

COAL, PETROLEUM, AND OTHER DISTILLED OILS.

CHAPTER I.

Early records and progress of the distillation of oils from coals and other bituminous substances.—Introduction of kerosene, patents, petroleum, varieties of coals; their origin and composition.—Effects produced upon coals by heat.—Variety of oils distilled from petroleum, coals, bitumen, etc.—Products of common bituminous coals, etc.

IN a treatise devoted to the manufacture and purification of oils, it might be deemed proper to consider the oleaginous substances derived from the animal and vegetable kingdoms; but the present treatise is intended to give a descriptive account of the mineral oils only, and the modes by which they are manufactured and purified.

The rapid advances made during the last fifteen years in developing mineral oils, and their growing importance to the world for illuminating, and various other purposes, give them a value not rivalled by many articles of commerce.

The ancient inhabitants of different parts of the world, civilized and barbarous, were acquainted with those natural oils which flow from the earth, namely, mineral oil, or naphtha, bitumen, etc. Herodotus, the Greek historian, who composed his history 440 years before Christ, speaks of a place called Arderrica, thirty-five miles from Susa, where there were wells which yielded bitumen, salt,