

for that purpose; not being too many, lest one should trouble another; and yet many, lest many things might haply escape them. Who neither coveting praise for expedition, nor fearing reproach for slackness (seeing in a business of moment, none deserve blame for convenient slowness) had expended almost three years in the Work, not only examining the channels, by the fountain, translations with the original, which was absolutely necessary, but also comparing channels with channels, which was abundantly useful in the Spanish, Italian, French and Dutch (German) languages.—These, with Jacob, rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well of life: so that now, even Rachel's weak women may freely come both to drink themselves, and water the flocks of their families at the same.—

"Leave we then, those worthy men now all gathered to their fathers, and gone to God, however they were requited on earth, well rewarded in heaven for their worthy work. Of whom, as also of that gracious KING that employed them, we may say, *Whosoever the Bible shall be preached or read in the whole world, there shall also this that they have done be told in memorial of them.*" Ibid. p. 57. &c.

The character of James the First has been greatly undervalued. In the Hampton-Court Conference, he certainly shewed a clear and ready comprehension of every subject brought before him; together with extensive reading, and a remarkably sound judgment. For the best Translation into any language, we are indebted under God to King James, who was called a hypocrite by those who had no religion; and a pedant by persons who had not half his learning. Both piety and justice require, that while we are thankful to God for the gift of his word, we should revere the memory of the man, who was the instrument of conveying the water of life, through a channel by which its purity has been so wonderfully preserved.

Those who have compared most of the European Translations with the Original, have not scrupled to say, that the *English Translation of the Bible, made under the direction of King James the first, is the most accurate and faithful of the whole.* Nor is this its only praise: the Translators have seized the very spirit and soul of the Original, and expressed this almost every where, with pathos and energy. Besides, our Translators have not only made a *standard Translation*; but they have made their Translation the *standard of our language*: the English tongue in their day, was not equal to such a work—"but God enabled them to stand as upon mount Sinai," to use the expression of a learned friend, "and crane up their country's language to the dignity of the originals, so that after the lapse of 200 years, the English Bible is, with very few exceptions, the standard of the purity and excellence of the English tongue. The Original from which it was taken, is, alone, superior to the Bible translated by the authority of King James." This is an opinion, in which my heart, my judgment, and my conscience coincide.

#### OF THE METEORS.

We have seen that the atmosphere is a vast laboratory, in which nature operates immense analysis, solutions, precipitations and combinations; it is a grand receiver, in which all the attenuated, volatilized productions of terrestrial bodies are received, mingled, agitated, combined, and separated. Considered in this view, the atmospheric air is a chaos, an indeterminate mixture of mineral, vegetable, and animal effluvia, which the electric fluid is pervading and traversing continually. The grand changes it experiences, and of which we are sensible in extensive spaces by the appearance of water, light, or noise, are called meteors. As the state of the atmosphere is ever varying, the meteors assume different forms; some delighting us with their appearance, while others wear a terrifying aspect. In this repository is collected the gentle dew and hoar frost; here clouds are gathered and carried along by the wind, to refresh the earth in falling showers, give rise to rivers, spread vast inundations of water over the fields, or lay them under a covering of snow or hail; here mock-suns, mock-moons, halos, and rainbows, make their gaudy but transient appearance; and here the water-spout, dreadful to the mariner; here rolls the dreadful thunder, here lightnings dart their vivid flames, and sometimes striking upon the earth, destroy its productions, fill its

inhabitants with terror, and sometimes strike them dead; here the *aurora*, or streamers, the *ignes fatui*, or wandering fires, called also Jack with the Lantern; here falling stars, as they are ignorantly termed, or fiery balls of various sizes, appear with splendour during the gloom of night, and astonish mankind, who too often seem willing, with superstitious awe, to find portentous omens of dire calamities in those curious, phenomena, rather than investigate their causes, or discover their use.

To account for these various appearances in a satisfactory manner, it is plain that we ought to have an intimate acquaintance with the constitution of the atmosphere: with the nature of those powerful agents by which it appears to be principally influenced, viz. fire, light, and electric fluid; and with their peculiar modes of operation and action upon one another, and upon the atmosphere, and this in every possible variety of circumstances. Nor is even all this sufficient, the various phenomena of rain, wind, snow, thunder, heat, cold, &c. are known to depend very much upon the situation of different places on the surface of the earth: and their occasional variations are, with great reason, suspected to proceed, partly at least, from changes which take place in the bowels of the earth: whence we ought not only to be perfectly well acquainted with geography, but with mineralogy also; and that to an extent at which human knowledge will probably never arrive.

