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A Discourse concerning the Incombustible Cloth above Mentioned; Address't in a Letter to Mr. Arthur Bayly Merchant, and Fellow of the R. Society; and to Mr. Nicholas Waite, Merchant of London; By Rob. Plot. LL. D.

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ing it again, was found to have loſt one dram, 6 grains.

Dec. 3, Mr. *Arthur Bayly*, one of the *Fellows* of the *R. Society*, preſented them with a piece of this *Linnen* in the name of Mr. *Waite*. At the ſame time, the ſame Mr. *Bayly* preſented *Dr. Plot* with another piece of it, which being brought to *Oxford* the *Experiment* was again repeated on it (*Dec.* 16.) it being put into a ſtrong *Charcoal fire* in the *Natural Hiſtory School*, in a full meeting of the *Philoſophical Society* of that *Univerſity*; where after it had continued red hot for ſome conſiderable time, it was taken forth again little altered when cold, ſaving that it ſeemed a little *whiter* and *cleaner* than before it was put in; as appears upon the *Journal* of that *Society*. Concerning which, *Dr. Plot*, being deſired to offer his thoughts, drew up the following *Diſcours*, which was read before the ſaid *Society*, *June* the 23d *An.* 1685.

A Diſcourſe *concerning the* Incombuſtible Cloth *above mentioned*; *Addreſs't in a* Letter *to Mr.* Arthur Bayly *Merchant, and* Fellow *of the* R. Society; *and to Mr.* Nicholas Waite, *Merchant of* London; *by* Rob. Plot. *LL. D.*

Worthy Gentlemen.

THE Hiſtorical account of the *incombuſtible Linnen Cloth* above mention'd, being ſent me by the *one* of You; and a noble preſent made me of *part* of it by the *other*; with a deſire from *both*, that I would ſearch the old *Authors* and ſee how agreeable their *relations* are to *this*; give you *Both* a juſt right to the following Diſcourſe: which I deſire you would believe I addreſs to you, not ſo much out of *Complement*, as true *gratitude* for ſo valuable

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a gift. It being esteemed by the *Ancients*, though then more common, and perhaps better known, then 'tis yet amongst us, equally pretious with the best of Pearls [a].

Nor is it now of mean value even in the *Country* where made, a *China Covet*, (i. e. a piece 23 inches and $\frac{3}{4}$ long,) being worth 80 *Tale* i. e. $36^{lb}. 13^{s}. 4^{d}$. But that which much enhanced its worth with me, was, that hereby you put me in a capacity of giving full satisfaction to this famous *University* of the reality of the thing; whereof, I cannot blame them, if some did doubt; since we find very good *Authors* to have done the same: who though they owned such a mineral as *Amiantus*, out of the woolly part whereof this sort of *Linnen* was always anciently said to be made, yet questioned the possibility of its having been actually done: *Dalecampius* holding it very incredible, that it should be *woven* into *cloth*, by reason of its *brevity* [b]; and *Schildius* in his *Commentary* upon *Suetonius* absolutely denying it, *Multi falso sibi Linteum quoddam ἄσβεστον ex ingenio suo comminiscuntur*, being his very words [c]. *Xuerius Boxhornius* does not indeed deny but that there might be such *Linnen* amongst the *Indians*, where the *materials* of it grow; of which they might make them *funeral shrouds* wherein to enwrap the bodys of their *Princes* (as they say the ancient manner was) and so preserve their *Ashes* distinct from those of the *Pyra* in which they were burnt: but he is peremptory that the Romans never used any such [d]; and so is *Isaac Casaubon* [e]. The truth whereof I shall not dispute: but whether they did or no, I am sure they might, had they pleased; for *Pliny* says expressly (and I dare believe him in any thing he speaks of his own knowledg) that he himself had seen *Napkins* thereof, which being taken *foul* from the board at a great feast, were cast into the *fire*, by which means they were better *scoured*, and looked *fairer* and *cleaner*, then

a C. Plinii 2ii Nat. Hist. Lib. 19. c. 1. b Jac. Dalecampii notæ in locum supra citat. c. Joh. Schildii notæ in C. Suet. Tranq. Lib. 2. d M. Xuerii Boxhornii Quæst. Rom. Quæst. 25. e Is. Casaub notæ in Suet. Lib. 2. p. 186.

