

has of late given birth to some new form of apparatus calculated to produce instantaneous light, we find ourselves constantly recurring to the flint and steel, which our forefathers of many generations have used; and which will doubtless be the staple apparatus of our latest posterity.

The more important part of the present inquiry remains to be considered, the means namely of maintaining heat, when once excited, to a sufficient extent and degree of intensity for the various purposes of social and civilized life. To this important purpose, among others, the products of the vegetable world, both in a fossil and recent state, are destined; and in examining the origin and general history of some of these products, particularly with reference to common coal, we shall meet with an interesting example of those provisions of nature which Dr. Paley has denominated prospective contrivances.

In the early periods of civilization, and while the population of a country bears a small proportion to the extent of soil occupied, the indigenous forests easily supply an ample quantity of fuel: or, in the absence of those larger species of the vegetable kingdom which may be described under the term of *timber*, the humblest productions of the morass, though not the most desirable, are however a sufficient substitute. Thus the *sphagnum palustre* and other