

fore, beyond the reach of our investigation as they are, by which its permanence is secured, must be conceived as fitted to add, in each of the instances above adduced, to the admiration which the several manifestations of Intelligent Beneficence are calculated to excite.

CHAPTER XI.

The Laws of Electricity.

ELECTRICITY undoubtedly exists in the atmosphere in most states of the air; but we know very imperfectly the laws of this agent, and are still more ignorant of its atmospheric operation. The present state of science does not therefore enable us to perceive those adaptations of its laws to its uses, which we can discover in those cases where the laws and the uses are both of them more apparent.

We can, however, easily make out that electrical agency plays a very considerable part among the clouds, in their usual conditions and changes. This may be easily shown by Franklin's experiment of the electrical kite. The clouds are sometimes positively, sometimes negatively, charged, and the rain which descends from them offers also indications of one or other kind of electricity. The changes of wind and alterations of the form of the clouds are generally accompanied with changes in these electrical indications. Every one knows that a thunder-cloud is strongly charged with the electric fluid, (if it be a fluid,) and that the stroke of the lightning is an electrical discharge. We may add that it appears, by recent experiments, that a transfer of electricity between plants and the atmosphere is perpetually going on during the process of vegetation.