

## WONDERS OF THE ATMOSPHERE.

Though the Bible is not a book of science, yet the revelations of science show that the mind which inspired the writers of the Scripture records understood the secrets of nature, and has incidentally revealed some of its laws and effects. The author of the Book of Ecclesiastes has furnished one illustration of this, and most beautifully describes the provision which nature contains for preserving the harmony of its operations. In the first chapter, 6th and 7th verses, he says, "The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full, unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again." Now, we do not undertake to decide whether or not Solomon understood the theory of atmospheric currents, evaporations, and the precipitation of these vapours in various parts of the earth, as science in its present state of advancement teaches, yet he has most correctly described the true cause by which the rivers are furnished with supplies for their ever-flowing streams, and the oceans and seas are kept within their appointed bounds. The mighty engine which preserves this balance of nature is what Solomon calls "the wind in his circuits."

An oriental philosopher\* describes the atmosphere as a "spherical shell" surrounding our planet, and upon its wonderful properties the most important results are dependent. "Softer than the softest down—more impalpable than the finest gossamer—it leaves the cobweb undisturbed, and scarcely stirs the lightest flower that feeds on the dew it supplies; yet it bears the fleets of nations on its wings around the world, and crushes the most refractory substances with its weight. When in motion, its force is sufficient to level the most stately forests and stable buildings with the earth, to raise the waters of the ocean into ridges like mountains, and dash the strongest ships to pieces like toys. It warms and cools by turns the earth and the living creatures that inhabit it. It draws up vapours from the sea and lands, retains them dissolved in itself, or suspended in cisterns of clouds, and throws them down again as rain or dew, when and where they are required." This latter property and office of the atmosphere is the subject of our present exhibition of the various agencies performed by this wonderful machine. To distribute moisture over the surface of the earth, and to temper the climate of different latitudes, appear to be two of the great offices assigned by the Creator to the atmosphere.

When we consider the number of great and small rivers pouring their waters into the sea day after day, and year after year, and yet perceive

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\* Dr. Buist, of Bombay.