

branches of new shoots ; while, under some circumstances, transverse lines are formed, which, intersecting the lateral threads, produce a reticulated structure. There is, in fact, no modification that is so various in its extent, duration, and form, as the cirrus ; but we think it will be found more constant in all these particulars when formed at great heights, than when at small elevation.

The cirrus has been considered the sign of wind ; but it is ever desirable to remember, that when we prognosticate atmospheric changes from the presence or appearance of clouds, we must be careful to consider the circumstances under which the cloud was formed. Horizontal sheets of cirri frequently attend wet weather, ever changing here and there into cirrostratus ; and small groups of the same cloud are generally distributed over the sky during fine weather. When the cirrus precedes a storm, it is lower and denser than under any other circumstance ; and generally rises in a direction opposite that in which the storm advances.

It is now generally supposed by meteorologists, that the cirrus acts the part of an electric conductor from cloud to cloud, or from one mass of air to another. This supposition is warranted by the form of the cloud ; and it is worthy remark, that phenomena usually attributed to electricity frequently attend the long-continued presence of this cloud, when accompanied with dry easterly winds.

The cirrus has been, not inappropriately, called the Proteus of the sky. The variety of form it assumes may possibly at first confuse the student, but a little perseverance, and an attentive examination, will soon enable him to detect it under all the varied forms it presents. It might be desirable to arrange the cirri in different classes, for we are convinced that the several kinds cannot be traced to precisely the same causes, and are not the harbingers of the same results. Dr. Forster appears to have made an arrangement of this kind, and we may be permitted to quote his judicious remarks on the subject. "Of late, by way of distinction, I have used certain specific names for the various forms of each modification. I have called this net-like feature the reticular cirrus. Those which are local and detached, and which ramify in many directions, giving the idea of a distended lock of hair, may be denominated comoid cirri. Sometimes numerous little filaments appear, like bundles of thread,