

of North America is said to be gradually diminishing, and the climate otherwise altering, in consequence of the clearance of the forests; while, on the other hand, under the beneficent influence of a largely increased cultivation of the palm in Egypt, rain is annually becoming more frequent. Lakes are cited in what was formerly Spanish America whose water supply (derived of course from atmospheric sources) had been so largely diminished, owing to the denudation of the country under the Spanish regime, as to contract their area, and leave large tracts of their shores dry; which, now that the vegetation is again restored, are once more covered by their waters. Even in our own southern counties complaints are beginning to be heard of a diminution of water supply, partly, it is said, owing to gradually decreasing rainfall from the universal clearance of timber,* though chiefly perhaps attributable to robbing the springs of their supply by draining—a practice beneficial no doubt to agriculture, if used with caution and in moderation, but of which *the consequences, if carried to excess, may ere long be very severely felt, in rendering large tracts of*

* On the other hand, forests, owing to the immense evaporation from their foliage which must be supplied from the soil beneath, have a direct tendency to *drain that soil upwards*, and so throw its moisture into the air. This has been well pointed out and strongly insisted on by M. le Marechal Vaillant, in "Les Mondes," T. 8, p. 674. As a matter of fact, it seems pretty distinctly proved by the collection of data laboriously accumulated by Mr Symonds—that the annual average rainfall *is* decreasing over the whole of the British Isles, and more especially along a line running nearly S.W.—N.E. from Cornwall to the Wash. (Symond's Report of British Association, 1865.)