

“ horse’s feet was in a moment filled up by the
 “ surrounding swarms ⁿ.”

We who rarely are oppressed, for more than a few hours in a whole summer, by such a state of the atmosphere as occasionally precedes a thunderstorm, when no friendly breeze interposes to remove the close and humid stratum of air which envelopes our bodies, may well be thankful that our lot has not been cast in certain regions of the earth; in those Alpine valleys, for instance, whose scarcely human inhabitants attest the dreadful consequences of a confined atmosphere: the influence of which often affects not only the present sensations and comforts, but even the intellectual, and eventually the moral character, of those who are habitually exposed to it.

It appears, from recent inquiries, that the physical and intellectual and moral degradation, so often observable in the inhabitants of mountain valleys in general, but noticed particularly in the valleys of the Rhone, may be referred with probability, among other causes, to a stagnant atmosphere; and to the reverberation of heat from the sides of the mountains which bound those valleys, cooperating with an alternation of piercing winds: the degree of that degradation at least is always proportional to the action of those causes.

ⁿ Philos. Trans. 1790, p. 347.