

by the evaporation during the night only, a thousand gallons of water would, in that short time, be raised from an acre of snow. It may thus be easily understood, how a moderate fall of snow may entirely vanish during a succeeding northerly gale, without the slightest perceptible liquefaction on the surface.* We have given this statement to satisfy the general reader of the fact, that evaporation is constantly going on from snow and ice; indeed there is every reason to believe, as before observed, that the quantity thus evaporated is precisely equal to what would be evaporated, from water itself; provided that body could exist as a fluid at the same temperature.

The circumstances incidental to water, and affecting evaporation and saturation, arise chiefly from its purity or impurity. The presence of foreign bodies, as of saline matters, for instance, is well known to raise considerably the boiling point of water; in other words, they lower its tendency to become vapour, and thus diminish its evaporating and saturating powers. Hence the air over the sea, though, of course, much nearer, in general, to the point of saturation appropriate to the latitude and temperature, than air over the land, is comparatively seldom in a state of perfect saturation; and sea-water, so far

* Article Meteorology; in the Encyclopædia Metropolitana.