

[For private circulation.]

A Contribution towards an Investigation of the changes which have taken place in the condition of the people of the United Kingdom during the eight years extending from the harvest of 1839 to the harvest of 1847 ;

AND

An Attempt to develop the connexion (if any) between the changes observed and the variations occurring during the same period in the prices of the most necessary articles of food.

[READ BEFORE THE STATISTICAL SOCIETY, 21st Feb. 1848.]

By J. T. DANSON,

OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY M. & W. COLLIS, 52, BOW LANE, CHEAPSIDE.

1848.

A CONTRIBUTION, &c.

In limiting the scope of the proposed enquiry to the period referred to in the title, I have been governed by two considerations:—one arising from a view of the purpose with which, chiefly, I entered upon the subject; and the other from a careful estimate of the means by which I could best hope to accomplish it.

1. The commercial distress which has so strongly marked the year just closed, would appear to be, in the main, only a recurrence of a state of things which has become in some degree periodical. Effects occurring repeatedly, at intervals having some appearance of regularity, seem to indicate a corresponding regularity in the recurrence of their causes;—and a desire, if not to uncover these causes, yet to begin the work, in the hope of being followed by those better fitted to accomplish it, led me to the labour, the results of which I have now the honour of presenting to the Society.

In looking back from 1847 for a period in some degree similar, the year 1839 is the first in which we find the affairs of the country in a condition so far analogous as to justify the expectation that we may here discover in operation influences of a similar character;—and the eight or ten years preceding 1839 do not appear to afford any better, if so good a starting point for the investigation in view.

2. Leaving the purpose of the enquiry, and looking to its means, I find, also, that the sources of information upon which, principally, I have to rely, do not in general extend much, if any, farther back than the year 1839. This remark applies particularly to the tests of the condition of the people afforded by the Reports of the Poor-Law Commissioners,—by the Returns of the funds deposited in Savings' Banks,—and by the Reports of the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths, and Marriages:—upon which, as will appear in the sequel, we have mainly to rely, in the first and most important branch of the enquiry.

As to the method of the investigation.—Regarding this Paper rather as a basis for future and more ample enquiry, than as likely itself to effect the desired end, and trusting by it to pave the way for abler and better aided efforts, I have endeavoured to preserve, in the methods I have used, as much simplicity and distinctness as possible, so as to render the results of what I have done easy of adoption into the enquiries of others, wherever they may be deemed worthy of it.

The part of the enquiry to be first pursued is, obviously, that which shall develop the actual condition of the people, and the changes which took place in it, during the period in question;—and here the

国立公衆衛生院附属図書館

受入先

受入日

登録番号

所在

Library, National Institute of Public Health

materials afforded by the Annual Reports of the Poor-Law Commissioners seem to be first entitled to attention, as well from the nature of the information they afford, as from the extent and the comparative completeness of the arrangements under which it has been collected and recorded.

These Reports furnish the means of determining two lines of variation (so to speak), extending through the period in view,—one describing the varying amount of the expenditure upon the relief and maintenance of the poor, and the other the varying numbers of the persons receiving relief as paupers. The former is much affected by concurrent variations in the prices of food, and of the labour and materials required for building and repairs, and for furniture, clothing, &c., in connexion with the administration of the relief. The latter is probably also disturbed, in some degree (as an indication of the actual amount of pauperism for the time being), by variations, as well in the principles upon which the relief was administered during these eight years, as in the degree of order and economy prevailing in the details of the administration itself. It is clear, however, that of the two lines of fluctuation, the latter—that which marks the variations in the number of persons relieved—is the best adapted for the present purpose.

The Commissioners have, in each of their annual reports, stated the number of persons relieved in the Lady-day quarter* of the preceding year, and the proportion it bore to the total population of England and Wales in 1841,—as evidence, when compared with the like proportion of the year before, of the increase or decrease of pauperism. This method is obviously liable to the objection that, as the population is increasing, the proportion of pauperism to population, so deduced, cannot be true for any year after 1841, and must in every subsequent year be removed farther from the truth. But the average increment of the population is ascertainable by methods not liable to any material error. If, therefore, it be assumed that the number of persons relieved in each year is accurately stated, it is clear that whatever value may belong to a comparison of this description, as evidence of the increasing or diminishing prosperity of the people, is within easy reach.

It is generally known that, according to the censuses of 1821, 1831, and 1841, the population of England and Wales increased, in the first decennial period about 16, and in the second about 14·5 per cent. For such a purpose as the present, it might suffice to assume a continuation from 1841 to 1847 of the rate of increase found to prevail between 1831 and 1841. Various considerations, however, favour the adoption of the mean annual rate of the whole twenty years from 1821 to 1841 as the more likely to accord with the fact. This gives 1·428 per cent. as the mean rate of increase per annum. The following table presents the results of the calculation for each year, and also shews the proportion borne by the number of paupers relieved in the winter quarter, ending at Lady-day in each year, to the (computed) population of the same year:—

* That being the quarter in which, invariably, the number of paupers is greatest in each year.

YEARS.	Population of England and Wales	Number of Persons who received Relief in the Quarter ending Lady-Day.	Number of Paupers to every 10,000 of the Population.	Increase or decrease per 10,000 in each year as compared with the average of the whole eight years.
1839	15,461,300	1,134,165	735	—101 = 12·08
1840	15,684,000	1,199,529	763	— 73 = 8·73
1841	15,906,700	1,300,928	817	— 19 = 2·27
1842	16,132,600	1,427,187	884	+ 48 = 5·74
1843	16,361,600	1,546,390	945	+109 = 13·03
1844	16,593,900	1,477,561	890	+ 54 = 6·45
1845	16,829,600	1,470,970	874	+ 38 = 4·54
1846	17,068,500	1,330,557	779	— 57 = 6·81
			Av. 836	

It will be observed that there was a progressive increase in the proportion of pauperism to population from the Lady-day quarter of 1839 to the corresponding quarter of 1843:—the whole increase, during the four years, being from 735 to 945 paupers for each 10,000 of population. But the period between Lady-day, 1843, and Lady-day 1844 appears to have brought a change for the better; which not only stayed this progressive increase of the proportion of pauperism to population, but substituted for it a progressive decrease. There is exhibited, indeed, at the latter date (Lady-day, 1844), not only a diminution of this proportion, but an absolute and a considerable reduction in the numbers relieved;—which reduction appears to have continued, thenceforward, year by year, to the end of the period in view.

The above table affords no indication of the particular time, between Lady-day, 1843 and Lady-day, 1844, at which the change for the better, so strongly marked, began. The extent of the change, had we no further evidence, might suffice to support the inference that it began early in the year ending Lady-day, 1844; but the Tenth Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, made in May, 1844, affords evidence of a more precise description.

The gradual and constant increase of the Poor-Law expenditure, with the increase of the numbers relieved, had been watched by the Commissioners for some years with anxiety; and the first appearance of a decline excited a corresponding degree of attention. In one of the earlier pages of the Report just referred to (the first issued after the change had been observed), they introduce the subject thus:—"We rejoice to be able to state that the progress of pauperism, which had been constant from the year 1837 to Lady-day, 1843, was arrested in the course of last year, and that the expenditure for the half-year ending Michaelmas, 1843, exhibits a diminution of £139,926 as compared with the corresponding half-year for 1842." It will be observed that the circumstance here adduced by the Commissioners, apparently as evidence of "the progress of pauperism" having been arrested, in fact only proves that the relief of the pauperism of the Kingdom, whatever its extent, had become less expensive; which, though it answered the purpose of the Commissioners, obviously does not answer that of the present enquiry. But in the Appendix to the same Report is a Table in which is stated the number of persons relieved in England and Wales, and also in each county, in the quarters ending respectively

at Michaelmas, 1842 and Michaelmas, 1843. We are thus enabled to mark the proportion of pauperism to population, as before, at a point mid-way between the Lady-day quarters of 1842 and 1843, and again mid-way between those of 1843 and 1844. The following statement for this purpose may be considered supplementary to that already given:—

YEARS.	Quarter ending.	Number of Persons who received Relief as Paupers.	Population of England & Wales, (computed)	Number of Paupers to every 10,000 of the population.	Decrease per 10,000 between MICHAELMAS 1842 and MICHAELMAS 1843.
1842	Michaelmas .	1,372,642	16,247,100	844	
1843	Lady-Day ...	1,546,390	16,361,600	945	
"	Michaelmas .	1,294,574	16,477,250	785	-59
1844	Lady-Day ...	1,477,561	16,593,900	890	

The number used for the population at Michaelmas of each year is the mean of the numbers used for the Lady-day quarters preceding and following.

Thus, so far as the Poor-law Returns are to be relied upon, there would appear to have been a gradual declension of the condition of the people of England and Wales, generally, from the beginning of the year 1839 down to a period subsequent to Lady-day and anterior to Michaelmas, 1843; and that from this period forward to the Lady day quarter of 1846 there was a nearly corresponding elevation of their condition.

If, however, we examine the returns separately for each county, it soon becomes apparent that the gradual increase of pauperism down to 1843, and its subsequent decrease, as exhibited for the aggregate of England and Wales, is the result of an average, which covers great variations in different parts of the kingdom; and, in particular, that the movement, during the whole period, differed widely in the agricultural and the manufacturing districts.

In order to make the nature and extent of these variations in some degree obvious, and susceptible of more easy examination, it may be sufficient to select two groups of the districts for which separate returns are made, such as may represent with tolerable accuracy the agricultural and manufacturing portions of the kingdom; and after repeating for each the calculations (as to the annual increment of the population) previously made for the entire kingdom, to throw the results for each group of districts into the form already adopted.

For this purpose I select the county of Lancaster and the West Riding of the County of York as containing the principal manufacturing districts, and not ill representing the remainder. These contained in 1841 an aggregate population of 2,821,988, and the mean annual increase in each, during the twenty years from 1821 to 1841 was—

In Lancaster - - - 2.324 per cent.
York, W. R. - - - 1.845 "

To represent the agricultural districts I take the nine counties of Northumberland, Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridge, Bucks., Herts., Berks., Wilts., and Devon. These contain, I believe, the greater part of the purely agricultural population of the kingdom; and they also include a portion of every agricultural locality of importance. Their aggregate population in 1841 was 2,409,717; and the mean annual

increase of the population in each county during the twenty years from 1821 to 1841 was as follows:—

	PER CENT.		PER CENT.
Northumberland	1.154	Herts	.967
Norfolk	.908	Berks	.974
Suffolk	.766	Wilts	.789
Cambridge	1.509	Devon	.981
Bucks	.760		

The following Table exhibits the Population (computed on these bases) of each District, or group of Districts, for each year from 1840 to 1847 inclusive.

	1840	1841	1842	1843	1844	1845	1846	1847
Lancaster	1,629,259	1,667,064	1,705,739	1,745,312	1,785,805	1,827,245	1,869,654	1,913,119
York, W. R. ...	1,184,053	1,154,924	1,176,174	1,197,815	1,219,844	1,242,289	1,265,147	1,288,424
	2,763,312	2,821,988	2,881,913	2,943,127	3,005,649	3,069,534	3,134,801	3,201,543
Northumberland .	247,416	250,268	253,149	256,060	259,005	261,983	264,995	268,042
Norfolk	408,941	412,621	416,334	420,081	423,861	427,675	431,524	435,408
Suffolk	312,749	315,129	317,523	319,936	322,363	324,813	327,281	329,771
Cambridge	162,073	164,509	166,976	169,480	172,016	174,596	177,209	179,868
Bucks	154,819	155,989	157,169	158,359	159,559	160,769	161,989	163,219
Herts	155,742	157,237	158,746	160,269	161,807	163,360	164,928	166,511
Berks	158,676	160,226	161,780	163,349	164,933	166,532	168,146	169,775
Wilts	257,996	260,007	262,024	264,067	266,126	268,191	270,262	272,349
Devon	528,551	533,731	538,961	544,242	549,575	554,961	560,401	565,896
	2,386,963	2,409,717	2,432,662	2,455,843	2,479,245	2,502,880	2,526,735	2,550,839
England & Wales	15,684,000	15,906,700	16,132,600	16,361,600	16,593,900	16,829,600	17,068,500	17,310,900

The computation of the proportion of pauperism to population in these districts, for a comparative purpose, is in some degree impeded by the circumstance that the number of Unions from which returns were received was not the same throughout. In 1840 the number was 577, and in 1846 it had been increased to 588; and the successive changes in this respect affect both groups of districts in each of the first four years observed. The correction rendered necessary by this variation involves two distinct computations for each year; and also makes it more convenient to compare each year with the one preceding than (as before) each with the average of all. Consequently the form of the table is less simple than that adopted for the entire kingdom.

