

verified, but the reason he has offered is not very capable of convincing the skeptic, or of satisfying a philosophical mind.

The electricity of the atmosphere is generally stronger in winter than in summer, and in the day than in the night, and in open and fine weather is in a positive state. The sources of atmospheric electricity cannot be determined with great accuracy, but it is probable that the overcharged condition of the air may be in a great measure traced to the constant evaporation which is going on from the surface of the earth, a phenomenon which is always attended by the disengagement of electricity. It has been stated by M. Pouillet, that electricity is never given off during evaporation, unless accompanied by chymical action; a result that we do not suppose to be perfectly true, though this is not the place to mention those experiments which have led us to this conclusion. But, however this may be, there can be no doubt that a large amount of electricity is given off by the evaporation which is going on from the surface of water, as well as by those numerous chymical changes which are so abundant in the terrestrial laboratory. These agencies are probably assisted by the influence of those unequal currents of heat which are circulating through the atmosphere, and by the friction of atmospheric strata moving in opposite directions; but we are at present quite unable to assign to any cause its proportional effect in producing the electric condition of the atmosphere.

AURORA BOREALIS.

Although we are not acquainted with the positive amount of influence exerted by the electric agent in the production or regulation of meteorological phenomena, yet there are some few appearances which may without doubt be attributed to its agency. One of the most common and beautiful of these is the Aurora Borealis, or the merry dancer, as it is called in the Shetland Isles. In Sweden, Lapland, and the polar regions, it is so constant during the long winter nights, that it frequently serves the traveller instead of the light of the moon.

“In the northeastern parts of Siberia,” says Gmelin, “these northern lights are observed to begin with single bright pillars rising in the north, and almost at the same time in the northeast, which, gradually increasing, comprehend a