

CHAPTER II

POPULATION

THROUGHOUT the whole of his author life Tucker consistently advocated increase of the population of Great Britain. In 1749 he commended the "flocks of children"¹ in the peasant families of France and favored state aid to "those burdened with large families."² In 1782 the climax, commendatory result to be achieved by his scheme for placing militiamen upon waste lands, was that it "would considerably increase the human species."³ In the thirty-three years lying between these dates he repeatedly declared Great Britain's need of a larger population. This was one of his emphasized arguments in the Naturalization papers.⁴ It was the central thought of the entire *Book I* of his great work.⁵ It had weight in leading him to oppose the settlement acts⁶ and to seek a revision of the general system of poor laws.⁷ It caused him to lament the emigration to the Americas.⁸ It led him to devise burdensome taxes to be laid upon bachelors and corresponding exemptions to be granted to married men.⁹ It even induced him to raise a fund to

¹ *Essay on Trade*, p. 41.

² *Ibid.*, p. 57.

³ *Reflections . . . Price . . . Wools*, p. 46.

⁴ In *Reflect. Nat. For. Prot. Part II*, p. 17, he quotes approvingly "In the multitude of people is the king's honor." Prov. xiv, 28.

⁵ The first draft of this *Book I*, as submitted to his friends for criticism, is contained in the *Elements*, pp. 11 to 41.

⁶ *Elements*, p. 21, and *Manifold Causes Increase of Poor*, p. 7.

⁷ *Manifold Causes Increase of Poor*, p. 7.

⁸ *State of the Nation*.

⁹ *Elements*, pp. 16-29. *Manifold Causes Inc. Poor*, pp. 16 and 17.

provide marriage portions for poor young women.¹ Clearly it is his central thesis upon population.

He had reasons for his belief that Great Britain should increase her population, reasons stated in the form of "polities for increasing the numbers of people." Tucker's *Book I* of the *Elements* is headlined as "containing certain polities for increasing the numbers of people." Tucker's theorist instinct asserts itself at once and he endeavors to show "the need for such a polity." A digest² of his argument must suffice:

"(1) Where a country is thinly peopled it is impossible to promote a brisk and general circulation of industry and labor by reason of the distance and dispersion of the people . . . and the consequence of that, their want of rivalship . . . experience confirms this. In every country extremely thin of inhabitants the people are proportionably poor and miserable and lead such lives as are but a few removes from the brute savages of the woods and mountains. Suppose only 10,000, inhabitants of Great Britain . . . these few would soon degenerate into British savages . . ." Division of labor increasing the "quantity of work performed" and bettering the "quality or workmanship" itself is impossible where there is a scarcity of inhabitants.

(2) Where a country is thinly inhabited there is little gain in trade and therefore "country gentlemen are still more prejudiced against it" and against those whom they consider "low born tradesmen and mechanics" and "vie rather with each other in the dangers of chase, pretensions of birth and family and length of pedigree."

(3) Where a country is thinly peopled lands will be the more easily engrossed and entailed in a few families . . . land-

¹ *Memoirs Kames*, vol. iii, pp. 162-163.

² The digests that follow, excepting where special references are given, are taken from the *Elements*, pp. 11 to 41.

holders become more despotic over vassals" This flatters the pride of the "petty tyrant" but he will have "less comforts than common tradesmen in a populous and industrious country. . . . Commerce as it is cultivated [tends] to extend industry and plenty, equalizes mankind more than any other way of life and at the same time that it connects them together in bonds of mutual interest it renders them free. Trade and vassalage, commerce and slavery are in their natures repugnant to each other."

(4) A thinly peopled country has neither strength nor riches for the numbers of the people are the strength as industry is the riches of a country."¹

(5) The increase of the people (brings) the increase of rent² to the landlord.¹

(6) A country thinly peopled has no implements for the improvement of husbandry, etc., no good roads, rivers made navigable³ and canals, etc., etc., no capitals either for husbandry or manufactures.⁴

(7) A country etc., produces no constant supply even of necessaries of life; hence families, etc.⁴

¹Sections vii, viii and ix (pp. 16-20), of *Reflect. Nat. For. Prot. Part II*, are respectively entitled "The increase of inhabitants the strength of a kingdom," "The increase of people the riches of a country," and "The increase of people the increase of rent to the landlord."

