

few in number, and of great simplicity in their composition ; that some of them usually exist in the state of invisible vapour, and consequently are without sensible form and colour : and that others, as light, and heat, and electricity, are not only without form and colour, but are also of such tenuity as to be incapable of affecting the most delicately constructed balance ; in common language, are without weight. We are now entering on a department of nature, which consists of objects characterised by properties very different from those we have been lately considering ; remarkable, as a class, for the mathematical precision of their form, the brilliancy and variety of their colour, and for their great weight ; most of them being many times heavier than the heaviest element of the atmosphere.

Few mineral substances, however, exist in such a state of purity as to exhibit the simple characters of their individual properties ; the class consisting of a great variety of species, which are capable of entering into union with each other, and of which the natural combinations are extremely numerous. But, as might be anticipated from the general analogy of nature, the advantages arising to mankind from this mixture of character are infinitely greater than if the individual minerals had existed in a state of purity, and uncombined with each other.