

taining, in solution or suspension, the same quantity of moisture which it did before ; and hence that moisture is precipitated in the form of dews and fogs ; or, being previously condensed into accumulated masses of clouds, is discharged from those clouds in the form of rain.

It almost seems puerile to illustrate the adaptation of the present laws and order of nature to the wants of man, by the supposition of the consequences that would ensue from a failure of those laws ; and yet, as in actual life we often feel not the value of the good which we possess, till admonished by the prospect of its loss ; so, with reference to the constitution of nature, we may more forcibly be impressed with the conviction of its general harmony and subserviency to our wants, by the supposition of its being different from what it is, than by the direct contemplation of its actual state. In supposing then that means had not been provided for the regular discharge of portions of that mass of water which has been carried up into the atmosphere by the process of evaporation, the existence of that mass would have been of little avail to man : for mere contact of an atmosphere, however moist, could not promote vegetation to any useful extent<sup>1</sup>; and

<sup>1</sup> Niebuhr asserts, what is confirmed by other travellers, that many tracts in Egypt and Palestine, formerly well cultivated and fertile, are at present mere deserts for want of irrigation. (*Descript. de l'Arabie*, p. 241.)