

nical properties of common air. In this state it is exceedingly inflammable; and if mixed with oxygen, and if the mixture be exposed to heat, the two gases unite suddenly and violently with a loud explosion; while the result of the combustion is *water*. With the other supporters of combustion, hydrogen forms compounds, more or less acid. Hydrogen is the lightest body known, and under the same bulk therefore, contains less matter than any other body. It does not exist naturally in a separate state, but always in combination; and by far most generally and abundantly in combination with oxygen, in the form of water. Hydrogen ranks perhaps next to oxygen in importance; at least as far as organized beings are concerned; since, like oxygen, it constitutes one of the elementary principles of which they are formed. It differs however, remarkably from oxygen, in not being in its elementary state necessary to the existence of organized beings; indeed hydrogen is actually incompatible with the existence of animals, if not of vegetables; and its properties as an element, have evidently been sacrificed to its properties as a compound; that is to say, to its properties as *water*. Hence we have to admire the happy adjustment of the quantities of the two elements to each other, so that the oxygen shall predominate; an adjustment that can scarcely be explained on any other supposition