

manner ; and the authors who have asserted the contrary, have followed their common track, which consists in looking on all actions as null which do not produce an effervescence. These second experiments of the Comte de Milly would appear to me very important, if they succeeded always alike.

5. We must however admit that many essential points of information are wanting to pronounce affirmatively on the origin of platina. We know nothing of the natural history of his mineral, and we cannot too greatly exhort those who are able to examine it on the spot, to make known their observations ; and until that is done we must confine ourselves to conjectures, some of which appear only more probable than others. For example, I do not imagine platina to be the work of man. The Mexicans and Peruvians knew how to cast and work gold before the arrival of the Spaniards, and they were not acquainted with iron, which nevertheless they must have employed in a great quantity. The Spaniards themselves did not establish furnaces in this country when they first inhabited it to fuse iron. There is, therefore, every reason to conclude, that they did not make use of the filings of iron for the separation of gold, at least in the beginning