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if they had been wash't in *water*[f]. Now if they had such *Napkins*, they might no question have had *sheets* of it too, and put them to the use above mention'd had they thought it expedient, as, 'tis said in the *Letter* above, the *Tartarian Princes*, and others adjoyning, doe at this very day.

That this *Linnen* was very well known to the *Ancients*, beside that of *Pliny*, we have the further testimony of *Cælius Rhodiginus*, who agrees with the *Letter*, placing both the *materials* and *manufacture* of it in *India*[g]; and *Paulus Venetus* more particularly in *Tartary*, the *Emperour* whereof, he says, sent a piece of it to Pope *Alexander*[h]. It is also mention'd by *Varro*; and *Turnebus* in his *Commentary* upon him, *de Lingua Lat*[i]. And by all of them as a thing inconsumable by fire. In these latter ages: *Geo. Agricola* tells us, that there was a *Mantle* of this *Linnen* at *Vereburg* in *Saxony*[k]; and *Simon Majolus* says, he saw another of it at *Lovain* exposed to the fire[l]. *Salmuth* also acquaints us that one *Podocattarus* a *Cyprian* Knight shewed it publickly at *Venice*, throwing it into the *fire* without scruple or hurt[m]; and Mr. *Lassells* saw a piece of it in the curious *Cabinet* of *Manfred Septalla*, Canon of *Milan*[n]. Mr. *Ray* was shewed a purse of it by the Prince *Palatin* at *Heidleberg*, which he saw put into a pan of burning *Charcoal* till it was throughly ignite, which when taken out and cool, he could not perceive had receiv'd any harm[o]; and we are told in the *Burgundian Philosophy*, of a long *Rope* of it, sent from *Signior Bocconi* to the *French King* & kept by Monsieur *Marchand* in the Kings gardens at *Paris*, which though steeped in *oyle* & put in the *fire*, is not consumed[p]. To which add, that we have now seen a piece of this *Linnen*, pass the fierry triall both at

[f] C. Plinii 2di. Lib. 19 cap. 1. [g] Cælii Rhodigini Lectionum Antiq. Lib. 18. cap. 31. [h] M. Pauli Veneti de Regionibus Orientalib. Lib. 1. cap. 47. [i] Andr. Turnebi Comment. in Varr. de Lingua Lat. [k] Geo. Agricolæ de natura Fossilium Lib. 5. [l] Sim. Maioli dierum Canicul. part. 2. colloq 20. [m] Hen Salmuth in Pancirolli rer. deperdit. Tit. 4. [n] Rich. Lassels Voyage into Italy Part. 1. [o] Ray's Observat. Topograph. &c. pag. 83. [p] Philosoph. Burgund. Tom. 5. Tract. 3. cap. 5.

ages,

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London, & *Oxford*. So that it ſeems to have been known in all ages, all deſcribing it after the ſame manner, as a thing ſo inſuperable by *fire*, that it only *cleanſes* and makes it better.

