

the most subtle of all the elements, is also that which has the most expansive force. The smallest molecules of matter, the smallest atoms with which we are acquainted are those of light, and we are sensible of their being perfectly elastic, since the angle under which the light is reflected, is always equal to that under which it comes. We may therefore infer, that all the constitutive parts of matter in general, are a perfect spring; and that this spring produces all the effects of the expansive force, every time that bodies strike by meeting in opposite directions.

We know of no other means of producing fire, but by striking or rubbing bodies together\*; since by supposing man without any burning glasses, and without actual fire, he will have no other means of producing it; for the fire produced by uniting the rays of light, or by application of fire already produced, had the same origin.

Expansive force, therefore, in reality might be only the re-action of the attractive, a re-action which operates every time that the primitive molecules of matter, always attracted one by the other, happen immediately to touch; for then it is necessary, that they be  
repelled

\* The fire, which arises from the fermentation of herbs heaped together, and which manifests itself in effervescences, is not an exception that can be opposed to me, since this production of fire depends, like all the rest, from the action of the shock of the parts of matter one against the other.