MANUFACTURING DISTRICTS.									
Years	Aggregate Population of the selected Districts.	Years Compared.	Number of Unions in England and Wales, from which returns were received in both the years compared.	Number of Paupers relieved in the selected districts in the Quarter ending Lady-day.	Number of Paupers to every 10,000 of the population.	Years Compared.	Increase per 10,000 in each year as compared with the year preceding.	Decrease per 10,000 in each year as compared with the year preceding.	
1840*	2,763,312	1840 } 1841 }	577 {	102,124 110,827	372 392	1840 } 1841 }	20 (5.37 p.ct.)	—	
1841	2,821,988	1841 } 1842 }	581 {	121,294 160,043	429 555	1841 } 1842 }	126 (29.37 p.ct.)	—	
1842	2,881,913	1842 } 1843 }	584 {	176,037 209,615	610 712	1842 } 1843 }	102 (16.72 p.ct.)	—	
1843	2,943,127	1843 } 1844 }	585 {	214,425 154,616	728 511	1843 } 1844 }	—	217 (29.80 p.ct.)	
1844	3,005,649	1844 } 1845 }	585 {	154,616 133,020	511 433	1844 } 1845 }	—	78 (15.26 p.ct.)	
1845	3,069,534	1845 } 1846 }	588 {	133,020 121,876	433 380	1845 } 1846 }	—	53 (12.24 p.ct.)	

* It was not until 1840, apparently, that any return was published of the numbers relieved in particular Counties.

It is apparent from these tables that the change for the better, in the proportion of pauperism to population, observed in England and Wales generally, between the Lady-day quarters of 1843 and 1844, was, in fact, a compound result of two descriptions of change, one for the better and the other for the worse, proceeding simultaneously in different parts of the kingdom.

AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS.									
Years	Aggregate Population of the selected Districts.	Years Compared.	Number of Unions in England and Wales, from which returns were received in both the years compared.	Number of Paupers relieved in the selected districts, in the Quarter ending Lady Day	Number of Paupers to every 10,000 of the population.	Years Compared.	Increase per 10,000 in each year, as compared with the year preceding.	Decrease per 10,000 in each year, as compared with the year preceding.	
1840	2,386,863	1840 } 1841 }	577 {	207,967 219,788	870 912	1840 } 1841 }	42 (4.80 p.ct.)	—	
1841	2,409,717	1841 } 1842 }	581 {	226,849 240,938	941 993	1841 } 1842 }	52 (5.52 p.ct.)	—	
1842	2,432,662	1842 } 1843 }	584 {	242,053 254,666	995 1,037	1842 } 1843 }	42 (4.22 p.ct.)	—	
1843	2,455,843	1843 } 1844 }	585 {	254,666 262,808	1,037 1,060	1843 } 1844 }	23 (2.21 p.ct.)	—	
1844	2,479,245	1844 } 1845 }	585 {	262,808 270,207	1,060 1,079	1844 } 1845 }	19 (1.79 p.ct.)	—	
1845	2,502,880	1845 } 1846 }	588 {	270,207 250,243	1,079 981	1845 } 1846 }	—	98 (9.08 p.ct.)	

Referring again to the special tabular statement appended to the Tenth Annual Poor-Law Report, I find the number of paupers relieved in the two quarters ending respectively at Michaelmas, 1842, and Michaelmas, 1843, in each of the counties comprised in the selected districts, to have been as follows:—

COUNTIES.	Number of Persons relieved in the Quarter, ending MICHAELMAS, 1842, in 584 Unions.	Number of Persons relieved in the Quarter, ending MICHAELMAS 1843, in 584 Unions.	Increase or Decrease per Cent.
Lancaster	132,082	93,378	— 29
York, W. R.	78,902	66,260	— 16
Totals for the Manufacturing Group	201,984	159,638	
Northumberland	20,397	22,198	+ 9
Norfolk	29,846	30,825	+ 3
Suffolk	29,849	31,556	+ 6
Cambridge	14,548	13,946	— 4
Bucks	14,400	15,096	+ 4
Herts	14,192	14,239	— (trifling)
Berks	15,076	15,900	+ 6
Wilts	29,382	30,041	+ 2
Devon	40,911	37,976	— 7
	208,601	211,777	

The following supplementary tables for each group of districts, display more precisely the extent and character of the movement in each, as shown at the close of the Michaelmas Quarter of 1843. The number used to express the population at the Michaelmas Quarter is, as before, the mean of those used for the Lady-Day Quarters preceding and following.

MANUFACTURING DISTRICTS.						
YEARS.	Quarter ending.	Number of Unions.	Number of persons who received relief as Paupers.	Aggregate population of the selected districts, (computed).	Number of Paupers to every 10,000 of the population.	Decrease per 10,000 between MICHAELMAS 1842 and MICHAELMAS 1843.
1842	Michaelmas.	584	201,984	2,912,520	693	
1843	Lady Day...	585	214,425	2,943,127	728	
"	Michaelmas.	584	159,638	2,974,388	536	— 157
1844	Lady Day...	585	154,616	3,005,649	511	(22·65 p. ct.)

AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS.						
YEARS.	Quarter ending.	Number of Unions.	Number of persons who received relief as Paupers.	Aggregate population of the selected districts, (computed.)	Number of Paupers to every 10,000 of the population.	Increase per 10,000 between MICHAELMAS 1842 and MICHAELMAS 1843.
1842	Michaelmas.	584	208,601	2,444,252	852	
1843	Lady Day...	585	254,666	2,455,843	1,037	
"	Michaelmas.	584	211,777	2,467,544	858	+ 6
1844	Lady Day...	585	262,808	2,479,245	1,060	(·70pr.cent.)

SUMMARY.						
	COMPARATIVE VARIATIONS IN NUMBER OF PAUPERS PER 10,000 OF THE POPULATION.					
	In England & Wales		In the selected Manufacturing Districts		In the selected Agricultural Districts	
	Increase.	Decrease	Increase.	Decrease	Increase.	Decrease
<i>Between the Lady Day Quarters of</i>						
1840 and 1841 . . .	54	—	20	—	42	—
1841 and 1842 . . .	67	—	126	—	52	—
1842 and 1843 . . .	61	—	102	—	42	—
<i>Between the Michaelmas Quarters of</i>						
1842 and 1843 . . .	—	59	—	157	6	—
<i>Between the Lady Day Quarters of</i>						
1843 and 1844 . . .	—	55	—	217	23	—
1844 and 1845 . . .	—	16	—	78	19	—
1845 and 1846 . . .	—	95	—	53	—	98

* The appendices to the thirteenth annual Report of the Poor-Law Commissioners, with the detailed returns for 1846, not being yet (January 1847) published, these tables cannot be carried beyond Lady-Day 1845.

The most remarkable feature of these tables is that which exhibits the great and rapid changes of the proportion of pauperism to population in the manufacturing districts. Excepting only the last year, they appear to have constituted nearly the whole of the variations observable in a less degree when our view is extended to the whole Kingdom. It is also worthy of remark that though the proportion of pauperism to population was on the increase in the agricultural districts down to the Lady-Day Quarter of 1845, such changes as occurred in its *rate* of increase agreed generally with the variations shown in the manufacturing districts. The concurrent decrease of the proportion of pauperism to population in both groups of districts, between Lady-Day, 1845, and Lady-Day, 1846, and the decided preponderance of the rate of decrease in the agricultural districts, seems to point to the operation of some new cause, bearing particularly upon the population of the agricultural districts. In any extension of the view here opened it will obviously be necessary to take into account the effect of the increased demand for field labour arising from the construction of new railways; and in this direction will probably be found the true explanation of the rapid decrease of pauperism in the agricultural districts after Lady-Day 1845.

Before quitting this part of the subject it may be desirable to notice, shortly, the fluctuations, during the same period, of the amount expended annually in the relief and maintenance of the poor in England and Wales. Though (from the interference of the element of price) the amount of this expenditure cannot be received as indicating the extent of the distress relieved, an examination of its variations during the period in view may be of service, as marking the annual variations of the burden of pauperism upon the rest of the community. Accordingly, I have in the following table stated the amount expended in each year, and its proportion to the computed population of the year, with the variations, annually, in relation to the average of the whole period. And further, I have deducted from the population of each year the number returned as having received relief as paupers in the Lady-day quarter of the same year, and have shown the proportion borne by the poor-law expenditure to the population of each year, thus reduced,—so as to exhibit more precisely the variations of the weight of the burden upon those who, as not being themselves paupers, had to bear it.

Years ending at Lady Day.	Amount expended in the relief and maintenance of the Poor in England and Wales.	Population (computed) of England and Wales in each year.	Proportion per head of Expenditure to Population	Excess or deficiency of the proportion in relation to the average of the 9 years	Population, not paupers; ascertained by deducting the number relieved in the Lady-day Quarter of each year from the population for the year.	Proportion per head of Expenditure to population, not paupers	Excess or deficiency of the proportion last mentioned in relation to the average of 9 years
1838	£ 4,123,604	15,241,700	£ .270	£ —·021			
1839	4,406,907	15,461,300	·284	—·007	14,328,035	·307	—·018
1840	4,576,965	15,684,000	·291	=	14,484,471	·315	—·010
1841	4,760,929	15,906,700	·299	+·008	14,605,072	·326	+·001
1842	4,911,498	16,132,600	·304	+·013	14,705,413	·334	+·009
1843	5,208,027	16,361,600	·318	+·027	14,815,210	·351	+·026
1844	4,976,093	16,593,900	·299	+·008	15,116,339	·328	+·003
1845	5,039,703	16,829,600	·290	—·001	15,358,630	·328	+·003
1846	4,951,204	17,068,500	·290	—·001	15,737,943	·314	—·011
			Av. ·291			Av. ·325	

From the materials thus derived from the Poor-Law Reports, it is to be inferred that the condition of the people of England and Wales, generally, was not only much depressed at the commencement of the period in view, but was growing gradually worse during the whole of the four years extending from Lady-day, 1839 to the same date in 1843;—that a great and rapid improvement took place in the manufacturing districts in 1843, and was continued down to Lady-day 1846;—that there was in the agricultural districts a gradual and continuous depression during the six years extending from Lady Day 1839, to Lady-day 1845; but that the improvement shown in the manufacturing districts after Lady-day, 1843, was so far shared by the agricultural districts that after that period the annual rate of depression was materially diminished, until, at length, a diminution in the proportion of pauperism to population took place also in the agricultural districts, so great as to warrant the inference that the condition of the people in those districts had been very considerably and rapidly improved within the year ending at Lady-day 1846.

Of the condition of the people since Lady-day 1846, it will be observed that these returns afford us no evidence.

It is much to be regretted, that the inquiry as to the proportion of pauperism to population, during the period in question, cannot be extended beyond England and Wales.