²This is an illustration of the appeal Tucker frequently makes to the landed gentry. He rightly estimated them to be the ruling class in eighteenth century English politics.

³Tucker was greatly interested in inland navigation improvements. See his *Improvements and Savings in Inland Navigations Exemplified on the River Stroud*, *Gent's Mag.*, vol. xxx, pp. 167-168. In the *Essay on Trade*, 3rd Ed., pp. 116 to 118, he advocates cutting canals "between our great towns of trade for convenience and cheapness of carriage," and "counts canals better than making rivers more navigable."

⁴These two paragraphs just as given above are marginal additions in Tucker's own handwriting, in the New York Public Library (Astor) copy of the *Elements*.

The very depopulation leads others to leave as they cannot secure employment . . . lands lie waste where there are no markets and artificers cannot be employed without customers."

Thus Tucker argues the general proposition that sparse population is detrimental to a country. So far indeed is he from fearing a Malthusian surfeit of population that he says:

"it is impossible there can be a want of labor [i. e. employment for labor] but where there is a previous want of industry on one side or the other. For the more hands there are employed, the more employments they will create for other hands, etc." ¹

He next confines his consideration to Great Britain in particular and contends that something must be wrong in its polity since it is *slowly* gaining in population although well situated and with rich resources:

"Great Britain now has wrong notions of public welfare and national commerce in the following respects (1) The marriage state is loaded with taxes . . . the duties and excises paid by a father on commodities consumed by his family are practically a fine upon marriage." (2) "This inducement to celibacy increases vice" or at best "young people assume no responsibility." (3) By entailing great estates and primogeniture, small farms are destroyed. (4) The nobility remain single and spend their prime in debauchery "so that those of higher rank, who ought to set the example, seldom think of raising a family till they are fitter for a hospital than the bridal bed." (5) The very liberty of the English corrupts their morals; the gallows, electioneering, spirituous liquors and debauchery helping to dispeople the country. (6) "Our distant colonies and navigation, perilous trades and English troops employed by the continent, draw off many" people, while "European nations attract our tradesmen and artificers."

¹ *Spirit. Liquors*, p. 33.

Tucker therefore concludes that Great Britain should adopt a polity that would increase both marriage and immigration. In outline the polity which he suggests for "rendering marriage the foundation of civil society, a matter of the universal choice and aim of both sexes" is:

(1) Let no post or title of honor or emolument be given to a person never married.

(2) Persons to be minors until 25 years of age, unless married before, with the consent of parents; then minors until 21 years.

(3) Statute of 5th Elizabeth requiring seven years apprenticeship should be repealed as to married men but retained as to bachelors.¹

(4) "Let married men be free to work as journeymen or set up any trade in any town whatsoever."

(5) Let married men reside any where without parish certificates, provided a responsible man gives 5£ security they do not become parish charges within three months.

(6) Let men not work at women's trades unless married.

(7) For twelve months after marriage let a man decline any offices he chooses and be exempt from personal duties and taxes.

(8) Divorce should be granted by lower courts to either party upon proof of the other's adultery.²

As consequences of the adoption of his suggested polity Tucker prophesies that:

¹ Tucker comments: "This statute was really meant to serve monopoly and base ends . . . turn it to good."

² Pages 23 to 27 of the *Elements* are devoted to a discussion of divorce. Tucker concludes that it should be granted for adultery only, and that the guilty party should be imprisoned for a year. He argues that the lower courts should have jurisdiction instead of, as then obtained, the plan empowering Parliament alone to grant a complete divorce. "It needs friends and money to get this." Archbishop Secker, in a marginal note in the New York Library copy, suggests "Money alone will do."

(1) Marriages, with the honors all to the married, "will become the style."

(2) All will marry and therefore there will be no dissatisfaction in comparing married selves with single blessedness.

(3) Debauchery will be lessened when men of property marry early.

(4) Self-love will prompt the person of family to keep sober in desire to support well their own.

(5) Self-love will prompt them to train their children to sober callings and religious living.

(6) Parents will have more authority in marriage, with the majority at 25 years.

(7) Drinking, crimes and lusts will be lessened.

(8) Divorce will release innocent and punishment threatened will restrain those willing to be guilty.

