

ASBESTOS, a sort of native fossile stone, which may be split into threads and filaments, from one inch to ten inches in length, very fine, brittle, yet somewhat tractable, silky, and of a greyish colour, not unlike talc of Venice. It is almost insipid to the taste, indissoluble in water, and endued with the wonderful property of remaining unconsumed in the fire, which only whitens it. But, notwithstanding the common opinion, in two trials before the Royal Society, a piece of cloth made of this stone was found to lose a dram of its weight each time. Paper as well as cloth has been made of it; and Pliny says he had seen napkins of it, which, being taken foul from the table, were thrown into the fire, and better scoured than if they had been washed in water. This stone is found in many places of Asia and Europe; particularly in the island of Anglesey in Wales, and in Aberdeenshire in Scotland.