The Act of 1838, introducing the Poor-Law of this country into Ireland, has not, even yet, been carried so far into operation, as to afford the means of ascertaining the proportion referred to for even a single year. The following statement of the number of persons relieved, and the amount of the expenditure, in each year since 1840, will, when considered in connexion with the extent to which pauperism is, upon other evidence, known to prevail in Ireland, abundantly prove that but a small fraction of the relief actually administered to destitute persons in that country, is brought to view in the accounts of the Poor-Law Commissioners.

Years ending December 31st.	Number of Unions in Operation.	Expenditure during the year. £	Number of Persons relieved during the year.
1840	4	37,057	10,910
1841	37	110,278	31,108
1842	92	281,233	87,604
1843	106	244,374	87,898
1844	113	271,334	105,358
1845	123	316,025	114,205
1846	129*	435,001	243,933

* The whole country is divided into 130 Unions; so that only one was excluded from the system in 1846.

As, before the passing of the Act 8 and 9 Vic. c. 83, (in the session of 1845) there was no compulsory provision for the Poor in Scotland, we have, before that time, no official account of their numbers. The Act referred to, created a "Board of Supervisors for the relief of the Poor in Scotland," distinct from the Poor-Law Commission of England. The first annual Report of this body was made in August, 1846, and was published last year. It embraces a very full and lucid description of the arrangements for the relief of the Poor under the old

voluntary system, and of the proceedings of the Board in their amendment, under the Law of 1845; and there is appended to the Report a general abstract of a mass of returns made to the Board by the "Inspectors of Poor," throughout Scotland, showing the number of paupers, and the sum expended in the relief and management of the Poor, during the years ending February, 1845, and February, 1846; and the increase or decrease in the number of paupers, and in the sum expended in their relief during these years. The following statement, however, will show that these returns, even for the short period they cover, are not sufficiently complete in character to warrant their use in the present enquiry; for it can scarcely be supposed that the actual proportion of pauperism to population is, as the figures here given would make it, only about one fourth of what it is in England.

	Number of Persons on the roll on 1st February.	Sum expended in the relief and management of the Poor in the year preceding.
1845	63,070	£ 258,814
1846	69,342	295,232

If we receive the Reports of the Poor-Law Commissioners as evidence of the condition of the poorest, the least provident, and the least fortunate among the people, the returns of the amount of the funds in the Savings' Banks may perhaps be received with nearly equal confidence as evidence of the condition of the classes next above these.

Undoubtedly, both these sources of information are to be safely relied upon only under the exercise of much caution. As the number of persons relieved as paupers may have varied in obedience to other influences than those now sought to be developed, as under changes in the law, or in the means or the methods of administering it—so the amount of the funds in Savings' Banks may have been, and probably have been, varied by causes wholly apart from those springing immediately from the greater or less prosperity, for the time being, of the people at large. The number of depositors in Savings' Banks in the United Kingdom, (about 1,100,000) is large enough, and their distribution over nearly every part of the Kingdom, among the classes whose condition is now chiefly to be considered, is sufficiently general, to warrant the inference that every cause operating powerfully upon the pecuniary means of any considerable section of the community will have an effect, more or less perceptible, upon the aggregate amount of the funds they hold in deposit in successive years. It is however, to be borne in mind, in the first place, that both the number of the depositors and the amount of the funds have, during the period now under review, been steadily increasing in continuation of the increase by which the present system of Savings' Banks has altogether grown up since 1817.* Before we can safely rely upon any given addition to these funds as evidence of an absolute increase of the pecuniary means of the

* The total number of depositors in 1838 was 703,236; and the amount of the funds £21,363,000. In 1845 the number of depositors was 1,063,418 and the amount of the funds £32,661,000. This shows a rate of increase, for each, about four times as great as that due to the mere increase to population.

depositing classes, it is therefore necessary to allow for the gradual extension of the use of Savings' Banks, and of the provident habits they may be presumed to serve and strengthen. On the other hand, a diminution of the Savings' Banks' funds is not necessarily to be referred to a diminution of the means of the depositors. The inducements to keep money in deposit in these Banks may have become less, or those to withhold or to withdraw it greater than before; or it may even so happen that the two conditions have occurred together. As, for instance, when the rate of interest allowed on deposits in Savings' Banks was reduced, in November 1844; and when, in the year following, speculations in railway shares offered a strong temptation to the withdrawal of money from these Banks by persons dazzled with the prospect of enormous profits.

The Savings' Bank returns have one important advantage over those obtained through the Poor-Law Commissioners—they extend to the whole of the United Kingdom.

The following table is framed to represent the proportion of the total amount of the Savings' Bank funds to the population of the United Kingdom in each year, with the annual variations in relation to the average of the whole period, and also the increase of the proportion in each year, as compared with the one preceding.

Years.	Population of the United Kingdom (computed.)	Aggregate amount of Savings' Bank Funds, including sums invested with the Commissioners of the National Debt by Friendly Societies	Proportion per head on the population.	Relation of the annual proportions to the average of the 8 years.		Increase of the proportion in each year in relation to the one preceding.
				£	Per Cent.	
1839	26,516,000	22,425,812	·841	—183=17·87	·079	
1840	26,789,000	24,688,815	·920	—104=10·15	·032	
1841	27,064,000	25,781,368	·952	—072= 7·03	·027	
1842	27,342,000	26,768,580	·979	—043= 4·19	·063	
1843	27,624,000	28,786,603	1·042	+018= 1·75	·078	
1844	27,909,000	31,725,636	1·120	+096= 9·37	·038	
1845	28,196,000	32,661,924	1·158	+134=13·08	·024	
1846	28,487,000	33,694,642	1·182	+158=15·45		
Av. 1·024						

And the next exhibits the same particulars for England and Wales only.

Years.	Aggregate amount of Savings' Bank Funds in England & Wales.	Proportion per head on the Population.	Increase or decrease of the proportion in relation to the average of the 8 years.	
			£	Per Cent.
1839	19,771,541	1·278	—163	·043
1840	20,725,356	1·321	—120	·034
1841	21,563,878	1·355	—086	·028
1842	22,312,301	1·383	—058	·077
1843	23,900,122	1·460	+019	·089
1844	25,712,661	1·549	+108	·028
1845	26,548,358	1·577	+136	·030
1846	27,434,474	1·607	+166	
Av. 1·441				

It will be observed that the aggregate amount of the funds in Savings' Banks in the United Kingdom, and also in England and Wales separately, increased through the whole term more rapidly than the population. A mere comparison of the proportion of the amount of the funds to the population, therefore, does not afford any very striking confirmation of the variations observed under the operation of the Poor-Law. But if we observe *the proportion added to the funds* in each year, as compared with the year preceding, a closer indication is obtained; and here we find evidence of remarkable variations. If, for instance, the pound sterling be divided into 1,000 parts, it appears that there were in the Savings' Banks of the United Kingdom, in 1839, for each member of the population, a proportion amounting to 841 parts: in 1840 there were added 79 parts,—in 1841 only 32 parts were added,—and in 1842 only 27 parts;—but in 1843 there were 63 parts added, and in 1844, 78 parts. Thus, though the funds grew during the whole period, the rate of their growth varied considerably, becoming slower in each succeeding year after 1839 until 1842,—when a change took place, and the previous rate of growth was gradually resumed. After 1844 the rate of growth again declined. But here it is to be remembered that the rate of interest allowed in Savings' Banks was reduced by Parliament from the 20th of November, 1844—the maximum rate being then fixed at 2d. per cent. per diem, or £3 : 0 : 10d. per cent. per annum; and that about the same time, not only was there a general revival of trade, producing many openings for the profitable investment of small amounts of capital, but also the railway speculations began to excite general attention,—each of which circumstances may reasonably be supposed to have caused the withdrawal, or the withholding of considerable sums from Savings' Banks during the year or two following.

The tables given in the following pages, in which this branch of the investigation is pursued in detail, as to England and Wales, may, perhaps, be safely received as confirming the general inference already drawn from the Poor-Law Returns—that the condition of the people underwent a gradually increasing depression during the four years ending in the spring of 1843. To any greater extent I confess I am not inclined to rely upon them for the present purpose.

To represent the manufacturing districts I am here compelled to take the county of Lancaster alone, as there is no separate return for the West, as distinguished from the other Ridings of York.

It is also to be observed that the amount invested directly with the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt, instead of through the banks, not having relation to the division of counties, is necessarily excluded from the inquiry, as it concerns particular districts. This amount steadily increased from £1,217,765 in 1840 to £1,806,916 in 1845.

I have also deemed it proper to carry the computation for Lancashire one year farther back, in order to bring into view a remarkable diminution of the funds in that county in the year ending 20th November, 1839. This would appear to mark the first effect of the high prices of food, and the checked and disturbed state of trade in that county in 1838. But, whatever the cause of the variation, its exhibition seems to be necessary to the practical completeness of the tables,

as discovering a material diminution of the funds, immediately prior to the commencement of the fluctuations more particularly regarded.

It may also be necessary to observe that in dealing with the funds of separate counties, I include in one sum those ascribed in the accounts to "Individual Depositors," to "Charitable Institutions," and to "Friendly Societies," on the ground that all are likely to be increased or diminished by causes operating generally on the prosperity of the people.

MANUFACTURING DISTRICTS.					
Years.	Aggregate of Savings' Bank Funds for the County of Lancaster.	Proportion per head on population.	Increase or decrease of the proportion in relation to the average of the 9 years.	Increase of the proportion in each year, as compared with the year preceding.	The like Decrease
	£	£	£	£	£
1838	1,553,337	·998	—·090	—	·040
1839	1,525,773	·958	—·130	—	—
1840	1,607,951	·986	—·102	·028	—
1841	1,678,241	1·006	—·082	·020	—
1842	1,688,548	·989	—·099	—	·017
1843	1,898,837	1·087	—·001	·098	—
1844	2,150,766	1·204	+·116	·117	—
1845	2,315,170	1·267	+·179	·063	—
1846	2,440,849	1·305	+·217	·038	—
		Av. 1·088			

Here the decrease in 1839, the small increase in 1840 and 1841, and the second decrease in 1842, agree, generally, with all the more prominent features of the preceding tables. The heaviest draw-back to the growth of the funds (after 1839) seems to have occurred in the year ending the 20th of November, 1842. A continuous increase began in 1843, and went on with greater rapidity in 1844;—and this agrees to a remarkable extent with the results previously obtained as to the diminished proportion of pauperism at the same period.

The following is a similar table for the agricultural districts, comprising the returns for the nine counties before mentioned.

AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS.					
Years.	Aggregate of Savings' Bank Funds for the nine selected counties.	Proportion per head on population.	Increase or decrease per head in relation to the average of the 8 years.	Increase of the proportion in each year, as compared with the year preceding.	The like Decrease
	£	£	£	£	
1839	3,351,801	1·417	—·196	—	—
1840	3,518,367	1·474	—·139	·057	—
1841	3,671,456	1·523	—·090	·049	—
1842	3,829,597	1·574	—·039	·051	—
1843	4,036,687	1·642	+·029	·068	—
1844	4,259,435	1·718	+·105	·076	—
1845	4,407,965	1·761	+·148	·043	—
1846	4,541,635	1·797	+·184	·036	—
		Av. 1·613			

A correct appreciation of this table, as well as those preceding it, will probably be aided by consideration of the fact that in most districts, and in the agricultural districts in particular, the depositors are principally either persons rather in the middle than in the lower ranks of life, or servants and others in the employment of families whose domestic arrangements are not immediately or extensively affected by such a degree of general depression even as that which appears to have prevailed between 1839 and 1843. Hence, probably, both the higher proportion (in the agricultural districts) of the funds to the population, and the comparatively steady growth of the aggregate amount of the funds from year to year. Though, however, the fluctuations observed lie within much narrower limits in the agricultural than in the manufacturing districts, it will be observed that they mark the occurrence of changes of a similar character at about the same periods. If we take the five years 1840 to 1844 inclusive, we find the years of least addition to the funds were 1841 and 1842, and that 1843 and 1844 show a considerable increase as compared with any of the previous years.

