

vessels in which our food is prepared, were it not defended by that superficial coating of tin, which is commonly applied to the inner surface of such vessels ; tin being neither easily rusted, nor capable of communicating any poisonous quality to substances brought into contact with it. Let us then suppose that the respective degree of malleability, or of fusibility, were reversed in these metals ; and observe the inconvenience that would ensue. Let the tin have that degree of malleability, for instance, which would render it capable of supplying the place of the iron, or the copper, in the construction of various economical vessels and instruments ; yet, from the small quantity in which it occurs in the world, the supply of it would soon be either exhausted, or its price would be so enhanced that it could not be purchased except by the rich. And, even if the supply were inexhaustible, yet, from the softness of the metal, the vessels made of it would be comparatively of little use ; and from the low temperature at which it melts, it could not be readily used for the generality of those purposes to which copper and iron are commonly applied. On the other hand, let the copper or the iron be as fusible as tin ; and let the tin be as refractory under the action of heat as iron and copper are : in that case, how could the tin be applied with any degree of economy to the surface of either of the other two ; while they themselves would be unfit, from their