A fully developed argument for "the admission of wealthy and industrious foreigners," continues Tucker's polity for increasing Great Britain's population. The plan for encouraging this immigration should be, in general:

"(1) To make known to foreigners the true nature of the English Constitution and (2) To enact laws removing all difficulties they labor under but not naturalizing them since the public is too greatly prejudiced."¹

He closes his presentation of this polity with the statement that later polities which he will present, will co-operate with the one outlined above:

"A set of polities which promote industry and discourage vice . . . puts mankind into a capacity of increasing their species without bringing misery on themselves or entailing it upon their posterity . . . the several parts of the great com-

¹ An illustration of Tucker's constant aim in his practical programs to offer not what is ideally best, but the best that is likely to be approved.

mercial system do indeed mutually support and strengthen each other inasmuch as populousness hath a natural tendency to promote industry and good morals and these in turn as naturally create populousness.”¹

In close connection with Tucker’s treatment of his leading idea concerning population are his suggestions upon three subsidiary but important topics (1) Immigration (2) The rural exodus and (3) The poor.

I. IMMIGRATION.

Tucker favors immigration and opposes emigration, even to the British colonies. He asserts that the British have a peculiar and characteristic aversion to foreigners. One of the first pleas in his arguments for the naturalization of incoming foreigners, both Protestant and Jew, is made against this hostility to foreigners. He tells the English that they themselves are “a collection of all races and foreign tongues”² and that the common people of Wales are accustomed to call an Englishman who comes amongst them “a little pitiful Saxon who comes one knows not from where.”³ He holds aversion to foreigners to be especially irrational to so motley blooded a people.

He takes up the same topic from the historical point of view⁴ and argues that opposition to foreigners is prejudiced

¹This is another application of Tucker’s “fundamental harmony” thesis.

²*Reflect. Nat. For. Prot., Part I*, p. 62.

³*Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁴Part I of *Reflect. Nat. For. Prot.* is an admirable historical critique of the disposition of natives of Great Britain towards foreigners. It traces the history from the time of the conquest, pointing out the periods of development in trade and manufacture as coincident with the periods of freest immigration, and accrediting to foreigners the introduction and development of various manufactures. The *2d Letter to a Friend on Naturalizations* in a similar way traces the historical rights

since much of English prosperity in manufactures and commerce is due to industrious immigrants. These thoughts are all embodied in the queries with which he opens *Part II. of his Reflections upon the Naturalization of Foreign Protestants*:

“Is popular prejudice a test of the truth? Does the word foreigner not carry the idea of contempt and reproach? Have the English any grounds for this? Ought not the native, pursuing aims hostile to the country, be rather regarded as an alien? Do we not owe our knowledge in the manufacture of cloth, stuffs, linens, hats, iron, copper, brass, etc., to the instructions of foreigners?”

But many of those who might acquiesce in his favorable opinion of past immigrant contributions to British prosperity would oppose present immigration on the ground that immigrants displaced British workmen. Tucker therefore presents an argument upon this phase of the subject:

“Let foreigners come to take the bread out of our mouths!! Out of whose mouths? It must be English bread. The corn grew here, was manufactured here, was sold here. And the foreigners who eat it earn it by their labor and pay for it. . . . The more inhabitants there are to consume the produce of our lands, the better can the farmer and the gentleman pay their shopkeepers and tradesman, and the more manufactures will they consume in every respect. Let us see in the next place:

and wrongs of the Jews in Great Britain. Its tolerant theme, for Tucker was a native British, royalist, Protestant advocating the cause of an alien, Jewish, people against the royal, British, oppressors, was: “our princes only used them (the Jews) as sponges to suck up the treasure of the nation, and then when they had a mind to squeeze them dry, they let loose the popular odium and fury upon them. This is the true state of the case and the origin of their sufferings.” P. 36 of *2d Lett. on Naturalization*.

