

only one law of affinity, a law which is precisely the same as that of universal attraction.

Salts concur in many operations of Nature by the power they have of dissolving other substances; for, although it is commonly said, that water dissolves salt, it is easy to be perceived, that in reality, when there is a dissolution, both are active, and may be alike called *dissolvents*. Regarding salt as only a dissolvent, the body to be dissolved may be either liquid or solid; and, provided the parts of the salt be sufficiently divided to touch immediately those of the other substances, they will act and produce all the effects of dissolution. By this we see how much the action of salts, and the action of the element of water which contains them, must have influence on the composition of mineral matters. Nature may produce by this mode, all that our arts produce by that of fire. Time only is required for salts and water to produce on the most compact and hard substances, the most complete division and attenuation of their parts, so as to render them capable of uniting with all analagous substances, and to separate from all others; but this time, which to Nature is never wanting, is, of all things, that which is the most deficient to us: the greatest of all our arts, therefore, is that of abridging time, that