

even though saturated with vapour, than they would be in a purely aqueous atmosphere; while in an unsaturated atmosphere, the motions of the vapour must be still more liable to be influenced by the motions of the air, than they would be in an atmosphere of air, at its utmost point of saturation.

Before we close this part of our subject, let us reflect for a moment, on the consequences of such a state of comparative dryness of the lower atmosphere next the earth. Over the greater portion of the earth, the air which, during the day at least, is warmed by contact with the earth's surface, and thus becomes lighter, has, as we have observed, a constant tendency to rise into the higher atmosphere. Now, if this air were saturated with vapour; of course, whenever the air by rising became mixed with colder air, its vapour would be more or less condensed, and a cloud would be formed. Hence, if we lived in such an atmosphere; we should be always enveloped in a mist, through which the sun would not be visible. But, by the benevolent arrangement we enjoy, this consequence is so entirely prevented, that, unless under peculiar circumstances, and always for beneficial purposes, the air at the earth's surface is hardly ever saturated with moisture. The air which has been warmed by contact with the earth, can, therefore, rise from the surface, without any condensation of