Out of what mouths do they take the bread? If they introduce new manufactures, or carry those already established to greater perfection, in that case the public is greatly benefitted and no individual can be injured. If they employ themselves only in such as are already settled and perfected, they will not defraud the mouths of sober, frugal and industrious persons, who may work as cheaply, and can work as well, as foreigners, and therefore should be obliged to do both. . . . But we are told that English tradesmen of every denomination are used to live better than foreigners, and therefore cannot afford to work or to sell so cheap as they. Apply this to foreign trade. . . . If English ask 5 per cent., 10 per cent., etc., more for goods and argue that they live better, other nations will outsell them. . . . The English must trade at least upon an equal footing with other nations, or not trade at all. If not at all, even the most self-interested may be sorry we did not admit industrious foreigners. . . . For example, take Birmingham: It admits freely all; is no exclusive town. Englishmen coming from other towns are practically foreigners to its natives. Yet natives have lost no bread. Property has risen, . . . great accession to its trade, . . . very prosperous, . . . fewer beggars here, and in Leeds and Manchester (both free), than in towns with exclusive charters and trading companies. So true and certain is it that these rights and privileges, as they are called, do multiply the numbers of the poor, because they damp the spirit of industry, frugality and emulation. A manufacturer who knows that no foreigner dares come in to be a competitor against him, thinks himself privileged to be idle.”¹ . . . “There must be rivals in commerce at home and abroad. If so, is it not better to have the rivals at home?”²

“The immigrants that Great Britain needs are merchant capitalists, artisans and mechanics.”³ Especially desirable are

¹ *Essays on Trade, 3d Ed.*, pp. 84-87.

² *Reflect. Nat. For. Prot. Part II*, p. 33.

³ *Elements*, pp. 30, 31.

those "industrious and ingenious foreigners, men who have their fortunes yet to make," who may "come and enrich the country at the same time that they are enriching themselves."¹ The idle rich are not so desirable. If all the idle rich were to locate in England, it would soon become "a nation of gentlemen and ladies on one side, and footmen and grooms, ladies' women, laundresses, and such like dependents, on the other."²

There need be no fear that foreign beggars will come, for they "are too lazy and poor, and cannot speak the language."³

As to the alleged danger that foreigners might corrupt the English, Tucker is of the opinion that "there is greater danger that the English should corrupt the foreigners, than *vice versa*."⁴

It is to be expected that one favoring immigration on the general ground that Great Britain needed a larger population, should be opposed to emigration from the British isles. In his American papers, Tucker did oppose such emigration, even to the British colonies.¹ He had accurately noted that :

"The emigrants who lately sailed in such multitudes from the north of Scotland, and more especially from the north of Ireland, were far from being the most indigent or the least capable of subsisting in their own country. No, it was not poverty or necessity which compelled, but ambition which enticed, them to forsake their native soil."²

It should be observed that his opposition to emigration to the colonies was expressed after he had arrived at the conclusion that separation from the American colonies was

¹ *Four Tracts*, pp. 26, 27.

² *Reflect. Nat. For. Prot. Part II*, p. 40. Tucker had a very low estimate of the moral character of the English people in his day. See *Sermon at Charity School*, pp. 18-20.

³ See *Humble Address*, etc., pp. 62-65.

inevitable. In closing his earlier argument upon emigration written in 1752 he thought that it would be

“ prudent to keep open two doors, one to let in such people as will come to the state, . . . the other to let those go to the colonies who wish; . . . better allow our own people to go to the colonies than to our rivals.”¹

It is only fair to Tucker's logical accuracy to observe that these seemingly contradictory positions are in harmony. After the colonies had declared their independence and were in the attitude of rivals, they were practically a foreign state; and even in his earlier discussion Tucker impliedly opposes emigration to other states. The net result is that he favored immigration into the empire and opposed emigration from it.

II. THE RURAL EXODUS

From his observations of the shiftings of the people within the island territory Tucker is led to remark upon the flow of population towards the cities and its effects:

“ As to the continual flux of the lower order of people into towns and cities, and their desertion of their native places, this, alas, may be but too well accounted for: . . . First, it is but natural to suppose that the poor, being of the same flesh and blood with their superiors, and exposed to the same temptations, should be infected with the reigning disorder of the times, viz., a thirst after pleasure and amusements, a taste for gaiety and show, and consequently a desire of supporting their expenses without much industry or application. . . . But, secondly, it is not always true that rustics and peasants come to reside in towns and cities through choice and inclination; on the contrary, they are frequently driven to this expedient of late years, especially

¹ *Reflect. Nat. For. Prot. Part II*, p. 37.