Within the last few days (15th February) there has been published a return to an order of the House of Commons containing a full abstract of the accounts of the "Manchester and Salford" Savings' Bank, in each year from 1818 to 1847 inclusive. Availing myself of the information thus afforded, I have computed the population of Manchester and Salford and the suburbs (using, throughout, the local limits of 1831) by the method before described, and comparing it with the annual variations of the Savings' Bank funds have stated the results in the following table.

MANCHESTER AND SALFORD BANK FOR SAVINGS, IN RELATION TO THE POPULATION OF MANCHESTER, SALFORD, AND THE SUBURBS.					
Annual Account made up to 20th Nov.	Computed Population.	Amount standing to the credit of Depositors.	Proportion per head on the Population.	Relation of the Annual Proportion to the average of the ten years.	Increase or decrease of the proportion per head in each year in relation to the one next preceding.
		£	£	£ per cent.	£
1838	269,400	331,759	1·231	—·254=17·10	—
1839	278,300	331,729	1·191	—·294=19·79	—·040
1840	287,400	366,423	1·274	—·211=14·20	+·083
1841	296,800	397,592	1·339	—·146= 9·83	+·065
1842	306,500	416,283	1·357	—·138= 9·29	+·018
1843	316,700	488,824	1·543	+·058= 3·90	+·186
1844	327,100	568,313	1·737	+·252=16·96	+·294
1845	337,800	599,186	1·773	+·288=19·39	+·036
1846	349,000	629,381	1·803	+·318=21·41	+·030
1847	360,500	580,915	1·611	+·126= 8·44	—·192
			Av. 1·485		

It will be observed that the variations in the proportion of the funds to the population are much wider than those shown in any of the tables previously given. These variations may be compared, thus:—

	Highest.	Lowest.	Variation.
	£	£	£
United Kingdom	1·182	·841	·341
England and Wales	1·607	1·278	·329
„ Manufacturing Districts	1·305	·958	·347
„ Agricultural „	1·797	1·417	·380
Manchester and Salford	1·803	1·191	·612

Confining our view to the eight years 1839—46, we find that the lowest proportion occurred in the first year, and the highest in the last,—that when groups of districts are compared, the agricultural exhibit the highest proportion throughout,—that in the United Kingdom, in England and Wales, and in the manufacturing and agricultural districts of England and Wales respectively, the variation between 1839 and 1846 was nearly the same, showing an increase of about 7s. per head on the general population;—but that in Manchester and Salford the variation during the whole period was nearly twice as great as is shewn in any of the instances previously examined. And if the table relating to the latter be regarded separately, it will be observed to afford evidence of fluctuations, both in the amount of the funds and in the rate of their growth, of a very remarkable character. In particular I would draw attention to the last column, and to the absolute decrease of the proportion of the funds to the population in 1839 and in 1847 as compared with the years immediately preceding.

Among the most valuable of the statistical records which have recently been made available in such investigations as the present there is another, the Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, which, though indicating changes in the condition of society of a description differing widely from those already considered, may reasonably be expected to correct or confirm in some degree conclusions based upon the fluctuating proportions of pauperism and Savings' Bank funds to population. I have made no attempt to use the records of births or of deaths. It is extremely probable that, were it possible to eliminate all that is due to every other cause, we should find the varying numbers of both births and deaths, especially over periods longer than that we are now dealing with, strikingly indicative of corresponding changes in the pecuniary condition of the people; but in the present state of the materials upon which any such investigation must be based I have deemed it hopeless to attempt the needful preliminary operation. In the registry of marriages, however, the disturbing influences are comparatively few. Each such event records an act of the most deliberate kind, to which two grown persons, at least, are consenting parties; and also an act which in a great majority of cases is liable to be hastened or postponed by the favourable or unfavourable condition of the pecuniary affairs of those immediately concerned. I have, therefore, extracted from the last Annual Report of the

Registrar General the figures necessary for the formation of the following table, which exhibits the proportionate number of marriages annually to every 100,000 males living; first in England and Wales, and then in each of the groups of districts before selected to represent the manufacturing and agricultural portions of the kingdom.

	1839.	1840.	1841.	1842.	1843.	1844.
In England & Wales	1,625	1,597	1,574	1,506	1,549	1,633
In the selected Manufacturing Districts .	1,783	1,702	1,678	1,545	1,721	1,914
In the selected Agricultural Districts .	1,464	1,448	1,443	1,400	1,385	1,419

Or, to make the fluctuations indicated by these numbers more distinctly apparent, they may be stated thus:—

Comparing	In England and Wales.		In the selected Manufacturing Districts.		In the selected Agricultural Districts.	
	Inc.	Dec.	Inc.	Dec.	Inc.	Dec.
1839 with 1840	—	28	—	81	—	16
1840 with 1841	—	23	—	24	—	5
1841 with 1842	—	68	—	133	—	43
1842 with 1843	43	—	176	—	—	15
1843 with 1844	84	—	193	—	34	—

If the last table be compared with that previously given, showing the comparative variations of the amount of pauperism in the corresponding years (at page 10) a very striking coincidence will be observed throughout. Indeed, it is not easy to conceive indications of the same general changes in the condition of the people, drawn from sources so widely separated, more strongly and directly confirmatory of each other.

As the only other test, of a character sufficiently general to be relied upon for the present purpose, resting upon official records, I may refer to the Reports of the Emigration Commissioners. It appears that the total number of persons who emigrated from ports in the United Kingdom, under their supervision, was in each of the years under review as follows:

In 1839 . . .	62,207	In 1843 . . .	57,212
1840 . . .	90,743	1844 . . .	70,686
1841 . . .	118,592	1845 . . .	93,501
1842 . . .	128,344	1846 . . .	129,851
Average . . .	93,894		

Here the gradual increase of the number of emigrants during the first four years seems to accord with all the results previously obtained; so also does the sudden decrease in 1843: but the gradual

increase during the next three years, with the large number in 1846, seem to require further explanation. The decrease in 1843, independently of its agreement with previous results, is a repetition of what the records of previous years proves to be common. The number of emigrants seems invariably to fall off, considerably, in the year after it reaches any extraordinary height. The number in 1844 is considerably below the average of the eight years; and even that of 1845 scarcely reaches the average. In both the last mentioned years, and more particularly in 1846, an allowance is to be made for the effect of the potato disease, particularly in Ireland, whence, chiefly, the emigration of each of these years is stated to have taken place.

There is also another class of returns of a general description, and which as to the commercial classes are in some degree analogous to those of the Poor Law—I mean the returns of the number of bankrupts, annually and monthly, and their occupations. I have examined these with a desire to avail myself of their aid; but, though I find it would be easy to derive from them an apparent confirmation of the inferences deduced from other materials, I also find that the operation of this test has been so much interfered with, in the first place by changes in the law, and in the next by the prevalence of the practice of avoiding bankruptcy by private arrangements with creditors, that whatever were the results of its application, I should feel compelled to reject them for want of confidence in their origin.

From the sources of information thus appealed to, we may gather indications of a gradual decline in the prosperity of the people of the United Kingdom during the four years extending from the spring of 1839 to the spring of 1843; and of a gradual elevation of their condition from the last-mentioned date to about the autumn of 1846, beyond which period the materials available do not enable us to extend our view; except in the instance of the return from the Manchester and Salford Savings' Bank, and there we find evidence strongly confirmatory of the reports current during the last eighteen months of severe depression in the principal manufacturing districts.

The remarkable difference between the variations observed in the conditions of the manufacturing and the agricultural districts of England and Wales, however, would seem to indicate the operation, during this period, either of different influences in different parts of the kingdom, or of the same (or similar) influences upon social conditions differing so far as to cause a wide divergence in the results.

I now pass to the second division of the subject, with the purpose of developing "the connexion (if any) between the changes observed in the condition of the people during the eight years, 1839-47, and the variations occurring during the same period in the prices of the most necessary articles of food." And here a word or two may be requisite to define more precisely the scope of my present purpose. I should not have undertaken the labour of preparing this paper, had I not conceived the hope of tracing, by a strictly statistical method, some of the principal causes of the changes already described, to concurrent fluctuations in the prices of food. Aware, however, of the tendency of the exclusive contemplation of any particular set of causes to warp the judgment in its estimate of their comparative influence, and not hoping entirely to escape this source of error, I desire to place the results of my labours in such a form as will best enable those who may think fit to examine, to use, or to add to them, to test the validity of every inference I may venture to draw. I have deemed it proper, therefore, to keep this second division of the paper so far distinct from the first, that each may have a significance of its own,—independently of any it may derive from its connexion with the other.

The most necessary articles of food in the United Kingdom—those the consumption of which is most general among all classes of the people, and which all but the very poorest can least dispense with—are, fortunately, those also, the prices of which are to be ascertained most readily and accurately. I allude, of course, to the six descriptions of grain and pulse (wheat, barley, oats, rye, beans and peas,) of which the average prices, weekly and annually, in this country, have now been recorded regularly for a long series of years. For about the first half of the period under review, these averages were ascertained by taking an account, weekly, of every sale made in each of 150 of the principal corn-markets in England. About June, 1842, the number of markets thus inspected was extended to 290. In other respects the method of taking the averages has, I believe, remained unaltered during the period in view. The official method of computation is so far perfect that, if accurately worked out, it may be held to give the true average weekly price of all the sales actually inspected. And these would appear to include, as to wheat, about one third of the entire quantity grown and consumed in England and Wales. If it be liable to any objection, it is in reference to the *annual* average, which is made up simply from the averages of the fifty-two weeks in each year from January to December, without any reference to the *quantities* sold under each of the weekly averages. In most years the inequalities of the weekly sales, at different prices, so nearly correct each other, that a strict reference to them would probably not alter the annual result to any material extent. But the method being defective, the accuracy of the average,

if it be accurate, is merely accidental, and it so happens that in the last year, (1847) the sales having been very unequally distributed, the usual method of computation gives an average varying materially from the true one,—the former giving 69s. 9d., and the latter only 68s. as the annual average price. It might also be worthy of consideration whether, if the needful labour for obtaining an accurate annual average of the prices of British grain is to be undertaken officially, it might not be better applied (possibly in connexion with a system of agricultural statistics) to a period more nearly coinciding with that in which each crop of grain is grown and consumed,—or to the *harvest* year, rather than to the astronomical year. It is true that the former, if fixed by law, might frequently, under the variations of the seasons, vary a week or two from an exact coincidence with the gathering of the crops; but the latter involves the constant anomaly of including some thirty-four or thirty-five weeks covered by one harvest, and seventeen or eighteen covered by the next.

