

that acids should be almost all formed of different kinds of air ; and that one of those acids, whose strength can dissolve almost any of the metals, should be made of the self-same ingredients with the common air we breathe ; these surely are things to excite the wonder of any reflecting mind—nay, of any one but little accustomed to reflect. And yet these are trifling when compared to the prodigies which astronomy opens to our view : the enormous masses of the heavenly bodies ; their immense distances ; their countless numbers, and their motions, whose swiftness mocks the uttermost efforts of the imagination.

Akin to this pleasure of contemplating new and extraordinary truths, is the gratification of a more learned curiosity, by tracing resemblances and relations between things which, to common apprehension, seem widely different. It is surely a satisfaction, for instance, to know that the same thing which causes the sensation of heat causes also fluidity ; that electricity, the light which is seen on the back of a cat when slightly rubbed on a frosty evening, is the very same matter with the lightning of the clouds ; that plants breathe like ourselves, but differently, by day and by night ; that the air which burns in our lamps enables a balloon to mount. Nothing can at first sight appear less like, or less likely to be caused by the same thing, than the processes of burning and of breathing,—the rust on metals and burning,—the influence of a plant on the air it grows in by night, and of an animal on the same air at any time, nay, and of a body burning in that air ; and yet all these operations, so unlike to common eyes, when examined by the light of science, are the same. Nothing can be less like than the working of a vast steam-engine and the crawling of a fly upon the window ; yet we find that these two operations are performed by the same means—the weight of the atmosphere ; and that a sea-horse climbs the ice-hills by no other power. Can anything be more strange to contemplate ? Is there, in all the fairy tales that ever were fancied, anything more calculated to arrest the attention, and to occupy and gratify the mind, than this most unexpected resemblance between things so unlike to the eyes of ordinary beholders ? Then, if we raise our views to the structure of the heavens, we are again gratified with tracing accurate but most unexpected resemblances. Is it not in the highest degree interesting to find, that the power which keeps the earth in its shape and in its path, wheeling round the sun, extends over all the other worlds that compose the universe, and gives to each its proper place and motion ; that the same power keeps the moon in her path round the earth ; that the same power