

to destroy the food of millions. We are aware of a compensation, in the varieties of soil and exposure, so that the weather which is adverse to one part of the country might be favourable to another; besides, that the mischief of a desolating tempest in autumn must only be partial, from the harvest of the plains and uplands falling upon different months. Still, with all these balancing causes, the produce of different years is very far from being equalized; and its fluctuations would come charged with still more of distress and destitution to families—were there not a counterpoise to the laws of nature, in what may be termed the laws of political economy.

18. The price of human food does not immediately depend on the quantity of it that is produced, but on the quantity of it that is brought to market; and it is well that, in every year of scarcity, there should be instant causes put into operation for increasing the latter quantity to the uttermost—so as to repair as much as possible the deficiencies of the former. It is well that even a small short-coming in the crop should be so surely followed by a great advance of prices; for this has instantly the effect of putting the families of the land upon that shortness of allowance, which might cause the supply, limited as it is, to serve throughout the year. But, beside the wholesome restraint which is thus imposed on the general consumption of families, there is encouragement