near the ſea, they place laths acroſs it, on which they lay the herb in heaps, and, having made a fire below, the liquor, which runs out of the herbs, drops to the bot­tom, which at length thickening, becomes ſal kali, which is partly of a black, and partly of an aſh-colour, very ſharp and corroſive, and of a ſaltiſh taſte. This, when thoroughly hardened, becomes like a ſtone; and in that ſtate is tranſported to different countries for ma­king of glaſs.

SALT, one of the great diviſions of natural bodies, but which has never yet been accurately defined. The characteriſtic marks of ſalt have uſually been reckoned its power of affecting the organs of taſte, and being ſo­luble in water. But this will not diſtinguiſh ſalt from quicklime, which alſo affects the ſenſe of taſte, and diſſolves in water; yet quicklime has been univerſally reckoned an earth, and not a ſalt. The only diſtinguiſhing property of ſalts, therefore, is their cryſtalli­zation in water: however, this does not belong to all ſalts; for the nitrous and marine acids, though allowed on all hands to be ſalts, are yet incapable of cryſtallization, at leaſt by any method hitherto known. Several of the imperfect neutral ſalts alſo, ſuch as combinations of the nitrous, muriatic, and vegetable acids, with ſome kinds of earths, cryſtallize with very great diffi­culty. However, by the addition of ſpirit of wine, or ſome other ſubſtances which abſorb part of the water, keeping the liquor in a warm place, &c. all of them may be reduced to cryſtals of one kind or other. Salt, therefore, may be defined a ſubſtance affecting the or­gans of taſte, ſoluble in water, and capable of cryſtalization, either by itſelſ or in conjunction with ſome other body; and, univerſally, every ſalt capable of be­ing reduced into a ſolid form, is alſo capable of cryſtallization *per ſe.* Thus the claſs of ſaline bodies will be ſufficiently diſtinguiſhed from all others: for quicklime, though ſoluble in water, cannot be cryſtallized without addition either of fixed air or ſome other acid; yet it is moſt commonly found in a ſolid ſtate. The precious ſtones, baſaltes, &c. though ſuppoſed to be formed by cryſtallization, are nevertheleſs diſtinguiſhed from ſalts by their inſipidity and inſolubility in water.

But acids and alkalis, and combinations of both, when in a concrete form, are ſalts, and of the pureſt fort. Hence we conclude, that the bodies, to which the name of *ſalts* more properly belongs, are the concretions of thoſe ſub­ſtances; which are accordingly called *acid ſalts, alkaline ſalts,* and *neutralſalts.* Theſe laſt are combinations of acid and alkaline ſalts, in ſuch proportion as to render the compounds neither four nor alkaline to the taſte. This proportionate combination is called *ſaturation*: thus the common kitchen-ſalt is a neutral ſalt, compoſed of marine acid and mineral alkali combined together to the point of ſaturation. The appellation of *neutral ſalts* is alſo extended to denote all thoſe combinations of acids, and any other ſubſtance with which they can unite, ſo as to loſe, wholly or in great meaſure, their acid properties.

But altho’ this general definition of ſalts is commonly received, yet there are many writers, eſpecially mineralogiſts, who confine the denomination of *ſalts* in the man­ner we firſt mentioned, viz. to thoſe ſubſtances only which, beſides the general properties of ſalts, have the power of cryſtallizing, that is, of arranging their particles ſo as to form regularly-ſhaped bodies, called *cryftals,* when the wa­ter ſuperfluous to their concrete exiſtence has been evaporated.

The ancient chemiſts aſſerted that ſalt was one of the component principles of metals, and indeed of every thing elſe: a doctrine which was attempted to be revived by the late Dr Price of Guildford, who thought it probable that the baſis of all imperfect me­tals is ſaline, becauſe Mr Scheele had lately extracted a real acid from arſenic, which, by the addition of a pro­per quantity of phlogiſton, becomes a ſemimetal. But here the argument will hold only with regard to the ſemimetals, all of which are volatile in the fire, and therefore may poſſibly have a volatile baſis, ſuch as all acids are in ſome degree: but ſome of the imperfect metals, as tin and copper, may be reduced to a calx equally refractory with quicklime itſelf; and even zinc, though volatile in cloſe veſſels, is yet capable of being reduced to an exceedingly refractory calx called *flowers oſ zinc*; and it is to be obſerved, that the regulus of arſenic, even in its moſt perfect metalline form, cannot be calcined like other metals. The common opinion that metals have an earthy, rather than a ſaline baſis, ſeems to be well founded.

The origin of ſalts is very much, or rather totally, unknown. Some eminent chemiſts, particularly Stahl, have ſuppoſed that the number of ſubſtances truly and eſſentially ſaline is very ſmall; nay, that there is but one ſaline principle in nature. This principle they ſuppoſe to be the vitriolic acid, as being the moſt ſimple and indeſtructible of them all. Stahl delivers his opinion on this ſubject in the following words: “That he conſiders the vitriolic acid as the only ſubſtance eſſentially ſaline; as the only ſaline principle which, by uniting more or leſs intimately with other ſubſtances that are not ſaline, is capable of forming an innumerable multitude of other ſaline matters, which nature and art ſhew us; and, ſecondly, that this ſaline principle is a ſecondary principle, compoſed only by the inti­mate union of two primary principles, water and earth.

In ſupport of this theory Mr Macquer argues in the following manner: “Every true chemiſt will eaſily diſcover that this grand idea is capable of comprehend­ing by its generality, and of connecting together, all the phenomena exhibited by ſaline ſubſtances. But we muſt at the ſame time acknowledge, that when we exa­mine the proofs upon which it is founded, although it has a great appearance of truth by its conſiſtency with the principles of chemiſtry, and with many phenomena, yet it is not ſupported by a ſufficient number of facts and experiments to aſcertain its truth. We might here examine what degree of probability ought to be grant­ed to this theory of ſalts; but this could not be pro­perly accompliſhed, without entering into long details, and penetrating into the depths of chemiſtry. We are therefore obliged to relate only what is moſt eſſential to be known concerning this grand hypotheſis. We may perceive at once, that the former of thoſe propoſitions, upon which is founded the theory which we mention­ed, cannot be demonſtrated, unleſs it be previouſly pro­ved that every ſaline matter, excepting pure vitriolic acid, is nothing but this ſame acid differently modified, the primary properties of which are more or leſs alter­ed or diſguiſed by the union contracted with other ſub­ſtances. But we confeſs, that cherniſts are not capable of proving deciſively this opinion; which, however, will appear very probable from the following reflections. Firſt, of all ſaline matters known, none is ſo ſtrong,