In the first of the two following tables I have used the annual average prices of grain as obtained officially, for the astronomical years, and in the second, the annual averages of the fifty-two weeks following the first week in September.* In both cases the quantities sold at each weekly average price are disregarded, and the distribution of the sales of home-grown wheat having been still more irregular during the year extending from September, 1846, to September, 1847, than in the year from January to December, 1847, the deviation of the average stated, from that which would be obtained by a strict regard to the quantities sold at different prices, is still greater in the last line of the second table, than in that of the first. Thus, as has been said, if the quantity sold in each week be taken into account, the official average price of wheat for the year 1847, will be reduced from 69s. 9d. to 68s. And in the harvest year, if regard be had only to the unequal distribution of the sales over the *quarters* of the year, so much greater were the inequalities that the annual average will be reduced from 70s. 2d. to about 64s. 6d. It will be remembered that these averages include only grain of home growth. The quantities sold are, however, sold in competition with supplies of foreign grain; and if these were taken into the account, they would render the quantities sold in each week much more nearly alike. Though, therefore, the official annual averages are defective for the purpose of ascertaining the price obtained by the British grower for his grain, they are, perhaps, not far from accurate as indications of the price paid by the people for all the grain consumed. And as it is in this point of view, chiefly, that I would now regard them, I have not

* There may be a difference of opinion as to the period at which the harvest year should be deemed to commence, when the computation extends over a series of years. In the last volume of Mr. Tooke's History of Prices, the harvest year is assumed to run from the first week in August as to the effect of each harvest upon *prices*, and from the first week in September as to the actual supply of grain. I have here taken the beginning of September instead of the beginning of August, because I am inclined to think that either would very nearly answer the purpose; and the two computations may afford some ground for the discussion of their relative merits.

disturbed the official average, even for the last year; and in taking the averages of the harvest years have adhered to the same method. The use of these averages with reference to the whole of the United Kingdom, though not strictly correct, is in accordance with the use made of them under the corn laws, to serve which, only, they were instituted: the duties being levied by the scale they govern in every port in the United Kingdom. Nor does there appear to be, in fact, any strong practical objection to their being regarded as the prices of the United Kingdom, as much as of England and Wales.

Average prices of grain—official—in astronomical years.

Years.	Wheat.		Barley.	Oats.	Rye.	Beans.	Peas.	Collective average of the prices of the five before-named descriptions of grain, besides wheat.	Excess or deficiency of the annual collective average of such prices, as compared with the average of the whole period.
	per qr. £.	Excess or deficiency of the annual average price of wheat, as compared with the average of the whole period. £.							
1839	3-533	+561	1-975	1-395	2-1	2-062	2-058	1-918	+200
1840	3-316	+344	1-821	1-283	1-85	2-171	2-121	1-849	+131
1841	3-216	+244	1-641	1-121	1-837	1-991	2-017	1-721	+003
1842	2-862	-110	1-375	-962	1-65	1-645	1-621	1-450	-268
1843	2-504	-468	1-475	-916	1-529	1-554	1-458	1-392	-326
1844	2-562	-410	1-683	1-029	1-695	1-671	1-721	1-559	-159
1845	2-541	-431	1-583	1-125	1-625	1-945	1-933	1-642	-076
1846	2-733	-239	1-633	1-183	1-75	1-95	1-95	1-693	-025
1847	3-487	+515	2-208	1-433	2-450	2-525	2-571	2-237	+519
Av. 2-972			1-710	1-160	1-831	1-946	1-939	Av. 1-718	

Average prices of grain—determined by the official method—in the HARVEST YEARS, beginning with the first week in September.

Years.	Wheat.		Barley.	Oats.	Rye.	Beans.	Peas.	Collective average of the prices of the five before-named descriptions of grain, besides wheat.	Excess or deficiency of the annual collective average of such prices, as compared with the average of the whole period.
	per Qr. £.	per Qr. £.							
1839-40	3-416	+496	1-962	1-316	1-883	2-183	2-137	1-896	+194
1840-41	3-179	+259	1-658	1-135	1-771	2-05	2-046	1-730	+028
1841-42	3-116	+196	1-475	1-037	1-821	1-771	1-854	1-591	-111
1842-43	2-529	-391	1-412	-912	1-541	1-491	1-575	1-386	-316
1843-44	2-633	-287	1-6	-987	1-616	1-629	1-646	1-495	-207
1844-45	2-366	-554	1-629	1-071	1-641	1-866	1-8	1-601	-101
1845-46	2-7	-220	1-508	1-150	1-675	1-95	1-866	1-629	-073
1846-47	3-421	+501	2-308	1-487	2-541	2-533	2-6	2-293	+591
Av. 2-920			1-691	1-137	1-811	1-929	1-940	Av. 1-702	

It will be observed that in the latter table—that which may be regarded as marking most nearly the fluctuations of price connected with the varying yield of the grain crops in each year—both wheat and the five other descriptions of grain taken collectively were unusually high in price at the beginning of the period in view, and fell gradually till the harvest year 1842-3, when both reached a minimum. Wheat rose in 1843-4, but in 1844-5 fell again even lower than the year but one before; while after 1842-3 all the other descriptions of grain rose in price somewhat steadily till the harvest of 1846; and, finally, in the harvest year 1846-7 rose, together with wheat, to an extraordinary height. In particular it will be observed that the price of wheat was in each year down to the commencement of the harvest year 1842-3, considerably above the average of the whole period, even elevated as that average is by the very high prices of the last year.

A mere statement of the average prices of grain during any given series of years affords, however, a very inadequate impression of the effect of the variations exhibited upon the condition of the people, unless accompanied by a statement of the quantities of foreign grain imported and consumed at these prices. I have, therefore, collected into the next table a statement of the quantities of each of the six descriptions of grain before mentioned imported into the United Kingdom and entered for consumption during each of the eleven years ending the 5th of January 1848. The statement is carried back a year or two in order the better to mark the unusual extent of the importations in the earlier part of the period now under consideration. The additional column for maize is rendered necessary by the newly acquired importance of this grain in the importations of the last two years.

Grain entered for Home Consumption.

Years.	Wheat and Wheatflour	Barley.	Oats.	Rye.	Beans.	Peas.	Maize.
	Qrs.						Qrs.
1837	244,272	332,276	19,555	47,184	109,076	87,615
1838	1,848,475	8,192	11,004	2,517	54,240	11,618
1839	2,711,273	594,301	855,448	152,582	123,597	170,270
1840	2,401,436	619,801	504,945	1,298	129,517	153,489
1841	2,647,808	222,837	20,416	518	267,697	132,857
1842	2,989,708	49,520	280,600	28,502	42,737	80,000
1843	990,523	223,209	40,820	2,718	45,520	45,014
1844	1,025,887	1,024,322	259,135	28,716	225,260	122,548	38,711
1845	315,015	397,655	582,909	15	197,030	79,605	42,285
1846	2,963,000	400,443	772,554	1,636	209,874	181,800	720,580
*1847	4,458,500	772,349	1,706,780	68,817	443,719	157,245	3,614,637

* The quantities for 1847 are those imported.—no distinction as to the entry for consumption appearing in the official accounts while the ports are open.

And in the two tables next following will be found computed the cost of the quantities of the three principal descriptions of grain (wheat, barley, and oats) thus entered for consumption in each year at the official average price of the year, with the annual proportion per head on the population of the aggregate cost.

Cost of the Grain imported in the following years, at the average price of the astronomical year, in England and Wales.

	1837	1838	1839	1840	1841
Wheat	£. 681,922	£. 5,968,601	£. 9,579,730	£. 7,964,761	£. 8,517,115
Barley	503,951	12,897	1,173,913	1,128,553	365,822
Oats	22,568	12,144	1,108,146	648,012	22,900
	1,208,441	5,993,702	11,861,789	9,741,326	8,905,837

1842	1843	1844	1845	1846	1847
£. 8,557,638	£. 2,480,807	£. 2,628,834	£. 800,662	£. 8,098,866	£. 15,549,000
68,090	329,233	1,724,275	631,618	654,056	1,705,603
270,200	37,410	274,250	655,772	914,188	2,446,384
8,895,928	2,847,450	4,627,359	2,088,052	9,667,110	19,700,987
				1,441,000	7,229,274
				£11,108,110	26,930,261

Add the cost of maize imported in 1846-7, (before which period it was imported only in small quantities,) say at 40s. per quarter

Years.	Total cost of the Wheat, Barley, and Oats entered for consumption, at the average price of the year.	Proportion per head on Population of such cost.	Excess or deficiency, of proportion in relation to the average of the eleven years.
1837	£ 1,208,441	·046	£ —·263
1838	5,993,702	·228	—·081
1839	11,861,789	·447	+·138
1840	9,741,326	·363	+·054
1841	8,905,837	·329	+·020
1842	8,895,928	·325	+·016
1843	2,847,450	·103	—·206
1844	4,627,359	·165	—·144
1845	2,088,052	·074	—·235
1846	11,108,110*	·389	+·080
1847	26,930,261*	·935	+·626

Av. 309

* It will be noticed that these sums so far vary from the description at the head of the column, that they include the cost of the maize entered for consumption in 1846-7.

If attention be given particularly to the eight years now under consideration, it will be observed that the apparent outlay for foreign grain to make good the deficiency of our own crops was by much the heaviest in the four consecutive years from 1839 to 1842 inclusive. We have here very distinctly marked the effect of the four deficient harvests of 1838-9-40 and 41. The apparent *average* amount expended annually in the purchase of foreign wheat, barley, and oats only, in the four years (1839-42) was £9,851,000. In the three years next following the amount similarly expended was reduced to an average considerably less than one-third of this sum, having been only £3,187,000. Again, the amount of the burden from this source, if distributed equally over the computed population of each year, gives an average tax per head during each of the four years 1839-42 of £·366, (about 7s. 4d.); or upon each family of five persons, rich and poor, throughout the kingdom, about 36s. 8d. per annum. In the three years next following, 1843-4-5, the burden, measured in the same way, was reduced to an annual average of about £·114 (about 2s. 3½d.) per head, or not quite 11s. 6d. per annum on each family.

It would thus appear, that during the four years 1839-42 there was, as an immediate result of the deficient home supply of wheat, barley, and oats, only, a deduction made from the aggregate income of the population (to be paid to foreigners to make good in some degree the deficiency of the home supply) of nearly £10,000,000 sterling per annum; and that in the three years 1843-45 the deduction made on the same score but little exceeded £3,000,000 per annum.

The effect of the enormous expenditure of the last year falls, in great part, beyond the period in view.

The results, in relation to the aggregate profit of our *foreign trade*, may be estimated from the following statement of the total (declared) value of the British and Irish produce exported from the United Kingdom in each year, as compared with the concurrent outlay upon foreign grain of the three descriptions referred to, as estimated above. For the purpose of bringing the computation to a more practical issue, I have assumed the average amount of profit returned, one year with another, upon British produce exported, to be 10 per cent. The precise accuracy of this estimate is not, it will be observed, of much importance in relation to the present purpose—that being not so much to ascertain the actual proportion of our annual outlay on foreign grain to the profits of our foreign trade, as to exhibit the importance of large variations in the former, in relation to any reasonable estimate of the amount of the latter.

Years.	Declared value of British and Irish produce exported.	Estimated profit thereon, at 10 per cent.	Cost of Foreign and Colonial Wheat, Barley, and Oats entered for consumption in each year, estimated as before described.
1837	£ 42,070,744	£ 4,207,000	£ 1,203,441
1838	50,060,970	5,006,000	5,993,702
1839	53,233,580	5,323,000	11,861,789
1840	51,406,430	5,140,000	9,741,326
1841	51,634,623	5,163,000	8,905,837
1842	47,381,023	4,738,000	8,895,928
1843	52,279,709	5,227,000	2,847,450
1844	58,854,292	5,885,000	4,627,359
1845	60,111,081	6,011,000	2,088,052
1846	57,786,000	5,778,000	11,108,110

Thus, assuming that the average rate of profit is correctly taken, the total profit upon exports of British produce during the four years 1839-42 was about £20,364,000; while the apparent cost of the foreign wheat, barley, and oats entered for consumption during the same four years was £39,404,000, shewing an excess in the outlay upon grain of nearly £19,000,000 sterling. In the three years 1843-45 the result of the comparison is reversed:—the profits upon British exports having apparently been in those years £17,123,000; while the cost of the foreign grain of the same descriptions consumed in this country was only £9,562,000, shewing an excess of profits of about £7,560,000. I deem it proper, however, again to observe that this comparison is introduced only in the character of an illustration. Both the amounts compared are estimated, and the method and grounds of the estimate are, in each case, to be taken carefully into account before the result can be safely applied to any practical purpose.

