

oxygen. Such, however, are the powerful affinities of the metallic bases for oxygen, that they no where exist naturally upon the surface of our globe. The same may be also remarked of potash and soda; the powerful alkaline properties of which, prevent them from existing separately. In this respect, the compounds these metals form with oxygen, present a striking contrast with the compounds they form with the analogous principle, chlorine; the compounds of potassium and sodium with chlorine, (the latter of which constitutes common salt,) are remarkable for their permanent character; and for the little tendency in general, which they have, to enter into a further state of combination. Besides their remarkable avidity for oxygen, potassium and sodium possess some other unusual properties. Potassium, for example, is so light, that were it compatible with water, it would swim on the surface of that fluid; a circumstance we can hardly imagine to happen with a metal. Potash and soda, in all their forms, are most important principles; and evidently are necessary to the existence of the present order of things, both mineral and organized: for there are few organized beings, that do not contain more or less of them; especially of soda. Potash is found more particularly in plants; but exists also in animals: while the universal presence of soda in animals, in the form of common salt,