sequences of changes so trifling in the qualities of a few substances only; nor is it possible, scarcely, to conceive any other change, that would not be attended with similar results.

In the next place, the importance of the adjustments of quantity, is equally striking. Let us, for instance, conceive what would happen from the simple inversion of the quantities of dry land, and of sea, as they now exist: in such a case, there would not be enough of water to preserve the surface of the land in a moist state; the greater part would thus be in the situation of the deserts of Africa; and totally unfitted for the habitation of organized beings. When speaking of the elements of water, we alluded to the happy adjustment of the quantities of oxygen and of hydrogen in the world; and to the consequences which would have ensued, if hydrogen, instead of oxygen, had predominated. The same remarks apply to almost every other element; for example, had the proportions of the chlorine, and of the soda in common salt; or of the carbonic acid, and of the lime, in our marbles, been different from what they are; the one or the other of the ingredients must have been in excess; and the present order of things could never have existed. Again, were gold suddenly to become as abundant as iron, and iron as rare as gold; were the carbon existing in the present useful form of fossil coals, to assume

172