

CLOUDS.

By PRINCIPAL J. A. DRESSER B.A., of Richmond, Que.

Read before the St. Francis College Literary and Scientific Society, Feb. 3rd, 1897.

(An Abstract).

In the opening words of Prof. Davis's admirable work on the subject of Meteorology he says: "We dwell on the surface of the land; we sail across the surface of the sea; but we live at the bottom of the atmosphere.

Its changes pass over our heads; its continual fluctuations control our labors. Whether our occupation is indoor or out, on land or at sea, we are all more or less influenced by changes from the clear sunshine of blue skies, to the dark shadows under clouds; from the dusty weather of droughts to the rains of passing storms; from the enervating southerly winds to the bracing currents from the north.

Few persons fail to raise some questions now and then concerning the causes and processes of these changes; some inquire more earnestly, desiring to inform themselves carefully on the subject.

No school study suggests more frequent questions from scholars, or allows more educative replies from teachers than meteorology, the science of the atmosphere."

To this it may well be added that the atmospheric phenomena of sky and clouds furnish some of the grandest panoramas of beauty that nature ever presents to our eyes. And yet, how strange it is that while we recognize the different forms of earth and sea, we so seldom distinguish the various features of the atmosphere.

We have an abundance of names for the different appearances of land and water, as island, peninsula, isthmus, cape, and mountain; or, sea, gulf, bay, lake and river. But for the many and beautiful aspects of the sky, only indefinite or figurative language is commonly at hand. It is only fine or dull, bright or cloudy.