

It is difficult to determine, what constitutes the difference between the purer sorts of this class;

lybdena however, that has been reputed formerly as a species of *plumbago*, later experiments have shewn to be of a metallic nature: and of course, it will be ranged in the last Class, after the Semi-metals.

The Noble Author says, that phlogistic substances are *electric (per se)*. It has not, however, that I know, been decided, that all *inflamable minerals* are *electric*, or *non-conductors* of electricity; on the contrary Mr. Kirwan affirms, that fossil coal is not an *electric*.

But, what is the constituent principle by which the minerals, belonging to this Class, become *inflamable*? or rather, what is the nature of these *combustible substances*? what is *combustion*, this common phenomenon so repeatedly beheld, and so little understood, from whence these substances take their denomination? Chemists and Philosophers have given various, and so seemingly opposite theories on this very interesting subject, that it would be impardonable not to give a short account of their ideas, chiefly those of the modern ones, in this edition of a work, whose matter is so intimately connected with these chemical disquisitions.

It was taught by former chemists, that the integrant parts of *combustible bodies* were only *heated, burned, and reduced into flame*, by the action of *fire*, according to the quantity and condition of the *phlogiston* they contained. This last is what they called the *inflamable principle*, by means of which *combustion* is performed. But Becher, Boyle, Rey, and several other Chemists, admitted that the concourse of *air* is absolutely necessary for the effect of *combustion*. As soon as the various kinds of aeriform-substances began to be known by Modern Philosophers, they soon found, that it is that *kind of air*, discovered by the Father of this new and valuable branch of Natural Philosophy, Dr. Priestley, which he calls *dephlogisticated*, and to which some new Nomenclators give the epithets of *pure, vital, air of fire* and *empyrean air*, without the interference of which no combustion can take place. It is com-
puted,