

form very different conceptions of the same denomination; nay, sometimes a Mineralogist applies even several denominations to the same character, and one denomination to different characters. This indefinite application of the External Characters is a principal cause of their imperfection, and of the consequent inutility of the descriptions of Fossils: on the contrary, the descriptions would have attained perfection had the External Characters been as well defined as they are arranged and complete. In Mathematics the method of teaching owes great part of its perfection to the definition of terms; for here all combine the same ideas with a sum, a line, or an angle, and again all apply the same denomination to one idea. If then Mineralogists would unite, with a view to render Oryctognosy, in this respect, as nearly similar as possible to Mathematics, what advantages might not this science derive from their endeavours?

## §. 34.

*The definition of the External Characters of Fossils in general,* requires, 1st. that we know what External Characters are; 2d. how many their number; 3d. that we apply to each an appropriate and determinate denomination; 4th. that we give of each the proper and adequate conception; and 5th. that we endeavour to shew the relations in which they stand to each other.

*What*