In a subject so very difficult, it is not to be supposed that any thing like a certain and established theory can be laid down in this elementary work. As evaporation, however, seems to be particularly concerned in the production of meteor, we shall take a view of that operation of nature, the extent of which we have noticed in the preceding section. This process may be reckoned in a particular manner the effect of heat. Upon this principle, vapour is shown to be a compound of water and fire; and such it is supposed to be by philosophers of the highest rank. In considering this operation, however, as carried on by nature, we shall soon find, that it proceeds in a manner very different from what takes place in our chemical operations. In the latter, evaporation is merely the effect of heat; and the process cannot go on without a considerable degree of it. In the natural way, on the contrary, the process goes on under almost every degree of cold we know: the vapours ascend to a height which has never yet been determined; and, from the extreme cold which they sustain, shew evidently that they are connected with our atmosphere by means of some other agent besides heat. From the continual ascent of vapour, indeed, if the operations of nature were of the same kind with those of art, the upper parts of our atmosphere would be always involved in fog, by reason of the condensation of the vast quantity which continually ascends thither: but so far is this from being the case, that in those elevated regions to which the vapours continually ascend, the air is much drier than at the surface of the ground.

From many experiments, indeed, it is evident, that water, after being reduced into a state of vapour, is capable of undergoing a certain change by which it lays aside its fluidity entirely, and even to appearance its specific gravity: so that it becomes, as far as we can judge, a substance totally different from what it was before. After water has attained to this state, our inquiries concerning it must in a great measure cease; but as it is not in the immediate product of evaporation that rain has its source, and as vapours change their nature in the atmosphere, so as to be no longer sensible to the hygrometer, or to the eye, and do not become vapour again till clouds appear, we must acknowledge it to be very probable, that the intermediate state of vapour is no other than air; and that the clouds do not proceed from any distinct fluid in the atmosphere, but from a decomposition of a part of the air itself, perfectly similar to the rest.

Granting this to be the case, and we can scarcely hope for a more probable conjecture on the subject, the decomposition of the vapour will be easily accounted for.—If by any natural process the water can be converted into air, and if the latter is only water partially decomposed, then, by an inversion of the process, air may be instantly re-converted into water, and will become visible in fog or mist, or be condensed into rain, consisting of greater or smaller drops, according to the degree to which this inverted process is carried.

It is generally supposed by meteorologists, from all the clouds, fogs, rain, hail, and snow, being electrified, that the electric fluid is the agent employed in the formation of these meteors, and that it is this fluid which acts in the re-conversion of air into water. This process may be particularly observed in the summer season, when the horizon is suddenly overcast, and a copious torrent of rain ensues, which cannot be from the rising of any aqueous vapours at the time, but must be from a precipitation of water that existed in an invisible state in the atmosphere.

Water may therefore exist in the air: 1st, in an invisible state, which is the case when the dissolving power of air is considerable: 2dly, in a state of the incipient separation, in which case it forms clouds, mists, or fogs; 3dly and lastly, in a state of actual separation, in which case it forms either rain, properly so called, or snow, or hail.

#### ON PERSPICUITY.

Perspicuity, it will be readily admitted, is the fundamental quality of Style: a quality so essential in every kind of writing, that for the want of it nothing can atone. Without this, the richest ornaments of Style only glimmer through the dark; and puzzle, instead of pleasing, the reader. Thus, therefore, must be our first object, to make our meaning clearly and fully understood, and understood without the least difficulty. Quintilian, says thus:—"discourse ought always to be obvious, even to the most careless and negligent hearer; so that the sense shall strike his mind, as the light of the sun does our eyes, though they are not directed upwards to it. We must study, not only that every hearer may understand us, but that it shall be impossible for him not to understand us." If we are obliged to follow a writer with much care, to pause, and to read over his sentences a second time, in order to comprehend them fully, he will never please us long. Mankind are too indolent to relish so much labour. They may pretend to admire the author's depth after they have discovered his meaning; but they will seldom be inclined to take up his work a second time.

Authors sometimes plead the difficulty of their subject, as an excuse for the want of Perspicuity. But the excuse can rarely, if ever, be admitted. For whatever a man conceives clearly, that it is in his power, if he will be at the trouble, to put into distinct propositions, or to express clearly to others: and upon no subject ought any man to write, where he cannot think clearly. His ideas, indeed, may, very excusably, be on some subjects incomplete or inadequate; but still, as far as they go, they ought to be clear; and, wherever this is the case, Perspicuity in expressing them is always attainable. The obscurity which reigns so much among many metaphysical writers, is, for the most part, owing to the indistinctness of their own conceptions. They see the object but in a confused light; and, of course, can never exhibit it in a clear one to others.

Perspicuity in writing, is not to be considered as merely a sort of negative virtue, or freedom from defect. It has higher merit: it is a degree of positive beauty. We are pleased with an author, we consider him as deserving praise, who frees us from all fatigue of searching for his meaning; who carries us through his subject without any embarrassment or confusion; whose style flows always like a limpid stream, where we see to the very bottom.—16.

#### MORAL POWER OF THE PRESS.

The value of the press, as an auxiliary in the cause of benevolence, is strikingly exhibited in the following estimate. Without the aid of printing, some of our noblest institutions, as the Bible and Tract Societies, could not even exist, and all the benevolent operations of the age would be reduced to a very low scale.

It is announced in the London Times, that that paper is now printed with an improved machine, which takes off the astonishing number of *four thousand* copies in an hour, or seventy in a minute. It is computed that to write out the contents of one of the numbers of that paper would employ an amanuensis, six days; and as about 8000 copies are circulated daily, it would constantly require 40,000 persons to accomplish what is now done with one press.