

Nearly three fourths of the Earth being covered with Sea, whilst the remaining dry land is in need of continual supplies of water, for the sustenance of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, the processes by which these supplies are rendered available for such important purposes, form no inconsiderable part of the beautiful and connected mechanisms of the terraqueous Globe.

The great Instrument of communication between the surface of the Sea, and that of the Land, is the Atmosphere, by means of which a perpetual supply of fresh water is derived from an Ocean of salt water, through the simple process of evaporation.

By this process, water is incessantly ascending in the state of Vapour, and again descending in the form of Dew and Rain.

Of the water thus supplied to the surface of the land, a small portion only returns to the Sea directly *in seasons of flood* through the channels of Rivers ;\*

A second portion is re-absorbed into the Atmosphere by Evaporation ;

A third portion enters into the composition of Animal and Vegetable bodies ;

\* It is stated by M. Arago, that one third only of the water which falls in rain, within the basin of the Seine, flows by that river into the sea : the remaining two thirds either return into the atmosphere by evaporation, or go to the support of vegetable and animal life, or find their way into the sea by subterraneous passages. *Annuaire, pour l'An 1835.*