into minute parts will enter into a great number of substances, from hence they will contain articles of fixed air and fire, which are the first principles of combustibility; but they will be found in different quantities, according to their degree of affinity with the substance, and this degree will greatly depend on the quantity these substances contain of animal and vegetable parts, which appear to be the base of all combustible matter. Most metallic minerals, and even metals, contain great quantities of combustible parts; zinc, antimony, iron, copper, &c. burn and produce a very brisk flame, as long as the combustion of these inflammable parts remains, after which, if the fire be continued, the calcination begins, during which there enters into them new parts of air and heat, which fixes, and cannot be disengaged but by presenting to them combustible matters, with which they have a greater affinity than with those of the mineral, with which they are only united by the effort of calcination. It appears to me, that the conversion of metallic substances into dross, and their reproduction, might be very clearly understood without applying to secondary principles, or arbitrary hypotheses, for their explanation.

Having considered the action of fixed air in the most secret operations of nature, let us take

a view