

ject. But it is to be observed, that the state of equilibrium here described is not absolutely *fixed*; as such an unyielding condition would be not less incompatible with the present order of things, than a condition of unlimited change. The whole are so adjusted therefore, that slight deviations, or oscillations about the neutral point of rest or equilibrium, take place, and are even necessary, as the world is at present constituted; though these changes are bounded within very narrow limits, and greater deviations would instantly prove fatal to the whole. If we enquire into the principles upon which these slight deviations take place, and are regulated; we shall find still further reason to admire the wonderful arrangements displayed. When speaking of the elements of water, we observed how much the stability of nature depended on the proportions of the elements of this fluid; and that one of its elements, oxygen, existed in excess, and in a free state, in the air. Now, it is to the agency of this oxygen in a free state, and to the annual and diurnal motions of the earth, that most of the minor operations going on around us are to be referred. The universal presence, and peculiar properties, of oxygen are such, as to interfere more or less, with every thing; while the motions of the earth, keep every thing in a constant state of activity and change. Yet, the general tendency of the whole, as before ob-