

during the calmest weather, and without any apparent cause. It may be well to remember that this lake has suffered a similar agitation during the presence of earthquakes in very distant places. The same causes may not explain the phenomenon in both instances, but there is some reason to believe that they are not altogether distinct. It may also be mentioned, that lakes frequently contain islands, which are so light as to float upon the surface of the water : they are sometimes exceedingly numerous, and of considerable size.

THE SEA.

Although the sea has so large a proportion to the dry land, occupying seven tenths of the surface of the earth, yet its present quantity and conditions are absolutely necessary to man, that he may fulfil the objects of his terrestrial being. The earth without an ocean would be an arid and unfruitful desert, incapable of producing any vegetable substance, and consequently unfit for the residence of animals. But a constant interchange is going on between the ocean, the atmosphere, and the dry land. By the action of solar heat upon the surface of water, it is vaporized, and carried in an elastic form into the atmosphere. By a variety of causes, and especially by the agency of electricity, this aqueous vapour is condensed and returned to the earth, a part falling upon the sea itself, and a part upon the dry land. Having performed its purpose in watering the earth, and in giving fresh vigour to vegetable growth, it is, directly or indirectly, returned to the ocean, to pass again through the same series of changes and circumstances. But the ocean serves another important end, in the abstraction and decomposition of many of the noxious substances contained in the atmosphere ; and there is little doubt that it is the means of checking some of those principles of disease which are known to be wafted from clime to clime on the wings of the wind. It is also worthy of remark, that although the sea separates the inhabited portions of the earth's surface, yet it offers a ready means of communication. Upon its own bosom it carries the proudest trophy of human ingenuity, a vessel that contains within itself the source of power, and can plough its way from shore to shore, in spite of the ordinary opposition of winds and tides. Thus it is that the intercourse of nations, and the in-