If we regard the probable effect of the prices of grain, as already stated, upon the *home trade*, the apparent results will be found very similar. Attempts have been made at various times to estimate the actual quantity of each of the principal descriptions of grain annually consumed in this country; and some of these rest upon what may fairly be deemed high authority. I desired, for the sake of rendering the present paper more complete upon a point so important in reference to its principal purpose, to avail myself of the aid afforded by these estimates; but I find them to rest upon data confessedly so imperfect, that I think it better, in the present stage of the investigation, to exclude the element of quantity, and rest upon the variations of price, so much better ascertained, and already stated. Upon this point, therefore, I shall only refer to the variations exhibited in the tables given at p. 23 *ante*. If these be compared with the results, previously stated, of the analysis of the returns of pauperism, savings' bank funds, marriages, &c., it will be observed that the years of high prices were also the years in which pauperism was increasing, and savings' bank funds decreasing (in their rate of accumulation)—marriages diminished in number, and the number of emigrants augmented. The period of marked relief from the depression of 1839-40-41-42,—which has already been fixed, with some degree of certainty, at the spring of 1843,—will be found to follow immediately upon the remarkable fall in the price of corn brought by the harvest of 1842; while the very high prices prevailing from the time at which the ascertained failure of the potato crop of 1846 brought an enormously increased demand to bear upon the supply from the grain harvest of that year, will be found to coincide as nearly with the period at which the general depression now prevailing began to be substituted for the state of prosperity which is shown to have prevailed from the summer of 1843 down to the autumn of 1846.

The ordinary descriptions of grain and pulse are not, however, the only articles entering largely into the food of the people—the prices of which varied considerably during the period in view. As those most extensively used, and therefore the most important to the present purpose, I have selected for examination the prices of *beef, mutton, tea, sugar, and tobacco*.

In dealing with these we can derive no aid from official computations, except as to sugar; the average prices of British colonial sugar (unrefined) in the London market having for a long period been computed weekly by an officer of the Grocer's Company, and published in the London Gazette. It is a question of some moment, as regards the bearing of the results upon the present enquiry, how the average annual prices of the four remaining articles may be most correctly ascertained. As to beef and mutton, I have, for all but the last two years, relied upon the authority of accounts made up annually at the Board of Trade, from monthly returns of the prices of meat in the London markets. The rest are made up from the usual weekly prices current. The prices of tea and tobacco I have obtained by taking the current price of the most extensively used description of each, in bond, in London, at twelve equidistant periods in each year, and forming from these the annual averages.

It may be objected that these are all London prices, and therefore not applicable to the whole kingdom. I think this objection, if examined, will not be found material. As to sugar, tea, and tobacco, the whole supply of which is from abroad,*—London is so far pre-eminent as a port of entry, that the prices in bond there may be regarded as the prices of the whole kingdom, freed from those variations which are dependent upon local influences, and therefore the only fit basis for a computation applicable to the entire community. And as to beef and mutton, internal productions, it seems obvious that the prices of the largest markets, which draw their supplies from every part of the kingdom and minister directly to the consumption of a proportion not less than one-fifteenth of the entire population,—no other markets approaching to a competition with them in either respect,—may be safely received, if not as perfect, yet as the best available indications of the prevailing prices of the whole kingdom.

In the following table the average annual prices of these five articles are stated together. The prices of beef and mutton are those of meat of medium quality, known as "second class," per stone of 8 lb. to sink the offal.

Years.	Tea (Congou)		Sugar (Muscovada)		Tobacco (Virginia)	Beef.		Mutton.	
	per lb. s. d.	per cwt. s. d.	per lb. d.	per stone. s. d.	per stone. s. d.	per stone. s. d.			
1840	2 6	48 8	6½	3 6	3 10				
1841	2 4	38 3	5½	3 9	3 10				
1842	2 2	37 2½	4	3 7	3 10				
1843	1 7½	33 11½	4	3 2½	3 5				
1844	1 7¾	33 5	3½	3 1	3 6				
1845	1 8	32 9	3½	3 5	3 10				
1846	1 5	35 1	4	3 2	4 2				
1847	1 4	28 9	4	3 11½	4 7½				

It is remarkable that the variations of price here exhibited agree very nearly with those of the annual prices of grain.

* The small quantity of beet-root sugar produced in this country does not affect the point at issue.

The first three years (1840 to 1842 inclusive) were years of high prices. The next two (1843-4) were years of low prices. And in the last three years (1845-7) the low range of prices appears to have continued, excepting as to beef and mutton. While bread and meat, articles of home produce, fell in price from 1840 down to 1844-5, and thenceforward rose,—tea, sugar, and tobacco, articles of foreign produce, appear to have fallen in price with little variation through the whole period.

If, however, we take the last table in conjunction with those showing the annual variations of the prices of grain, it becomes apparent, on a *general view*, that the years of cheapest food were 1843-4-5; and that the prices of these years were, on the whole, *very considerably* lower than those of the years preceding or following.

In particular, the coincidence of date between the reduction of the prices of *all* the articles referred to in 1843, with the indications of a rapid improvement during that year in the apparent condition of the people, is very striking. Indeed, so obvious and remarkable is the coincidence of the return of low prices of food with the return of general prosperity, and the renewal of depression when prices again rose, that the tables will upon this point be best left to speak for themselves.

Having examined and compared the apparent variations in the condition of the bulk of the community, and in the prices of the principal articles of subsistence, and finding that they coincide sufficiently to support the inference that they were closely connected in the relation of cause and effect, it appears very desirable to ascertain, if possible, how far the quantities of these articles consumed, and the amount expended upon them, in proportion to the population, varied during the same years. Here, however, it is to be feared that the only statistical statements we possess, upon which much reliance can be placed, are insufficient to conduct us to a safe and satisfactory conclusion.

Tea and sugar are the only articles among those already mentioned as to which we have any accounts, supposed to approximate accuracy, of the quantities annually consumed. No accounts are taken of either the production or consumption of grain or meat; and the extent to which tobacco is known or supposed to be smuggled, renders the official accounts of the quantity entered for consumption unfit to be relied upon as indications of the quantity actually consumed. But in addition to tea and sugar, there are spirits, (British and foreign) and malt, which are consumed almost, if not quite, as extensively; and of the quantities of these (particularly the latter) produced and charged with duty for consumption we have statements believed to be tolerably accurate.

I have taken no account of spirits or malt in relation to their *prices*; and for this reason. The home production of spirits and beer (for which alone malt is prepared) is nearly confined to a very few hands; and the price of both to the consumers is remarkably steady.*

* Last year, at the beginning of January, a rise of 5s. per barrel was made in the price of beer, in London, consequent upon an enormous rise in the price of barley; but no such change had occurred for upwards of seventeen years previously; and on the opening of the ports to foreign corn, about five weeks afterwards, the old prices were at once resumed.

The business of distilling, in particular, is, partly from the large capital it requires, and partly from the restrictions imposed upon it in protection of the Excise duty, retained in the hands of a very small number of firms. The price of British spirits is thence much regulated by agreement among the producers; and being thus withdrawn from the ordinary influences of an open market, exhibits (as regards the consumer) very few of those variations the examination of which might have aided the present purpose.

In the tables next following, I have endeavoured to develop the annual variations of the quantities of tea, sugar, malt and spirits consumed, in relation to the population—and also the average expenditure per head on each of the three first-mentioned—taking for the cost to the consumers, as to tea and sugar respectively, the value at the average price in bond of the whole quantity consumed, added to the amount received by the government for duty, and as to malt, the average cost of the barley, added to the amount of the duty. This does not give, in either case, the whole cost to the consumer; but the part omitted being made up of commissions, cost of carriage, &c. and trading profit, would, for each locality, bear a nearly equal proportion to the sum thus taken to represent the whole. The amount derived by the revenue from tea, sugar, and spirits, respectively, in 1847, has not yet (21st February, 1848) been published.

An Account of the quantity of TEA consumed annually per head, and also of the annual expenditure on Tea per head, with the annual variations of each in relation to the averages of the whole period of 8 years (1839-1846).

Years.	Population of the United Kingdom by computation.	Quantity of Tea entered for Home consumption.	Average price per lb. in bond.	Annual Consumption per head in pounds.	Excess or deficiency of annual consumption per head, in lbs., in relation to the average of the 8 years.	Annual expenditure on Tea, per head in decimal parts of a pound sterling.	Excess or deficiency of annual expenditure per head, in relation to the average of the 8 years.
1839	26,516,000	35,127,000	s. d.	lbs.	lbs.	£.	£.
1840	26,789,000	32,252,000	1 10	1.321	-.103	.265	-.022
1841	27,064,000	36,675,000	2 6	1.206	-.218	.281	-.006
1842	27,342,000	37,355,000	2 4	1.351	-.073	.306	+.019
1843	27,624,000	40,293,000	2 2	1.363	-.061	.294	+.007
1844	27,909,000	41,363,000	1 7½	1.452	+.028	.273	-.014
1845	28,196,000	44,180,000	1 7	1.487	+.063	.281	-.006
1846	28,487,000	46,728,000	1 8	1.564	+.140	.308	+.021
			1 5	1.648	+.224	.295	+.012
				Av. 1.424		.287	

The quantity of tea charged with duty, as retained for home consumption, in 1847, was 46,324,298 lbs.: giving a proportion per head on the population of 1.609 lbs.; or .185 more than the average of the preceding eight years.

An Account of the quantity of SUGAR consumed annually per head, and also of the annual expenditure on Sugar per head, with the annual variations of each, in relation to the averages of the whole period of 8 years (1839-46).

Years.	Population of the United Kingdom by computation.	Quantity of Sugar (unrefined) entered for Home Consumption.	Average price per cwt. in bond.	Annual consumption per head, in decimal fractions of a cwt.	Excess or deficiency of annual consumption per head, in relation to the average of the 8 years.	Annual expenditure on Sugar, per head, in decimal parts of a pound sterling.	Excess or deficiency of annual expenditure on sugar, in relation to the average of the 8 years.
1839	26,516,000	3,825,000	s. d.	Cwt.	Cwt.	£	£
1840	26,789,000	3,594,000	39 4½	.144	-.007	.456	+.007
1841	27,064,000	4,057,000	48 7½	.134	-.017	.492	+.043
1842	27,342,000	3,868,000	38 3½	.149	-.002	.475	+.026
1843	27,624,000	4,028,000	37 2½	.141	-.010	.441	-.008
1844	27,909,000	4,139,000	33 11½	.145	-.006	.431	-.018
1845	28,196,000	4,880,000	33 5	.147	-.004	.433	-.016
1846	28,487,000	5,227,000	32 9	.172	+.021	.410	-.039
			35 1*	.183	+.032	.457	+.008
				Av. .151		Av. .449	

* Official annual average price of Sugar not obtained. This an average of 12 weekly averages, taken monthly.

The quantity of sugar (unrefined) imported and charged with duty for home consumption, in 1847, was 5,791,783 cwt.: giving a proportion per head on the population of .201 of a cwt., or .050 of a cwt. more than the average of the preceding eight years.

An account of the quantity of SPIRITS, British, Foreign, and Colonial, charged with duty in each year, from 1838 to 1846 inclusive, with the annual proportion, per head, on the population.