It being clear then beyond controverſy, that there always was, and now is ſuch *incombuſtible Linnen*; it cannot but be worth while to conſider it nicely, and in its full extent, which I ſhall doe firſt in giving ſome account of the notation of the *Names* of the *lanuginous mineral* of which 'tis made, and the *places* where found. 2. of its *natural principles*. 3. of the *manufacture* of it into *thread cloth*, &c. 4. of the variety of *uſes* it has been put to. and 5. of the *reaſon* why *incombuſtible*. And of all theſe with as much brevity, as perſpicuity will admit of. Firſt then as to the *notation* of its *Names* whereof it has many, taken from its *qualities*, *colour*, *texture*, and *places* where found; It is called firſt (from its ſtrange *qualities*) ſometimes *Amiantus*, *quod in ignem injectus non μιαίνεται*, the *fire* being ſo far from *defileing* it, that it rather gives it a *luſtre*. 2. It is call'd *Aſbeſtos*. and 3. *Salamandra*, in Engliſh *Salamanders wool*; I ſuppoſe from the *thryallides* or *Candle-Wieks* ſaid to be anciently made of it, which being put into *Lamps* of ſuch *inconſumable oyl*, as is mention'd in the *Letter*, would never waſt, or goe out; which I take to be the true reaſon of the impoſition of theſe *Names* upon it, whether there ever were any ſuch *Lamps* or noe. For as for the ſtone *Aſbeſtos* or *Apſyctos* mention d by *Solinus* [q], *Iſodore* [r], *Salmaſius* [s], and *Maiolus* [t], found in *Arcadia* of an *Iron-colour*, which they all ſay if once *heated*, can never be *extinguiſh't* or *cooled* again; it muſt be a quite different thing from *ours*, then which nothing is *extinguiſh't*, or *cooled* ſooner. Nay ſo far is it from being the ſame with our *Aſbeſtos*, that

q Julii Solini Polyhiſt. Cap. 12. r Iſodor Epiſc. Hiſpal. Orig. Lib. 16. Cap. 4. s Cl. Salmaſii Exercitat. Plin. in C. Jul. Solini Polyhiſt. t Sim. Maioli Colloq. Phyſ. admirand. Colloq. 18. & 22.

ſtrictly

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ſtrictly ſpeaking, I dare boldly ſay, there was never any ſuch thing in *nature:* Notwithſtanding what *Metaphraſtes* tells us of it, relating to St. *George* the *Megalo-Martyr, Patron* of the *Engliſh*; who being condemned to be *burnt* by his wicked *perſecutors*, that had ſeen many miracles done in the *name* of *Chriſt*, fearing the virtue of that *Name* might extinguiſh the *common fire, Asbeſto lapide Sanctum obruerunt*, cover'd him all over with *Asbeſtos* ſtones which they thought could never be extinguiſh'd[u], For I gueſs with *Bollandus* it was nothing elſe but *Calx viva*[w]; or *unſlaked Lime*, which kept dry will indeed retain its fiery particles for a long ſeaſon; or elſe ſome ſuch ſtone as the *Aſyctos* of *Pliny* which once heated will hold ſo for a week[x]; like the *Ruggiola's* of *Spain* (which are broad plates, like tiles, cut out of a Mountain of red Salt near *Cardona*) that being heated on both ſides will keep warm for a whole natural day[y]; or our *Corniſh* warming ſtone which will hold heat for 8 or 10 hours; All, or any of which, *per Synecdochen partis*, may in ſome ſenſe be call'd *Asbeſtos* well enough. Yet *Iſodore* and *Maiolus* both tell us of a *Lamp* that hung ſomewhere in a *Temple* of *Venus*, that had a wiek of ſuch *Asbeſtos*, that no tempeſt either of wind or water could poſſibly extinguiſh[z]; and we are told that the *Lamp* found in the *tomb* of *Pallas* the *Arcadian* ſlain by *Turnus* in the *Trojan* War, was of this kind, it remaining *burning* after it was taken forth, notwithſtanding either *wind* or *water*, with which ſome did endeavour to quench it[a]. Which *Hiſtories* muſt either be falſe, or the *Lamps* muſt have *Wieks* of ſome different kind of *Asbeſtos* from *ours*; which is eaſily *extinguiſht*; and from a *pungent* quality *Agricola* ſays it has on the tongue without *aſtringency*, is otherwiſe call'd *Alumen*[b], having the diſtinguiſhing Epithet [*plumeum*]

u Sim. Meta phraſtes in Encomio Sti. Georgii apud Lipoman. Tom. 7. in Apr. 23. *w* Bollandus in acta Sanctorum. Apr. 23. 2. *x* C. Plinii 2di. Nat. Hiſt. Lib. 37. cap. 10. *y* Fr. willughby's Voyage through Spain. p. 471. *z* Iſidor. Epiſc. Hiſpal. Orig. Lib. 16. cap. 4. & Sim. Maiolli colloq. Phyſ. admirand. colloq. 18. *a* Fortun. Liceti. de Lucern. Lib. cap. 11. *b* Geo. Agricola de Natura Foſſilium Lib. 5.

