

of plants and animals ; and is for this purpose every where present and almost uniform in its quantity. With all its local motion, it has also the office of a medium of communication between intelligent creatures, which office it performs by another set of motions, entirely different both from the circulation and the occasional movements already mentioned ; these different kinds of motions not interfering materially with each other : and this last purpose, so remote from the others in its nature, it answers in a manner so perfect and so easy, that we cannot imagine that the object could have been more completely attained, if this had been the sole purpose for which the atmosphere had been created. With all these qualities, this extraordinary part of our terrestrial system is scarcely ever in the way : and when we have occasion to do so, we put forth our hand and push it aside, without being aware of its being near us.

We may add, that it is, in addition to all that we have hitherto noticed, a constant source of utility and beauty in its effects on light. Without air we should see nothing, except objects on which the sun's rays fell, directly or by reflection. It is the atmosphere which converts sunbeams into daylight, and fills the space in which we are with illumination.

The contemplation of the atmosphere, as a machine which answers all these purposes, is well suited to impress upon us the strongest conviction of the most refined, far-seeing, and far-ruling contrivance. It seems impossible to suppose that these various properties were so bestowed and so combined, any otherwise than by a beneficent and intelligent Being, able and willing to diffuse organization, life, health, and enjoyment through all parts of the visible world ; possessing a fertility of means which no multiplicity of objects could exhaust, and a discrimination of consequences which no complication of conditions could embarrass.