Years.	In England.	In Scotland.	In Ireland.	In the United Kingdom.	Proportion per head on the Population in the United Kingdom.	Excess or deficiency of the proportion per head on Population in each year, in relation to the average of the whole period in the United Kingdom.
	Galls.	Galls.	Galls.	Galls.	Galls.	Galls.
1838	12,136,232	.79	6,384,255	12,334,281	30,854,768	1.17
1839	12,063,926	.78	6,301,825	10,848,509	29,214,260	1.10
1840	11,804,147	.75	6,271,496	7,427,904	25,503,547	.93
1841	11,511,907	.72	6,078,719	6,515,781	24,106,407	.89
1842	11,056,096	.68	5,667,113	5,320,196	22,042,905	.80
1843	10,785,750	.65	5,665,618	5,574,921	22,026,289	.79
1844	11,368,790	.68	6,001,090	6,481,251	23,851,131	.85
1845	12,507,995	.74	6,525,489	7,638,993	26,672,477	.94
1846					28,360,934	.99
					Av. .94	+.05

The Population being estimated, as before described, to have increased in the proportion of the average from 1821 to 1841.

The quantity of spirits charged with duty in the United Kingdom, in 1847, was 25,535,897 gallons: giving a proportion per head on the population of .88 of a gallon, or .06 of a gallon less than the average of the preceding eight years.

An Account of the number of bushels of MALT charged with duty, the amount of the duty, and the proportion per head on the population of the quantity of Malt charged, and of its cost to the consumers, as these varied during the nine years from 1838 to 1846 inclusive.

Years.	Malt charged in England.	Average price of Barley per bushel.	Malt charged in Scotland.	Malt charged in Ireland.	Malt charged in the United Kingdom.	Proportion per head of Malt charged in the United Kingdom.	Excess or deficiency of the proportion per head of Malt charged in relation to the average of the 9 years.	Total cost of the Malt charged being the cost of the Barley at the average price of the year, plus of the amount of the duty.	Proportion per head of the population of the total cost of the Malt.	Excess or deficiency of the proportion per head of Malt charged in relation to the average of the 9 years.
1838	Bushels. 33,823,985	s. 8 11 d. 1	Bushels. 4,419,141	Bushels. 2,282,440	Bushels. 40,505,566	Bushels. 1.54	Bushels. +.14	£ 13,110,274	£ .49	£ +.02
1839	33,826,016	4 11 1	4,360,373	1,744,552	39,930,941	1.49	+.09	14,902,885	.564	+.094
1840	36,653,442	4 6 1	4,397,304	1,406,116	43,456,862	1.58	+.18	15,239,990	.568	+.098
1841	30,956,394	4 1 1	4,058,362	1,149,692	36,164,448	1.33	-.07	12,302,872	.45	-.02
1842	30,796,262	3 5 1	3,786,476	1,268,656	35,851,394	1.31	-.09	11,014,956	.40	-.07
1843	30,891,002	3 8 1	3,018,607	1,184,281	35,693,890	1.292	-.118	11,395,463	.41	-.06
1844	31,856,551	4 2 1	3,889,458	1,441,177	37,187,186	1.33	-.07	12,886,332	.45	-.02
1845	30,508,840	3 11 1	4,353,038	1,684,112	36,545,990	1.296	-.114	12,137,324	.43	-.05
1846	35,653,000	4 1	4,586,000	1,740,000	41,979,000	1.47	+.07	14,228,916	.49	+.02
						Av. 1.40			Av. .47	

The quantity of malt charged with duty in the United Kingdom, in 1847, was 35,804,217 bushels: giving a proportion per head on the population of 1.22 bushels; or .18 of a bushel less than the average of the preceding eight years.

The table relating to tea is obviously that upon which most reliance is to be placed. Though the bonded price of tea has varied considerably, the duty (which has during the greater part of the time exceeded the price of congou), has only varied once, and that but slightly, and near the beginning of the period in view, when (15th May, 1840,) the duty was increased by an addition of 5 per cent. Neither the quantity consumed, nor the expenditure, per head, affords, however, a just indication of the condition of the people. The quantity consumed was limited, in the earlier years, as well by a high price as by a want of means to purchase; and in the latter years, both these conditions were reversed: lower prices and increased means of purchase coming together, so as to render it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to assign to each its due share in the general effect. The two years of comparative prosperity 1843-44 show a smaller expenditure, per head, on tea, than any of the three preceding years, 1840-41-42; and though the quantity consumed is increased, the coincident fall of price claims a share in the production of that effect, and a share the extent of which we have no means of defining.

The table relating to sugar is still less satisfactory, from the greater number and variety of the corrections requisite to render inferences from it practically trustworthy. The column showing the expenditure per head, cannot be held to indicate the varying condition of the people, till due allowance has been made for the fluctuations of the cost to the consumer, as affected (sometimes in opposite directions) by variations of supply, and by changes of the duty. And the column showing the variations in the quantity annually entered for consumption requires a still further correction, for the disturbance of the ordinary operations of the trade, either by extraordinarily high prices, or by the anticipations of a change of the import duties. Thus there was, apparently, a very remarkable diminution of the quantity consumed in 1840, as compared with 1839, and an equally remarkable increase in 1841. It will be observed that the average price of 1840 was unusually high; but this alone does not account for the altered rate of consumption. Some portion of the explanation is found in a closer examination of the basis of the table. The average price given for the year 1840, is no more the price proper to the natural supply of that year, (which was extremely short,) than the price of wheat in any astronomical year is that proper to the produce of any particular harvest. The bulk of the sugar crop of the West Indies, the failure of which, in 1839-40, caused the high price, reaches this country early in the summer. The prices of the first four or five months of the year, are ruled by the previous supply, rather than by that yet to come; and hence, if the year was made to begin in May, the price of 1840-41, would be much higher than that given for 1840, and that of 1841-42, much lower than that given for 1841. Instead of being as 48s. 7d. to 38s. 3d., they would be as 53s. to 36s., or thereabouts. So large an addition as was thus made, in the spring of 1840, to the price of sugar in bond, would, of course, (the cause of the addition being obviously temporary,) induce dealers to bring down their stocks (bought at prices 20, 30 or 40

per cent. lower than those then prevailing,) as low as possible, so as to postpone the need for further purchases. Something is also to be allowed for an increase of the practice of adulterating sugar, which, it is to be feared, invariably follows any material increase of the bonded price. When the more abundant crop of 1841 arrived, and prices fell, a portion of the new supply would be taken out of bond simply to replenish stocks in the hands of dealers; and this appearing undistinguished in the annual entries "for consumption," would, as it does by the table, unduly enhance the apparent quantity consumed in that year. In like manner, the quantity consumed under the high prices of 1840 was greater, in fact, than as it appears in the table; as not only the quantity taken out of bond in that year, but also a large proportion of what is usually retained in stock by the dealers, was consumed. Perhaps the nearest practicable approximation to the correct figures would be made, by adding together the quantities taken in the two years, 1840 and 1841, and distributing the consumption solely by reference to the price, seeing that those two years were nearly on a par in every other circumstance apparently influencing the quantity consumed. A mere average, however, will remove the anomalous character of the figures as they now stand, thus:—

Consumption, per head.	Expenditure, per head.
Cwt.	£
1840..... 134	492
1841..... 149	475
Av. 141	Av. 483

It may here, however, be observed, that the influences which thus operated, to an exaggerated extent, upon the sugar trade of 1840, are also to be allowed for as operating to some extent under every material variation of the price (to the dealer,) of articles of general and constant demand, of which the stocks in hand are either large enough to admit, by their reduction, of a postponement of the dealers' demand, or of such a nature as to facilitate the apparent increase of quantity by adulteration.

It is also to be observed, generally, that the extension of the railway system between London and all the other principal ports of entry for foreign supplies, and every other part of the kingdom in which articles of foreign production are held in stock for immediate consumption, has so far facilitated the gradual reduction of these stocks during the period in view, that we may safely infer that the quantities of tea and sugar, and of all similar articles, actually consumed, particularly in the latter years, were somewhat greater than the quantities taken out of bond.

As to the tables relating to the comparative consumption of malt and spirits, though the supply and the prices of both may have remained unaffected by the variations in the price of barley, the consumption of both has, undoubtedly, been much interfered with by influences apart from those the development of which is now particularly desired. It would appear that the consumption of

malt was highest in the years 1838-9-40, when the price of barley was also highest; and that the consumption was lowest in the five years 1841 to 1845 inclusive, when the price of barley was lowest. But assuming that the price of barley had no influence upon the consumption of beer and spirits, it is strange that the earlier years, being years of decided depression among the principal consumers of both, should exhibit at once a larger quantity of malt consumed and more paid for it. It would seem that either the quantity of malt charged in any given year is no index to the current consumption of beer and spirits, or that the profits of brewers and distillers admit of enormous variation of amount—or, finally, that the quantity of beer or spirits, or both, consumed per head, has been rapidly diminishing, from causes wholly apart from variations of the price or of the means of purchase possessed by the consumers.

At this point of the enquiry it may be advisable to take a combined view of the four tables; as in some degree explaining each other. It will be observed that those years in which the evidence previously adduced has established the existence of the greatest depression, were also the years in which (so far as the imperfect nature of the information afforded by these tables will enable us to arrive at any positive conclusion) the quantity of malt and of spirits consumed per head, and the proportion of the incomes of the people devoted to their purchase was greatest; and the quantity of tea and sugar consumed, and the proportion of income spent upon them, was least. And if we then turn to the years of apparent prosperity, we find more tea and sugar consumed per head, and less malt and spirits; though, in these years, the means of purchasing each must have been greatly, and about equally, augmented.*

Such is the first and perhaps the most remarkable inference to be deduced from a combined view of these four tables. If, however, we compare the annual variations of the consumption of, and apparent expenditure upon, all these articles, we find some ground for inferring that, apart from all other influences, there has been a gradual change of the habits of the consumers—a transfer of their taste and of their money from beer and spirits to tea.†

It is not necessary to the correctness of this last inference to suppose that the habits of individuals are being changed to any great extent. If we take the annual mortality in the United Kingdom of persons between 15 and 60 years of age at 1.33 per cent., the number of persons between those ages annually removed by death, on an average of the eight years now in view, must have been about 370,000. Of those who annually come within these ages, so as to

* This inference, however, as well as every other deduced from materials so scanty as those yet available for the investigation of the present subject, is to be received with due regard to several circumstances adverted to in the following pages, as well as to those which have already been particularly referred to. *Especially*, the results of the "temperance movement" are to be kept in view.

† And here I may observe that were the present paper not already more than sufficiently extended, I might have brought forward strong confirmation of the correctness of this inference from the official accounts of the concurrent entries for consumption of coffee and cocoa.

supply their places, there is, probably, a constantly increasing proportion of persons who, in accordance with the growing intelligence, and the changing habits of the community in other respects, prefer coffee or tea to beer or spirits.

The increased consumption of malt shown in the returns for 1846 may perhaps be traced mainly to the demand of the great number of men employed in 1845 and 1846 upon railway works. Their congregation, in many instances, in temporary villages or encampments on the line, separated from their families and apart from the influences of home has, as is known through official enquiries, had an evil effect upon their habits, and, combined with hard labour in the open air, could hardly fail to lead to an increased consumption of both beer and spirits.

The table relating to spirits requires one or two special remarks. The effect of the temperance movement under Father Mathew appears to have been confined, for the most part, to the consumption of spirits in Ireland, and by Irishmen in Great Britain; I have, therefore, kept the returns for each of the three kingdoms distinct. The foreign and colonial spirits form but a small part of the whole, and are chiefly consumed by the middle and upper classes. The reduction of the import duty in 1846 is, however, to be allowed for in considering the general increase of consumption in the last year of the period.

