

a view of it when it resides in bodies under an elastic form ; its effects are then as variable as the degrees of its elasticity, and its action, though always the same, seems to give different products in different substances. To bring this consideration back to a general point of view, we will compare it with water and earth, as we have already compared it with fire ; the results of this comparison between the four elements will afterwards be easily applied to every substance, since they are all composed merely of these four real principles.

The greatest cold that is known, cannot destroy the spring of the air, and the least heat is sufficient for that purpose, especially when this fluid is divided into very small particles. But it must be observed, that between its state of fixity, and that of perfect elasticity, there are all the links of the intermediate states, in one of which it always resides in earth and water, and all the substances which are composed of them ; for example, water, which appears so simple a substance, contains a certain quantity of air, which is neither fixed nor elastic, as is plain from its congulation, ebullition, and resistance to all compression, &c. Experimental philosophy demonstrates, that water is incompressible, for instead of shrinking and entering into itself when pressed, it
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