

that of attraction, insomuch that all the forces of matter would depend solely on a primitive one; at least this idea seems to be worthy of that sublime simplicity with which nature works. Now cannot we conceive that this attraction changes into repulsion every time that bodies approach near enough to rub together, or strike one against the other? Impenetrability, which we must not regard as a force, but as a resistance essential to matter, not permitting two bodies to occupy the same place, what must happen when two molecules, which attract the more powerfully as they approach nearer, suddenly strike against each other? Does not then this invincible resistance of impenetrability, become an active force, which, in the contact, drives the bodies with as much velocity, as they had acquired at the moment they touched? And from hence the expansive force will not be a particular force opposed to the attractive one, but an effect derived therefrom. I own, that we must suppose a perfect spring in every molecule, and in every atom of matter, to have a clear conception how this change of attraction into repulsion is performed. But even this is sufficiently indicated by facts; the more matter is attenuated, the more it takes a spring. Earth and water, which are the most gross aggregates, have a less spring than air; and fire, which is  
the