through cruel necessity. For when their narrow-minded landlords pull down their cottages in order to avoid even the contingency of a poor tax, and when they themselves are hunted from one country parish to another for the same reason, and not supposed to fix their abode on any, what can these poor wretches do but flee to great towns and cities?"¹

The result as Tucker saw it was that

"Great cities are already becoming the bane of mankind in every sense, in their health, their fortunes, their morals, religion, etc., etc., etc., and it is observable of London in particular, that were no fresh recruits, male and female, to come out of the country to supply those devastations which vice, intemperance, brothels and the gallows are continually making, the whole human species in that city would soon be exhausted. For the number of deaths exceeds the number of births by at least 7,000 every year."²

III. THE POOR

Tucker dealt with the question of the poor at some length. He (a) described their actual condition, (b) suggested their claims upon the nations, (c) criticized the prevailing plan for the maintenance and control of those who became public charges, and (d) constructed a plan of his own for dealing with the public's poor.

a. DESCRIBES CONDITION OF POOR

In describing the condition of the poor he pictures a grievous state of things in England:

"With regard to the morals of the poor, times were never worse. For the lower class of people are at this day so far degenerated from what they were in former times as to become a

¹ *Sermon at Charity School*, pp. 18, 19.

² *Treatise on Gov't*, pp. 260-61.

matter of astonishment and a proverb of reproach. And if we take the judgment of strangers and foreigners of every country, who are certainly the most unexceptionable judges in this respect, we shall find them all agreed in pronouncing the common people of our populous cities¹ to be the most abandoned and licentious wretches on earth. Such brutality² and insolence, such debauchery and extravagance, such idleness, irreligion, cursing . . . and contempt of all rule and authority, human and divine, do not reign so triumphantly among the poor in any other country as in ours." One reason is, "our people are drunk with the cup of liberty; . . . the lowest of the people are now become the ultimate judges of public affairs; . . . they turn this liberty into licentiousness; . . . they outbrave punishment. . . . Our houses of correction corrupt more than they correct."³ "And what shall I say of our mariners? . . . What they have been so long in earning, at the hazard of their lives, . . . they profusely and wantonly throw away, as if the whole pleasure of spending their money consisted in doing it as speedily, as foolishly and as wickedly as they could devise."⁴

b. PRESENTS CLAIMS OF POOR

To those who would argue that no attempt should be made to elevate the poor for fear that the "balance of condition which ever ought to exist between rich and poor" be disturbed, Tucker replies:

"If they mean to say that the poor should be treated as so many beasts of burden, without being permitted to enjoy the fruits of their own labor, or to rise gradually in the world by

¹ Previous quotation, see pp. 114, 115, has given Tucker's partial explanation of the crowding of poor people into the cities.

² Tucker's *Earnest Address*, etc., in 1787 argued against cock throwing as unmanly and cruel. It brought reproach upon the country, for "It is on account of such diversions as those that they give us abroad the character of a bloodthirsty and inhuman people," p. 5.

³ *Six Sermons*, pp. 70-74.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

superior industry or skill, by greater frugality or better economy, this is nothing else but saying, in other words, that the poor ought to be kept in a state of slavery of the most abject kind, . . . and slavery will ever be found as repugnant to the interests of society as it is contradictory to the principles of common justice and humanity. Nay, it is known, experimentally known, to be incompatible with an extensive progress, much less with any great perfection, in manufactures and the mechanic arts. . . . It has been observed . . . that those whose private interest leads them to be industrious and to cultivate everything to the best advantage, succeed the best in making useful discoveries at first, and in prosecuting them afterwards. . . . If any . . . poor . . . exert greater industry, or display superior skill, or practice better economy than others, . . . they ought to be at full liberty . . . to rise in the world. . . . Can we pursue other measures consistently with those ideas of freedom and liberty which now prevail?"¹

So much for the rights of the poor to an opportunity to rise. As to their claims upon society for charity Tucker says:

"It is a principle of justice and equity . . . that it is fitting and right to return something to the poor, by way of compensation, for the inequality of our possessions, and of making some reparation for the injuries they may have suffered, and the diseases contracted, when drudging on our account." But such charity should be disposed where "most good may be done in the most effectual way; where idleness and imposture may be sure of being detected, . . . where industry may be encouraged."²

C. CRITICIZES POOR HOUSE SYSTEM

Tucker's criticism of the system of caring for the public

¹ *Sermon Charity School*, pp. 19-22.