In regarding the variations of the prices of such articles as wheat, barley, oats, beef, mutton, tea, sugar, &c., with reference to any influence they may have had in producing, or aiding, variations in the material condition of the people, it will not be forgotten that fluctuations in the prices of such articles necessarily produce corresponding fluctuations in the prices of many others. For instance, besides the grain consumed for human food, there is a considerable demand for the consumption of cattle, for brewing and distilling, and for manufacturing purposes. Thus the feeders of horses and other cattle, brewers and distillers, and manufacturers, become, in time of scarcity, strenuous competitors with the bulk of the community for a share of the common supply; and finally the farmers themselves must either withhold from the market, or purchase, the quantity requisite for seed. If there be also, from other causes, as there was during the period now in view, a short supply and high prices of other principal articles of food, such as those already mentioned, a general increase of the cost of production, and so of the price, of every article of general use, is, obviously a natural, and all but inevitable, consequence.

If, turning from the conclusions arrived at, or approached, through the medium of these calculations, we refer to the current of public events during the period in question, these would appear to afford no slight confirmation of the results obtained by the more abstract method.

The riots in Birmingham, in July 1839, the outbreak at Newport, Monmouthshire, in the following November, and the similar disturbances in Sheffield, in January 1840, seem to point significantly to the growth of an uneasy condition of the operatives in the manufacturing districts, in the summer, autumn, and winter of 1839-40. These would appear to

have been the first movements of the "rebellion of the belly," consequent upon the high prices of food, and the depression of trade, following the defective harvests of 1838 and 1839.

When the distress had continued for some time, even though it became deeper, the manner of its expression was changed. It was shown in complaint, rather than in outrage. The firm, and from the first successful, repression of these outbreaks was followed by comparative quiet, though apparently under increasing suffering, for more than a year.

In the summer of 1841, public complaints of want of employment and of the high prices of food became general. Meetings of the municipal authorities took place in Manchester, Leeds, Bolton, Stockport, and other places in England, and in several of the manufacturing towns of Scotland, for the express purpose of making known the particulars of, and devising measures to relieve, the distress then prevailing among the labouring poor. And as the time approached for the prorogation of Parliament, in 1841, numerous public meetings were held, to petition that the effect of the import duties on corn might first be considered.

As the winter came on, and the usual suspension of farming occupations threw the agricultural labourer upon a still more scanty subsistence, incendiary fires appeared in several of the southern counties. The ensuing half year, ending at Lady-day 1842, was, as has been shown, one of severe pressure upon the poor's rate in all parts of England and Wales.

Early in the summer of 1842 (May), public meetings, and disturbances, again took place in Lancashire and Cheshire, always in avowed connexion with the general scarcity of employment, the high prices of food, and the influence attributed to the corn laws in the production and perpetuation of both. In the beginning of June the disturbances assumed a more alarming form in a general strike of the colliers of the midland counties, several thousands of whom turned out and stopped the working of the pits in which others were disposed to remain at their employment. Before the middle of July (1842) all work was stopped in the iron and coal works of that part of the country, and in the Staffordshire potteries. And in the first week in August, all the manufacturing towns of Lancashire, and the West Riding of Yorkshire, and the collieries in the West of Scotland, were included in the general stoppage.

This was the culminating point.

Thenceforward everything moved towards a change for the better. The harvest proved to be abundant, and was secured in good condition. It was also assisted in its effect upon prices by large foreign supplies, sent forward in anticipation of a continuance of the scarcity of the previous four years. The termination of the war with China, (in August 1842) put a stop to a considerable branch of government expenditure, and substituted the prospect of a speedy reimbursement of what had been spent. It also caused a rapid fall in the prices of tea. And the re-opening of the China trade, with liberty to carry our commerce into four additional ports, led to a brisk renewal of the export trade to that country, which, during the following spring, contributed to call the factories again into active employment. Within the last few weeks of the same year (1842) came news of the successful advance of the British army on Cabul, and its safe retreat, after rescuing the British prisoners and avenging the disasters of the year before. The apparent certainty of abundant supplies of food at moderate prices, and the improved aspect of our affairs abroad, tended strongly to diffuse a general feeling of confidence in the approach of more prosperous times. The funds rose, credit was extended, and the rate of discount on commercial bills, of the first class, fell, between August 1842, and January 1843, from 4 to 2 per cent.

From this time forward complaints from the manufacturing districts were gradually less and less heard.

The winter of 1842-3, however, though not a severe one, was marked by

the heaviest pressure upon the poors' rates which had been felt since 1835. The following figures, taken from the reports of the Poor Law Commissioners, will afford some idea of it:—

FOR THE YEARS ENDING AT LADY-DAY.		
	Amount expended in relief and maintenance of the poor in England and Wales.	Average price of wheat per quarter.
	£	s. d.
1839	4,406,907	69 4
1840	4,576,965	68 6
1841	4,760,929	65 3
1842	4,911,498	64 0
1843	5,208,027	54 4

The continuous increase of the general burden of pauperism, down even to Lady-day, 1843, notwithstanding so considerable a reduction, during the last year, in the price of grain, seems to be best explained by the extreme exhaustion of the means of the labouring classes. Though the price of food was so much reduced, their means of purchasing it would appear to have been reduced in a still greater proportion; and these were not generally replenished till the resumption of commercial activity, begun in the spring of 1843, had, towards the close of the summer, brought more or less within its influence the whole mass of the labouring population.

The general condition of the labouring classes in the latter half of 1843, during the whole of 1844-45, and down to the autumn of 1846, was commonly stated, at the time, to be one of full employment, with moderate prices of food, and tranquillity scarcely disturbed. The only remarkable exception is that which has already been observed upon, as existing at the commencement of this period, and in the condition of the agricultural labourer.

The pressure which had fallen first upon the manufacturing, was removed last from the agricultural districts.

The large influx of foreign corn in 1842 depressed the value of the home supply considerably below the point indicated by its own abundance. And though the supply, both home and foreign, was much less (in comparison with the then higher current demand) from the harvest of 1843 forward, than in the preceding year, this seems to have brought but little relief to the farmers. And the abundant harvest of 1844, again induced a strong and general feeling of depression in the agricultural districts.

In the summer and autumn of 1844, open expressions of discontent among the agricultural labourers, and frequent incendiary fires in the southern counties, drew the attention of the public to their condition; and in November and December of that year, when, in the metropolis, and in the chief manufacturing towns, public meetings were becoming numerous in connexion with the sanitary condition of the workpeople, and the stress laid upon the necessity for commodious apartments, with sufficient supplies of good air and water and the means of healthful recreation, proved, most significantly, that the more pressing needs of a year or two before had, in those districts, passed away, other public meetings were elsewhere being held to devise means of raising the class of agricultural labourers from a state in which it appeared that the means of even the barest subsistence were scarcely attainable.

It has already been shown that very soon afterwards, that is to say in the spring of 1845, the condition of the agricultural districts exhibited signs of improvement, in a marked diminution of the rate of increase of the distress; and it would appear that the summer of that year placed these districts in a state of prosperity nearly resembling that previously enjoyed

by the manufacturing districts. How far the increased demand for labour in connexion with the railway speculations of 1844 and 1845 was a cause of this change, is one of those branches of the present enquiry upon which I must at present refrain from entering.

The temporary addition made to the apparent amount of the current income of the community during the speculations of 1845, was of a character which seems scarcely to call for remark, beyond a mere reference to the fact. That the consumption of all articles of convenience and luxury was materially increased in that year, is in some degree proved by the Customs and Excise returns, and these are, as far as I can learn, amply confirmed by the personal knowledge of those who, at the time, possessed adequate means of observation.

The causes which have, since September, 1846, operated, through the failure of the cotton and potato crops of that year, and the high prices of grain and meat, in limiting employment in the manufacturing districts, by checking the demand for all articles but those of primary necessity, as well as the effect of the continued employment given upon railway works in keeping up the ordinary demand from one section of the labouring classes, and the aggravation of the resulting distress by severe pressure upon the money market, are, so far as they concern the present subject, too obvious, and of too recent occurrence, to require further exposition.

Regarding this paper as a mere contribution towards the investigation of a subject of the highest interest to the community at large, and trusting to make it, or see it made, use of in aid of more extensive and minute enquiries, I have made no effort to impart to it the appearance of a completeness to which it can, in fact, have no pretension. In conclusion, however, I am desirous of drawing attention to one in particular of the leading lines of enquiry suggested by the facts stated, and which the scope of this paper will not permit me to do more than suggest.

The continuance of distress in the agricultural districts so long after that prevailing in the manufacturing districts had been succeeded by comparative prosperity, brings to view a remarkably interesting problem; and as, during the preparation of this paper I have been led to regard it with much attention, I will venture to offer to those who may, with better means, attempt its solution by a strictly statistical method, the inference bearing upon it, which I am inclined to deduce from the materials here presented.

The matter in doubt, it will be observed, arises thus:—All the evidence adduced and analyzed in the preceding pages points to the conclusion that during the greater part of the period now under review, the agricultural labourers, though not exposed to the same violent alternations of condition as their fellow labourers in the manufacturing towns, were suffering from influences of more enduring operation; one of the most striking results of which was, as has been seen, a constant increase of the proportionate number of paupers among them down to the Lady-day quarter of 1845,—at least a year-and-a-half after a decided change for the better had become manifest in the manufacturing districts.—One of the principal causes of this prolongation of the depression in the agricultural districts may, I conceive, be found in the fact that the rapid growth of our manufacturing system has made a migration of young persons from the agricultural to the manufacturing districts a constant and necessary operation. The rate of increase of the agricultural population having in some degree adjusted itself to the furnishing of the needful average supply, a material reduction of the demand, especially if continued over a period of four or five years, cannot but have the effect of disturbing, most injuriously to the agricultural labourer, the state of the labour market as it bears immediately upon him. The accumulated supply of young men and women, retained to out-bid their elder relatives in the field, instead of finding their way to the factory, must in many instances become permanently fixed in the occupations of the former;—and when, at length, the revival of trade in the

towns, having first given employment to the resident population (also increased in the interval), again offers an opening to immigrants from the country, those who have been ousted in competition with younger men at home (while these had no such opening) must find themselves placed at even a greater disadvantage in any attempt to compete for town employment. Thus it would appear that the stream of migration from the country districts, (continuing to flow under influences not *immediately* affected by changes in the cost of subsistence, or in the current amount of employment,) if once dammed back, even for a year, does not again find its level without the lapse of a considerable interval, and then only through the medium of severe depression and suffering.

Guided by these considerations, I am inclined to infer that the remarkable difference observed in the fluctuations of the proportion of pauperism to population in the agricultural and manufacturing districts (under variations in the price of food,) would probably, were the comparison carried over a longer period, be explained as arising from the prevalence, in the two descriptions of districts (as affected by the same general influences), of two rates of fluctuation, identical as to their causes and mode of operation, and distinguished only by *the difference of their bearing* upon the peculiar occupations and social condition of each district.

I cannot bring this paper to a close without referring to the evidence bearing directly upon its subject to be found in several papers which have already appeared in the Journal of the Society. In particular, I may mention a very valuable paper in Vol. IV. by William Neild, Esq., Mayor of Manchester, comparing accounts of *the actual income and expenditure of labouring families in Manchester and Dukinfield in 1836 and 1841*; and another in Vol. V. by Henry Ashworth, Esq., one of the directors of the Chamber of Commerce of Manchester in 1842, on the *then existing depression of trade at Bolton, showing the mode in which it affected the different classes of a manufacturing population*. These papers will be found to afford a very striking view of the extent and degree of the depression prevailing in the districts of the cotton manufacture during the first two or three years of the period brought to view in the present paper; and if taken in conjunction with it, will, I trust, supply in some degree, as to the earlier years, the deficiencies necessarily incident to the treatment of so large a subject by so feeble a hand.