

water in the world. While on the other hand, the *relative gravity* of water, as compared with that of the earth, keeps the ocean within its destined limits, notwithstanding its incessant motion. Thus Laplace has shown, that the world would have been constantly liable to have been deluged from the slightest causes, had the mean density of the ocean *exceeded* that of the earth! Hence the adjustment of the quantity of water, and of its density, as compared with that of the earth, afford some of the most marked, and beautiful instances of design.

SECTION III.

Of the Atmosphere.

THE immense body of gaseous matters surrounding our earth, and usually known under the name of the Atmosphere, is essentially composed, as we formerly stated, of two principles, oxygen and azote, in the proportion nearly of one part of oxygen, and four parts of azote. Besides these two gases, the atmosphere also contains a small, and perhaps a variable, quantity of carbonic acid gas, amounting upon an average, to somewhat less than one part in a thousand of the whole; and of water in a state of vapour,