

while others of them are so obviously necessary to the existence of the present order of things ; that the least derangement or alteration in their proportion, or quantity, would be fatal to the whole. Some of these elementary substances exist in such enormous quantities, as to constitute a large proportion of the whole visible bulk of our globe ; while others again, occur in such minute proportion, at least within our reach, as to be obtained with difficulty, and not without elaborate research. With respect to the facility with which they enter into combination ; and the obstinacy with which they unite ; they differ also, very remarkably ; a few of them combining readily in a variety of proportions with almost all the rest ; while some of the others, can be scarcely made to combine under any circumstances. Lastly, the different effects, which different elementary substances are capable of exerting upon organic life, are equally striking. A large majority of them indeed, may, in their simple state, be considered of a deleterious nature ; while three or four of them, on the other hand, make organized beings what they are ; and are necessary to their very existence.

Such are a few of the leading properties of the elementary principles, as we are at present acquainted with them. They have been arranged by Dr. Thomson under three great divisions, which he denominates, the *supporters of*