

has been already referred to, and is generally known. These alkalies present us with a beautiful instance of adaptation, for the purposes which they seem destined to fulfil, in the operations of nature. Had they been solids; or had they formed solid compounds, like many of the preceding principles; they would have been totally unfitted for their peculiar office; that is to say, for forming a constituent element of the fluids of organized beings.

(26) *Lithium*, is the metallic basis of the alkaline substance termed *lithia*. This newly discovered substance is intermediate in its properties, between the alkalies and the earths, to be next considered. It has hitherto been met with, in some rare minerals, in small quantities only.

(27) *Calcium*, the metallic basis of *lime*, can be obtained only by a troublesome and difficult process; and, of course, does not exist naturally. It is a white metal like silver, and by union with oxygen, is readily convertible into lime. This well known principle exists in the greatest abundance in nature; not as quick-lime; but united with carbon and oxygen, in the form of common lime-stone, marble, &c. The great importance of lime in the economy of nature, is too obvious to require notice; and it is only necessary to revert to the fact, that this earth is one of the very few mineral productions, capable