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added to it, taken from its downy filaments, to discriminate it from all the rest of the Alums.

From the *light gray* colour of its lanuginous parts, it is calld by some *Polia*; by others *Corsoides*; and from its likeness to the *hoary fibres* of some sort of *Matweed*, *Spartopolia*[c]. From the capacity it has of being spun into thred, it is also calld *Linum*, with some distinguishing *Epithet* taken either from its *quality*, such as *asbestinum*, or *vivum*[d]; or from the place where found, in general or particular: it being calld in general *Linum fossile*; in *English*, *Earth-flax* and in particular *Linum Indicum* by *Cælius Rhodiginus*[e]; *Linum Creticum* by *Strabo*[f]; *Linum Cyprium* by *Pancirollus*[g]; also *Carpasium* by *Plutarch* and *Rhodiginus*, from *Carpasia* a City in *Cyprus*, near which it is found[h]; and *Linum Carystium*, by *Pausanias* from a Town of that name in *Negropont* where it was also dugg[k]. But beside these places that have given *Epithets* to the thred made of it, it is also found in *Tartary*, as *M. Paulus Venetus*[l] and Mr. *Waite* agree; and as *Agricola* informs us, at *Namur* in the *Low-Countries*; at *Eisfeld* in *Thuringia*; amongst the mines in the old *Noricum*; somewhere in *Ægypt*, and in the mountains of *Arcadia*[m]; Also at *Puteoli* as *John Hessus* acquaints[n]; and lately in some mines in *Italy* by *Signior Marco Antonio Castagna*[o]. To which we may add our own *Country*, it having been yet latelyer met with in a small *Island* belonging to *William Robinson* Esq; called *Ynis Molroniad* i. e. the *Island* of *Sea-calves*, in the parish of *LLan-Fair yng Hornwy* in *Anglesey* in *Wales*.

Secondly as to the *natural principles* of it, though it be commonly by the *Lithographers* reckon'd among *stones*, I rather should judg it a *terra lapidosa* or middle substance

c Ibidem. *d* C. Plinii 2^di. Nat. Hist. Lib. 19. cap. 1. *e* Cæl. Rhodigini Lect. antiq. Lib. 18. cap. 31. *f* Strabonis rer. Geograph. Lib. 10. *g* Guid. Pancirolli rer deperdit. Tit. 4. *h* Cæl. Rhodigini Lection Antiq Lib. 14. cap. 18. *k* Vid. Geo. Agricolæ de Nat. Fossil. Lib. 5. *l* Mar Pauli Venet. de Reg on b. Oriental. Lib. 1 cap. 47. *m* Geo. Agricol Ibid. *n* Pet. Andr. Matthioli Epist. Lib. 3. *o* philosoph. Transact. Numb. 166. 72.

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between a ſtone and an earth; but whether the one or the other, made of a mixture (I gueſs) of ſome *Salt* or other, and a *pure earth* without *Sulphur*, coagulated in the *winter*, and harden'd to perfection by the heats in *Summer*. Which Salt *Johannes Heſſus* proves by a very cogent argument to be *Alumen liquidum*, deſcribing it, as *Matthiolus* alſo does[p], to be a *whitiſh lacteous ſubſtance* ſomewhat inclining to *yellow*, that ſweats out of the *earth*, and ſmells like *Rotten cheeſe*: whereof having gather'd a quantity at *Puteoli*, together with the other *Species*'s of *Alum*, and kept it a while by him, when he came to look on it again, he found it to have loſt the ſmell, and a great part of it changed into *Alumen Plumeum*[q]: the *Saline* part (I ſuppoſe) ſhooting into *threds*, and the *pure earth* uniting them, as found in the places wherever generated: whether *ſweating* from the *earth* as *Pliny* and *Matthiolus* would have it[r]; or *percolated* through *rocks*, as we find it in *Wales*, the veins of it there running through a rock of ſtone in hardneſs and colour not unlike *flint*[s]. And yet it ſeems to be made of much ſuch an *Alum* as that of *John Heſſus* at *Puteoli* was, ſome of it being *ſtraw-colour'd*, as if it ſtill retain'd the *yellowneſs* that his *liquid bitumen* was ſaid to have: which is a colour not given it by any *Author*, moſt of it being ſaid to be *white* or *cinereous*; ſome of it *red*; and ſome of an *Iron colour* as *Agricola* tells us[t]; and I have ſome of the *Cyprian* by me ſent from *Aleppo* by my worthy friend Dr. *Rob. Huntington* now *Provoſt* of *Trin. Coll. Dublin* whereof ſome is of a *light blew* or *pearl-colour*; and ſome of it ha's a caſt of *Sea-green*. But however the whole mineral ſubſtances found at ſeveral places may differ in colour; yet I doe not find but the *woolly* part of them all ſeems to be much the ſame, *viz.* of a *white Silver colour*, the threds very *fine*

