

first necessities of life—to forego perhaps many of the little seasonings, wherewith they wont to impart a relish to their coarse and humble fare—to husband more strictly their fuel; and be satisfied for a time with vestments more threadbare, and even more tattered, than what in better times they would choose to appear in. It is thus that, even although the first necessities should be tripled in price for a season, and although the pecuniary income of the labouring classes should not at all be increased—yet they are found to weather the hardships of such a visitation. The food is still served out to them at a much larger proportion than the cost of it would in the first instance appear to indicate. And in the second instance they are enabled to purchase at this cost,—because, and more especially if they be a well-habited and well-conditioned peasantry, with a pretty high standard of enjoyment in ordinary years, they have more that they can save and retrench upon in a year of severe scarcity. They can disengage much of that revenue which before went to the purchase of dress, and of various luxuries that might for a season be dispensed with; and so have the more to expend on the materials of subsistence. It is this which explains how roughly a population can bear to be handled, both by adverse seasons and by the vicissitudes of trade; and how, after all, there is a stability about a people's means, which will keep its ground against many checks,