

INTRODUCTION.

MINERALOGY is that branch of natural history * Definition of mineralogy.
which makes us acquainted with all the properties and relations of minerals. As these properties and relations are very different from each other, we

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* If it be true "that description, when employed about events, constitutes history," then certainly the usual acceptance of the appellation, Natural History, is erroneous. That relation which aspires to the dignity of history, must embrace not only an exact and full description of the object or thing treated of, but also ascertain the relative time as well as manner of its production, and the change and alteration, if any, it has undergone in arriving at its present state. Natural history therefore comprehends two distinct branches, the one making us acquainted with natural objects as they are presented by nature, furnishing us with sufficient data and easily applicable criteria to distinguish them from each other, and this is *Natural Description*. The other branch, Natural History properly so called, consists in the investigation of the ancient and original state of natural objects, and the successive changes and alterations they have undergone till the present time. Thus in botany and zoology the questions, Were all animals and plants originally created as we

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