p And. Matthioli Comment. in Lib. 5. Diſcor. cap. 82. q Andr. Matthioli Epiſtol. Lib. 3. r C. Plinii 2^di. Nat. Hiſt. Lib. 35. cap. 15. & Andr. Matthioli Comment. in Lib. 5. Dioſcor. cap. 82. s Philoſoph. Tranſact. Numb. 166. t Geo. Agricolæ de Nat. Foſſil. L. 5.

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and *ſlender*, yet very *ponderous*, the ſmalleſt particles of them throughly wet, ſinking in *water*; as I alſo found a very ſlender thrumm of the *Incombuſtible Linnen* given me by Mr. *Baily*; which Mr. *Waite* brought from *India*, would alſo doe: which renders it very probable that it is not a *vegetable*, but a *mineral ſubſtance*, notwithſtanding the informations of *Conco* and *Keay-arear Sukradana* mention'd in Mr. *Waite's* Letter. I ſay, renders it probable, there being ſeveral woods, ſuch as *Box*, *red-wood*, *Perſian wood*, [u] &c. that will ſink in water.

Concerning the *manufacture* of it into *thred*, *cloth*, &c. our *Letter* is ſilent, but *Marcus Paulus Venetus* very luckily ſupplyes this defect, acquainting us in his book *de Regionibus Orientalibus*, how, it is made in *Tartary* it ſelf: where he ſays it is found in a certain mountain in the province of *Chinchinthalas*, and made into *cloth*, as he was inform'd by one *Curficar* a *Turk* who was *Superintendent* of the *Mines* in that *Country*, after this manner. The *Lanuginous mineral* or *Amianthus* being firſt dryed in the *Sun*, is next pounded in a *braſs mortar*, and the *earthy* part ſeparated from the *woolly*, which is afterward *waſht* from all filth whatever that may yet ſtick to it, and ſo, being thus purged, is then *ſpun* into *thred* like other *wool*, and after *wove* into *cloth*: which if *foul* or *ſpotted*, they cleanſe, he ſays, by throwing it into the *fire* for an *hours* time, whence it will come forth unhurt, as white as Snow [w]. Which very *Method* (as *Strabo* preſcribes it) ſeems alſo to have been uſed in ordering the *Cretan Amiantus*, only with this addition, that after it was pounded, and the *earthy* part ſhook from the *wooly*, he ſays 'twas *comb'd*, and ſo does *Agricola*, which argues there was ſome of a greater length than any I have yet ſeen [x]: what the *Cretan* might be I cannot tell, but the *Cyprian* I am ſure is ſhort enough, ſo is the *Welſh*, and ſo

[u] Philoſoph. Tranſact. Numb. 169. [w] Mar. Pauli Veneti de Regionibus Orientalibus Lib. 1. cap. 47. [x] Strabo nister. Geograph. Lib. 10. & Geo. Agricolæ de Nat. Foſſil. Lib. 5.

