

Every one must have remarked that water, in the act of freezing, assumes various symmetrical forms, shooting into spiculæ, &c., as may be beautifully seen on our windows on a frosty morning. Now this affords a familiar instance of what is termed *crystallization*; a property apparently possessed by all ponderable matter, and readily exhibited by such matter, when under favourable circumstances: and it has been remarked, that the form assumed by the same matter is usually similar, or easily deducible from some common form, according to well-ascertained and obvious laws. Let us now briefly inquire into the properties which the ultimate molecules of water must be supposed to possess, to enable them to form these symmetrical aggregations.

In the first place, it is evident, that the simple supposition of mutually attractive forces between these molecules, analogous to, or identical with, the forces of gravitation, is inadequate to explain the phenomena. Possessed of such properties alone, the ultimate molecules of bodies might indeed be imagined to adhere together, and their aggregations might even exhibit something like regularity; but this regularity would in a great measure be accidental, and probably never twice alike: hence the utmost latitude of assumption would never enable us to explain upon such principles alone, that sameness of figure above alluded to, as always assumed by