² *Six Sermons*, p. 86.

poor and his own plan for remedying the defects of the prevailing system are both elaborated in very considerable detail in his *Manifold Causes of the Increase of the Poor*. Only the scantest outline can be given¹ of them here. In criticism he argued:

1. The present districts are too small (1) to employ the poor effectually, (2) to teach the young Christianity and some particular industry, (3) to have good government of the poor, (4) to secure cheap maintenance and (5) equal taxation, (6) to prevent lawsuits.

2. Annual election of officers is a capital defect. "Little consideration will be given to any plan which cannot be harvested within a year."

3. Because of these defects the poor become desirous of parish pay, "as a pension to support them in laziness and indolence. Therefore they suffer themselves to become the poorer and more miserable in order to move compassion and to be considered as the proper candidates for this desirable state of life, which frees them at once from all labor and care."

4. "The taxes for the support of the poor are not founded on a judicious principle; . . . the legislature seems to have had no other end in view than . . . just to raise as much money as the case required. Whereas the first view in laying on taxes for the support of the poor should be to remove or lessen all such causes and temptations as may have contributed towards making people poor, so that these evils may be prevented for the future. . . . Secondly, to raise a sum of money sufficient to maintain those already poor and defray such expenses as cannot now be prevented, and therefore must be submitted to."

5. Poor are daily increasing in numbers; poor rates are becoming intolerable; parishes carry on expensive war, offensive and defensive, with each other; industrious poor are hunted from parish to parish; difficulties are placed in the way of mar-

¹ All that follows, on the subject of the poor, is paraphrased or quoted from *Manifold Causes Increase of Poor*, 1760.

riage amongst the poor; the country is becoming depopulated; labor grows scarce; wages rise, and production of necessities decreases.

6. Due to the fact that the property qualification for voters has not changed since the 8th of Hen. VI, c. vii, which placed it at "40s. by the year at least, above all charges," although the purchasing power of money has changed very considerably, the poorer classes have more power in elections, and this is demoralizing.

d. PROPOSES A POORHOUSE SYSTEM

When he came to propose remedies for the evils outlined above, Tucker first stated the essential characteristics of a sane attempt to reform an ineffective or vicious system:

"The root of the evil should be reached, but not too precipitately or violently," for "the mass of mankind are more attached to old custom than to truth and reason, or the usefulness of things. . . . To prevent future drunkenness, idleness and extravagance in the rising generation should be the principal object of every proposal made." As nearly as possible the regulations should execute themselves. They should be based upon common principles and applicable throughout the realm. What the official positions lack in profit should be made up in honor to the incumbents.

Tucker then develops in minute detail a plan embodying the principles expressed above and aimed to correct the evils he had detected in the poorhouse system then in use. The details are worked to completeness for levying and collecting the necessary tax and even for the household economy of the poorhouse, the regulations of its workshops and the punishment of offenders among its inmates. A few of the leading features of his scheme deserve mention.

He opposes outrelief in all cases except: (1) infectious

disease; (2) a numerous family of young children;¹ (3) sudden calamity, such as a fire, rendering provident persons temporarily helpless; (4) sickness or casualty, rendering removal dangerous.

He would establish an employment bureau at each poor house.

He would forbid all begging and deal with all cheats and impostors as rogues and vagrants, to be arrested, placed upon a diet of bread and water, at hard labor for ten weeks, whipped twice each week and dismissed with a warning of doubled penalty for a second offense.

He would divide poorhouse inmates into three classes, treating the decrepit and the very young "tenderly," and dealing with those able to labor "according to their productive merits" i. e. at one extreme those producing very little to receive coarsest fare and clothing and scantily furnished rooms; at the other extreme, those producing much to have better food, clothing and rooms, to be permitted to keep a part of their earnings and to be given a certificate of industry and allowed to leave the poorhouse when their savings reached a given sum. He would employ the inmates in gardening, dairy farming, and staple manufacture such as that of coarse woollens. He would pay managers, teachers and others in charge of the poorhouse, in bounties proportioned to the quantity and quality of good produced.

This is but a meager outline of an honest and thoughtful attempt to aid in solving the knotty problem of the pauper in the England of 1760.

¹Tucker's general thesis for the need of an increased population evidently inspires this exception.