

as the reservoir of that mass of water from whence clouds of rain, and consequently springs and rivers are derived, we have also seen that it at the same time prevents, by the effect of its pressure on their surface, the unlimited evaporation and consequent exhaustion of the ocean, and other sources, from whence that mass of water is supplied. And, again, while the agitation of the air contributes to the health of man, by supplying those currents which remove or prevent the accumulation of local impurities, it at the same time facilitates that intercourse between different nations in which the welfare of the whole world is ultimately concerned. And lastly, while in passing from the lungs in the act of expiration it essentially forms the voice, it at the same time removes from the system that noxious principle, the retention of which would be incompatible with life.

CHAP. VII.

Adaptation of Minerals to the Physical Condition of Man.

SECT. I.

The general Characters of Minerals.

IT has been shewn in the foregoing chapter, that the constituent parts of the atmosphere are