In this table, the names of the places to which it refers are arranged progressively, according to the amount of rain that falls in each place; and though the progression exhibits great irregularities, yet the table fully establishes the general decrease of rain with the increase of distance from the equator.

Sir John Leslie has shown, that if all the aqueous vapour which can at any time be held in solution by the whole atmosphere, were at once precipitated on the earth in the form of rain, it would not be more than about five inches in depth: now, as in the course of a year, many times this quantity of rain fall from the atmosphere, its replenishment, of course, must depend upon evaporation; of which evaporation we may thus infer the general amount. With respect to the quantity of rain which descends annually on the entire surface of the earth, we want the means of forming an estimate; though there is no proof that this quantity is subject to any material difference. The distribution, indeed, as we have seen, diminishes with the latitude, and varies according to numerous local peculiarities; some of which have been pointed out in the preceding paragraphs. Often also, no doubt for the wisest purposes, the same place is liable to great fluctuations in the annual amount of rain, or at least in the times of its precipitation. Yet all these variations oscillate within certain limits,