

which we easily fuse in our forge furnaces. In other respects, the density of platina being much greater than that of iron, the two quantities of density and non-fusibility unite here to render this matter the least accessible to the progress of heat. I presume, therefore, that platina would have been at the head of my table if I had put it to the experiment; but I was not able to procure a globe of it of an inch diameter, it being only found in grains*; and that which is in the mass is not pure, it being necessary, in order to fuse it, to mix it with other matters, which alter its nature. The Comte de Billarderie d'Angivilliers, who often attended my experiments, led me to examine this rare metallic substance, not yet sufficiently known. Chemists who have employed their time in platina, have looked upon it as a new, perfect, proper, and particular metal, different from all the rest: they have asserted, that its specific weight was nearly equal to that of gold; but that it essentially differed in other respects from gold, having neither ductility nor fusibility. I own I am of a quite contrary opinion; because a matter which has neither ductility nor fusibility, cannot rank in the number of metals,

* I have been assured, however, by a person of the first respectability, that platina is sometimes found in masses, and that he himself saw a piece that weighed twenty pounds, pure as it was extracted from the mine.