

getables depends : we shall, however, with diffidence, submit our conjectures on this subject, to the consideration of the society.

Gypsum, which has acquired the name of Plaster of Paris, from its abounding in the neighbourhood of that city, is of a stony nature, yet soft, and easy to be scraped with a knife. It is found in many parts of the earth, in very great quantities, forming hills of a considerable extent, as in the vicinity of Paris, in the Bay of Fundy, in Russia, and in many other parts of the world. It is found under different appearances.

1st. Crystallized into transparent plates, which can be easily separated with a knife, and which in some parts of Russia, are said to be so large, as to answer the purpose of glass.

2d. Of a fibrous texture, and composed of oblong concretions, lying across the mass.

3d. Composed of small crystalline grains ; this species is called alabaster, when it has a hardness capable of receiving a polish.

In Mont Martre, near Paris, all the above varieties are found, and also a stratum of a less perfect matter, filled with small shells ; a specimen of which, I have in my possession : I have also a beautiful specimen of the crystallized Gypsum, lately brought from the Bay of Fundy.

All kinds of Gypsum, however different in exterior form or appearance, have a perfect resemblance in their chemical and essential qualities.

It is generally allowed, that Gypsum is principally composed of calcareous earth, but it is not so well ascertained with what substance it is united, which prevents it from having the power of quick lime, when burnt. Regarding calcareous earth, as forming the basis of this substance, it may be necessary to take notice of the different forms under which calcareous earths appear.

That which is in the greatest quantity, and properly called calcareous, is distinguished from the rest by the effect which fire has upon it, in converting it into a quick lime ; all others should rather be termed alkaline absorbents. Calcareous earth appears in a variety of forms ; there are very considerable strata of it in
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