extending the limits of the vaporous atmosphere and maintaining the higher regions of the air in a state of increased humidity. And this is the way in which we conceive it possible the planets Venus and Mercury (as we have before hinted in our Lecture on the Sun, but without further explanation) may be maintained at a degree of superficial temperature not incompatible with even terrestrial forms of life. Their climate, to be sure, would have little to recommend it to our tastes; as it would probably afford small relief from a perpetual succession of cloudy days and rainy nights.

(33.) Is it in any degree within the power of man to *alter* the weather? A strange question, it may seem at first sight to propose! but by no means so absurd a one as it may appear. The total amount of annual rainfall over any district, is an element of its weather and its climate of the last importance; and when we look over the registers of rainfalls which are now so assiduously kept in almost every part of England and other civilized countries, it is impossible not to be struck by its very great local diversity; even in neighbouring places, whose general similarity of situation as regards wind-exposure and surface *configuration* would seem to preclude any material difference on an average of years in their reception of rain; if really indifferent in its *choice where to fall*. There is evidently something distinct from mere local *situation* which determines this element of climate; and we must look for it in the nature of the surface of the districts, and its relations to heat and moisture—relations which the operations of man on the soil itself,