

to dissolve; and, as the degrees of affinity vary, we must not be surprized at different salts varying in their action on different substances; their active principle is the same, their dissolving power the same; but they remain without exercise when the substance presented repels that of the dissolvent, or has no degree of affinity with it; but the contrary is the case when there is sufficient force of affinity to conquer that of the coherence; that is, when the active principles, contained in the dissolvent, under the form of air and fire, are found more powerfully attracted by the substance to be dissolved, than they are by the earth and water they contain. Newton is the first who has assigned affinities as the causes of chemical precipitation; Stahl adopted this idea and transmitted it to all the other chemists; and it appears to be at present universally received as a truth. But neither Newton nor Stahl saw that all these affinities, so different in appearance, are only particular effects of the general force of universal attraction: and, for want of this knowledge, their theory cannot be either luminous or complete, because they were obliged to suppose as many trivial laws of different affinities, as there were different phenomena; instead of which there is in fact
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