

energy would be exercised in exciting intestine commotions. We, on the contrary, tell you, that these very men, superabounding in ardour and energy, become the most hardy adventurers in all colonial enterprise and, instead of encouraging them to inbrue their hands in the blood of their fellow-creatures, we bid them go forth to subdue the forest and the wilderness, and to render the gifts of nature tributary to the use of man. I would invite you, also, to contrast our doctrines with the anti-population mania which, for several years, usurped possession of the public mind in this country;—that philosophical dogma which has sought to annul the mandate of Heaven, — “Be fruitful and multiply,”—given to the early fathers of mankind. We do not ask whether, as a matter of abstract theory, the position laid down by Mr. Malthus and his followers, be or be not true, — “that, whilst population increases in a geometrical ratio, the means of subsistence increase only in an arithmetical ratio,”—but we say, that whilst the unpeopled territories which acknowledge the sway of Great Britain are capable of sustaining twenty-fold the population of the United Kingdom, it is unnecessary to forbid marriage to the young, and, by a cold and often profligate prudence, to defeat the benign intentions of Nature.

Passing from these general observations, I now proceed to the proof of the first position which I have undertaken to establish; namely, — “That, in Great Britain and Ireland, the working classes are frequently exposed to extreme privation, from inability to procure employment.” Now, with respect to England, I am disposed rather to leave it to English Members to state their views with respect to the effect produced upon the condition of the working classes by an excessive supply of labour, as compared with the demand for it, than to dwell upon this part of the case myself, with a view to prove the existence of a redundancy of population in England. My own impression is, that it cannot, with propriety, be said that there is, in England, any very considerable or universal excess of population surpassing the means of employment; but that such excess should rather be characterised as partial, local, and temporary. As an instance of undeniable surplus of labour, in particular employments, I need only refer to the case of the hand-loom weavers, whose destitution has so often attracted the notice and the sympathy of this House. As an example of low wages, occasioned by a redundancy of the labouring population

in particular districts, I would remind the House of the statements which have been repeatedly made, with respect to the remuneration of labour in the counties of Wiltshire and Devonshire, the Members for which counties have been compelled to acknowledge that, in many instances the labourer does not receive more than six or seven shillings a-week as his hire. Of the sufferings occasioned to the working classes in England by occasional want of employment during particular seasons, the manufacturing districts of England afford too frequent illustration; and it is only necessary to mention the towns of Nottingham, Manchester, Bolton, and others, to recal to memory the complaints which we have heard, within a very recent period, respecting the privations of the manufacturing population of England. The simplest mode, however, of viewing this question, in regard to England, is, perhaps, to look at the amount expended on the relief of the poor; and when we find that, even after all the reductions which have been effected under the operation of the Poor Law Amendment Act, the poor rate amounted, in 1838, in England and Wales, to not less than 4,406,907*l.*, we are compelled to conclude that the privations of the working classes must have been, in the aggregate, of fearful extent; since it has been found necessary to raise, by compulsory taxation, so large a sum for their relief. I may here also observe, that, as a considerable proportion of this amount was expended in the relief of the able-bodied poor, whatever portion was so employed may be regarded as a fund which might have been applied to assist the persons so relieved to emigrate, without imposing upon the community any burden beyond that which it has actually sustained in maintaining them in a state of idleness at home. As, however, I wish to avoid the appearance of exaggerating the distresses of the poor, in order to make out a case in favour of emigration, I am contented to rest my argument, with regard to England, upon the simple proposition, — that the labouring classes will not voluntarily abandon their homes, unless, by doing so, they can materially improve their condition; and if, by emigration, they can escape the penury which creates the desire to leave their country, and can obtain comfort and independence in the colonies, we are bound, by every consideration of humanity, to enable them so to improve their condition.

With respect to Scotland, and particularly with respect to the Highland districts, there is, unhappily, no ground for, in any degree, qualifying the statement that the

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