

speciality in the law of prices, by which they oscillate more largely with the varieties in the supply of the necessaries, than they do in the mere comforts or luxuries of human life. The deficiency of one-tenth in the imports of sugar, would not so raise the price of that article, as a similar deficiency in the supply of corn, which might rise even a third in price, by a diminution of a tenth from the usual quantity brought to market. It is not with the reason, but with the beneficial effect of this phenomenon, that we at present have to do—not with its efficient, but with its final cause; or the great and obvious utilities to which it is subservient. Connected with this law of wider variation in the price than in the supply of first necessaries, is the reason why a population survive so well those years of famine, when the prices perhaps are tripled. This does not argue that they must be therefore three times worse fed than usual. The food of the country may only, for aught we know, have been lessened by a fourth part of its usual supply—or, in other words, the families may at an average be served with three-fourths of their usual subsistence, at the very time that the cost of it is three times greater than usual. And to make out this large payment, they have to retrench for the year in other articles—altogether, it is likely, to give up the use of comforts; and to limit themselves more largely in the second, than they can possibly do in the