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was all that was known in *Pliny's* time, who confeſſes it was very difficult to *weave* by reaſon of its *ſhortneſs, difficile textu propter brevitatem*[y]: inſomuch that I gueſs they uſed ſome *Art* to effect it, not diſcover'd by *Authors*, ſpininng it perhaps firſt together with *Tow*, and ſo weaving it into *cloth*, by which means 'tis likely it might hang together after twas *woven*, the *tow* being *burnt* away upon the firſt expoſing it to the *fiery triall*; or elſe if they *ſpun* it alone, perhaps they might moiſten it with *Gum-water*, or ſome other ſuch *glutinous liquor*, to make it hang the better together, during the *ſpinning* and *working* it into *cloth*, which though burnt away upon the firſt *experiment*, yet the *Amiantus* once *woven*, in all probability might then hang together well enough of it ſelf.

Thus having ſhewn the *Method* how *anciently*, and how poſſibly this *mineral* may be ſpun into *thred*, and conſequently work't into *cloth* in our *Age*: let us next conſider to what uſes it ever was, or may be put. As to the former whereof *Pliny* informs us, that *Shrouds* of this *Linnen* were anciently uſed, at the *Royal Obſequies* of *K. K.* to wrap up their *Corps* in, ſo as that the *aſhes* of their *bodies* might be preſerved diſtinct from *thoſe* of the *wood* which made the *funeral Pile*; and the *Letter* acquaints us that the *Princes* of *Tartary*, as *Keay-arear Sukradana* was credibly informed, doe uſe ſuch at this day for *burning* their *dead*: which I have had ſo well confirmed from other hands ſince my receipt of that *Letter*, that I have little reaſon to doubt of the thing; there being no incapacity on the part of the *cloth*: of which though, as the *Letter* ſays, ſome is not ſo *good* as the reſt (as 'tis in moſt other *commoditys*) yet I doe not find there is any ſo *bad*, but will ſo far reſiſt the *fire*, as to perform this *office*: for though it muſt be acknowledged it does *diminiſh* every time it un-

[y] C. Plinii 2di. N. H. Lib. 19. cap. 1.

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dergoes the violence of the *fire*; yet this hinders not but it may, and will, doe that *Service* divers times, before it be renderd altogether uſeleſs. *Cælius Calcagnanus* ſays that ſome of the *Ancients* made them *cloths* of it[z]; with whom agrees *Turnebus* in his *Commentary* upon *Varro*[a]; and *Cælius Rhodiginus* tells us indefinitly that the *Indians* did make them *Garments* of it[b]; but *Hieracles* reſtrains it to the *Brachmans* only[c]. The *Wieks* for the *Perpetual Lamps* of the *Ancients* were alſo made of *this*, as the ſame *Rhodiginus* further acquaints us; the *Wiek* of the golden Lamp of *Callimachus* that hung in *Acropoli* being made (as he ſays) *è Lino Carpaſio*, of which the fire had no power[d]. The *Emperor Conſtantin* alſo, as *Damaſus* informs us, appointed a *Wiek* to be made of this *incombuſtible flax*, which ſhould perpetually burn in his *Baptiſtery* at *Rome*[e]. And *Ludov. Vives* bears us Witneſs, that he ſaw many of theſe in Lamps, at *Paris*, that would never conſume[h]. That Napkins, Mantles, a Purſe and Rope have been made of it, has been ſhewn already; and we are told that *Septalla*, *Canon* of *Millan* had thred, roaps, net-works, and Paper of it[i]. *Marco Antonio Caſtagna*, who lately found this *mineral* ſomewhere in *Italy*, knows how to prepare, and render it ſo tractable and ſoft, that it reſembles well enough a very fine *Lambs-Skin*, which he can thicken and make thin to what degree he pleaſeth, and maketh it thereby, like either to a very *white Skin*, or a very *white Paper*[k]. We have alſo made *paper* of our *Welſh Amiantus* but lately here at *Oxford*, which will bear both *fire* and *Ink* well enough, the *Ink* only turning *red* by the *violence* of the *fire*[l].

