

water condensed on the land, must have been evaporated not from the land, but from the neighbouring ocean.

The relative proportions of the water that is condensed, and of the water that is evaporated, vary exceedingly in different countries. Such indeed is the amount and variety of the differences, that it is impossible to estimate them; though it is probable that in the same country, the proportions are nearly constant; or, at least, that there is a mean proportion, about which the differences oscillate within trifling limits. In this country, Dr. Thomson has estimated, that taking the whole of Great Britain together, the mean fall of rain amounts, in the course of a year, to 36 inches, the dew being included, (which is considered to amount to about four inches); and that the quantity of water evaporated is about 32 inches. Consequently, the excess of four inches must be supposed to go to supply the springs and rivers; and as these four inches are thus not taken up again by evaporation from the land, they must be drawn from the seas that encircle our shores.* These estimates

* On heat and electricity, p. 266. It is proper to observe, that this estimate differs considerably from a previous estimate of Dr. Dalton, who fixes the proportion of water as flowing off by the rivers, in England and Wales, at thirteen inches. It is probable that the truth lies somewhere between the two estimates.