

bring upon the farmer evils much greater than those he thus escapes.

To prevent an excessive multiplication of some species is one of the grand objects of the present balance established among the whole. Such an increase is an inevitable effect of the extinction of a species, and it often occasions great mischief. The carnivorous species, especially, were intended to act as nature's police, to prevent a too great increase of the herbivorous races, which are rendered excessively fruitful to keep the world full. If, then, a carnivorous species become extinct, the species on which it has fed will so multiply as to prove great nuisances, and to produce wide disorder among many species, not only of animals, but of plants. And often has man, in this way, by the extermination of species, in particular districts, unwittingly brought a powerful reaction on himself.

On the island of New Zealand, within one or two hundred years, past, eight or ten species of gigantic birds, the *dinornis* and *palapteryx*, have become extinct, probably through the persecution of man. The natives without doubt, hunted them down for food, until all disappeared; and as no quadruped of much size inhabits the island, we think there is no little plausibility in the suggestion of Professor Owen, that when the birds were all gone, or nearly gone, the natives were tempted to the practice of cannibalism, as the only means of gratifying their passion for meat. What a terrible retribution for disturbing the equilibrium of organic nature!

The records of zoology and botany afford endless illustration of this subject. But the great truth which they all teach is, that so intimately are we related to other beings, that almost every action of ours reacts upon them for good or evil; for good, upon the whole, when we conform to the laws which God has established; and for evil, when by their violation we disturb the equilibrium of organized nature, and produce irregular action. In this latter case, we cannot tell where the disturbance, thus introduced, will end; for it is not a periodical oscillation, like the perturbations of the heavenly bodies, nor a mere change of position and intensity by mechanical forces.

But does not this law of mutual influence between organic beings extend to other worlds? Why should it not be transmitted by means of the luminiferous ether to the limits of the universe? Who knows but a blow struck upon a single link