

“ woods ; and hence those woods themselves
“ yearly resound with the melody of their na-
“ tive tenants. Nor does the effect stop here :
“ for we ourselves ultimately derive our sup-
“ port from the same source ; and cities are
“ eventually peopled from the nutriment pro-
“ duced by the very rain which we had fondly
“ supposed to perish. But nothing really pe-
“ rishes ; nature producing new forms of matter,
“ from the materials of those which have ap-
“ parently been destroyed^k.”

It would appear, from a very remarkable passage in Lucretius, that some of the philosophers of his day entertained an opinion, which he himself however opposes, that there exists a universal law of gravitation, by which all bodies tend towards the earth as the centre of the universe ; that, in consequence of this law, the bodies of those animals which inhabit the opposite, or, as it were, the inferior surface of the earth, are no more capable of falling into the sky which surrounds them, than the animals inhabiting our own, or, the relatively upper surface of the earth, are capable of rising into the sky which is placed above them. And, correspondently with the spherical form of the earth, which almost necessarily follows as a corollary from such an exposition of the law of gravitation, the same philosophers argued that, at the same mo-

^k Lib. I. 251—265.