

having no chemical affinity for the greater number of gaseous substances, is calculated to retain them in an insulated and unaltered state for an indefinite length of time? nor let us forget to observe, how the properties of the metal, which is necessarily in contact with the gaseous substances in question, conspire with the properties of the glass vessels containing those gaseous substances, to facilitate the observations of the philosopher: for, if the glass were not both a transparent body, and equally devoid as the quicksilver of any chemical affinity for the gas contained in it, the metal itself would be of little use for the purpose intended; since we are not acquainted with any other substance that could supply the place of glass—with the exception perhaps of rock crystal; which however could only be procured in small quantity any where, and could not be worked into a convenient form but at a most enormous expense.

SECT. VII.

Common Salt, &c.

It does not appear that the mineral kingdom contains a single species capable of being employed as food: but there is one mineral species, which indirectly contributes to the nourishment of many other animals as well as man; and that is common salt: the flavour of which, to a certain extent, is not only grateful to the palate,