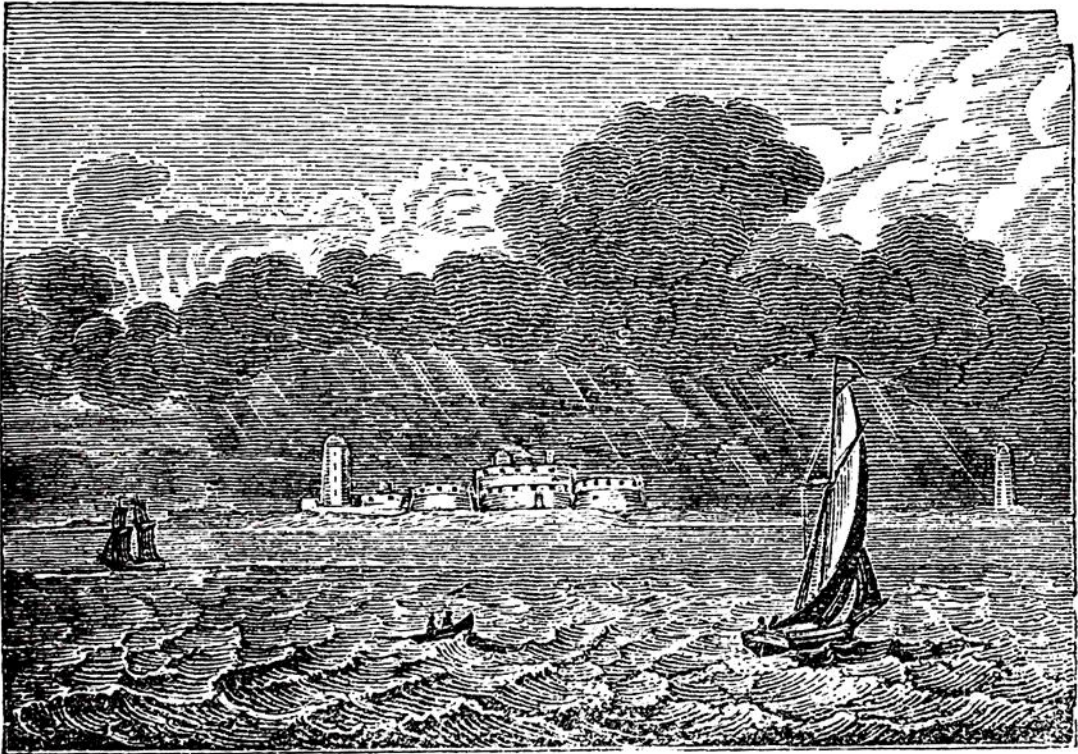


be seen, in rough weather, previous to the fall of rain, to lift themselves into towering mountains of cloud, and by an insensible change to take the structure of the cumulo-stratus. After a short interval this modification becomes more dense, and increasing in irregularity and extent, forms itself into the nimbus or rain-cloud. It is worthy of remark, that when the cumulo-stratus is formed, lengthened masses of cirro-stratus often cap it, and the quantity of rain seems to be in some degree proportional to the extent of the cirri.



There is no cloud that is so readily distinguished as the nimbus, and those who are least acquainted with the configuration and structure of clouds can generally detect it, although the cumulus and cumulo-stratus frequently assume a darker and more threatening aspect. Experience, however, guides us, and we frequently gain insensibly that knowledge which we cannot describe. We have often heard persons say that rain would fall from this, and not from that cloud, who yet have been unable to explain the reason of their opinions, always satisfying themselves with the assertion, "I know it, I have seen it before."

Clouds are so often in an electrified condition, that Beccaria and others have thought that their formation is attribu