

well closed, although exposed to the action of the greatest fire. Air is, therefore, the first and true food of fire, and combustible matters would not be able to supply it without the assistance and mediation of this element.

We have observed that heat is the cause of all fluidity, and we find, by comparing some fluids together, that more heat is requisite to keep iron in fusion than gold; and more to keep gold than tin; much less is necessary for wax, for water less than that, and still less for spirits of wine, and a mere trifle is sufficient for mercury, since the latter goes 187 degrees below what water can without losing its fluidity; mercury, therefore, is the most fluid of all matter, air excepted. Now this superior fluidity in air indicates the least degree of adherence possible between its constituting parts, and supposes them of such a figure as only to be touched at one point. It may be also imagined, that, being endowed with so little apparent energy and mutual attraction, they are, for that reason, less massive, and more light, than those of every other body; but that conclusion appears unfounded, from the comparison of mercury, the next fluid body, but of which the constituting parts appear to be more massive and heavy than those of any other matter.