

land, or of fresh improvements tending to cheapen commodities, can never be obtained but by increasing the labor in more than the same proportion. The population must work harder or eat less, or obtain the usual food by sacrificing a part of their customary comforts. From this results the important corollary, that the necessity of restraining population is not, as many persons believe, peculiar to a condition of great inequality of property. A greater number of people cannot, in any given state of civilization, be collectively so well provided for, as a smaller. The niggardliness of nature, not the injustice of society, is the cause of the penalty attached to over-population. An unjust distribution of wealth does not even aggravate the evil, but, at most, causes it to be somewhat earlier felt. It is in vain to say that all mouths which the increase of mankind calls into existence bring with them hands. The new mouths require as much food as the old ones, and the hands do not produce as much.

The logical inference from this statement of the law of increase of population and food is, that, supposing a country to be completely isolated from the rest of the world, the time must come when no one would be able to procure more than the mere necessities of life; with the further increase of population, less than the requisite amount, even of these, would fall to the lot of each individual; and further increase would be arrested by death. It is not by any means contended that the actual limit has yet been reached in any European country; but long before that limit is even approached the pressure of the law must be severely felt, and its consequences to all the lower strata of society must be practically the same as they would be to society as a whole, provided wealth were equally distributed and the absolute limit were reached. In other words: in densely populated countries pauperism and mortality are the inevitable results of its operation on the working classes. The principal reason why the limit has not as yet been reached even in Europe is that improvements in agriculture, and still more in manufactures, have been so rapidly multiplied within the last half century, that the increased facilities for production have more than kept pace with the increase of population. But that this remedy or countervailing principle must be regarded as adventitious and transient, in Britain, at least, is manifest from the fact that her manufactures and commerce are so intimately connected with her mineral wealth, which is so far from being even practically inexhaustible that the operation of the law of increase of production with respect to coal and iron is even now