Laſtly, to ſhew the *reaſon* whence it is, that this ſub-

z Cælii Calcagnini Epiſtol. Quæſt. Lib. 3. Epiſt. 1. *a* Andr. Turnebi Comment. in Varr. de Lingua Lat. *b* Cælii Rhodigini Lection. Antiq. Lib. 18. cap. 31. *c* Vid. Geo. Agricolæ de Nat. Foſſ. Lib. 5. *d* Cælii Rhodigini Lection. Antiq. Lib. 14. cap. 18. *e* Damaſ. in Sylveſtr. Pap. *h* Ludov. Vives in Scholio ad D. Auguſt. de Civitat. Dei. Lib. 21. cap. 6. *i* Muſæum Regalis Societat. Part. 3. chap. 5. *k* Philoſoph. Tranſact. Numb. 72. *l* Philoſoph. Tranſact. Numb. 166.

ſtance

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ſtance ſhould be ſo ſtrangely priviled by *nature*, as to be wholy put out of the *power* of *fire*: we muſt conſider firſt (that we doe it with clearneſs) the *Qualities* and *power* of *fire* it ſelf; 2. the condition of the *things* moſt lyable to *fire*; and then 3. what *things* they are that *reſiſt* it moſt, and *remain* after it has exerciſed its ultimat force. The *qualities* then and *power* of *fire* according to *Ariſtotle* are, ἀφοριστὴν τὰ μὴ ὁμόφυλα, συγκριτὴν δὲ τὰ ὁμόφυλα [m], to *ſeparat* things of a *different*, and *unite* thoſe of a *like nature*. 2 The *Subjects* moſt apt to take *fire* and be diſſolved by it, we find to be ſuch *heterogeneous bodies*, in whoſe *pores* the moſt *Sulphureous bituminous*, and *aqueous particles* are lodg'd; which being ſeized by *fire*, are quickly put into motion, dilated, ſeparated, and being thus made capable of flying away, are at laſt conſumed; and diſſolve the *frame* of thoſe bodies whoſe *parts* before were *united* by them. When theſe are fled and gone, the *fire* naturally goes out, as having nothing now left to work upon, nothing remaining, but the *Salts* and *Earth* in the form of *Aſhes*: which 3. in all ſorts of compounds are the *things* that *reſiſt* this *Element* moſt, and will remain after the moſt *exalted operation* it can be forced to. Nor doe the *Salts* only of *mixt bodies* thus baffle the force of *fire*, but the *ſimple ones* much more, as being more *homogeneous*, as we ſee in the *decrepitation* of *common Salt*, and *exſiccation* of *Vitriol*, which when the *aqueous* parts are once evaporated, are now a *pure ſimple homogeneous body*, no more *ſenſible* of the *fire*, the *decrepitation* ceaſing, and nothing remaining that can be *dilated*, any further to break the *corns* of *Salt*. Now whatever the *fire* cannot *dilate*, it cannot *ſeparate*, nor conſequently *deſtroy*, or carry any thing from it, but what is *heterogeneous* and accidentally adhering to the outſide of it: which is perfectly the caſe of our *incombuſtible Linnen*, whoſe *threds*

[m] Ariſtotel. de Cœlo Lib. 4. cap. 8.

being

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being altogether *homogeneous*, and nothing elſe but the *pure ſtriæ* of *liquid Alum*, as was ſhewn above, holding nothing of *Sulphur*, *bitumen*, or *water*, or any thing that is different or *heterogeneous* to it ſelf, that can be *dilated* or *ſeparated*, it is in no poſſibility indeed of being *lyable* to the *fire*: which may indeed paſs through it, as we ſee it does when 'tis made *red hot*, but can carry nothing from it; but ſuch *accidental filth* as has been put upon it, or accrewed by uſeing.

And thus *Gentlemen* I have run through the ſeveral *branches* laid down above, according to the capacity of the *ſubject*, and my ſelf; wherein if I have done well, you have your *deſire*; if ill, you ſee I have not ſcrupled to hazard my *reputation*, to ſerve my *Friends*; ſo that I hope you will believe without a *Complement*, that I really am,

Your moſt humble

Servant, R. P.

Short

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