over production, while, at the same time, in part of its progress at least, it has been accompanied by a diminished demand for labour. This circumstance alone proves it could not have proceeded from that cause. Although the increased foreign demand for commodities has of late partly relieved the labouring classes from the depression under which they in the first instance suffered, yet still a reduced demand for labour is the subject of complaint. A general distress, in fact, such as the present, from over production, could never happen. In the case just supposed, where one party loses, another gains. But now there is a universal loss. It began, not by increasing the comforts of the poor, but by starving them in the midst of plenty, and ends in the ruin of the agriculturists, with a consumption greater than the annual supply. That such are not the effects of over production, may be very safely assumed.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Soil is the original Source of Wealth.

If we admit the conclusions at which we attempted to arrive in the last two chapters, they will go far to establish the proposition which forms the title of this.

Experience of itself, however, establishes it. Where was there ever a rich country with a barren soil? Gold is valuable, but only in fertile districts, where it will exchange for labour, or commodities more useful. It is worth nothing in a desolate country.

Labour and art are necessary to wealth; and gold, the produce of labour and art, in general forms part of it. But it possesses no inherent value. Its value is entirely an exchangeable one; an alteration of fashion or opinion might reduce it below that of iron.

The produce of the soil, on the contrary, possesses an inherent value—a value derived from itself. It produces men, and men produce gold. It creates its own demand, which gold does not. Gold, no doubt, possesses intrinsic value. As a commodity, it is actually