

force that a much greater division might perform by a more immediate contact, and this is what we see happen in effervescences, where at once, heat and light are produced by the mixture of two cold liquors.

Light, heat, fire, air, water, and salts, are steps by which we descend from the top of Nature's ladder to its base, which is fixed earth. And these are at the same time the only principles that we must admit and combine for the explanation of all phenomena. These principles are real, independently of all hypotheses and all method, as are also their conversion and transformation, which are demonstrated by experience. It is the same with the element of earth, it can convert itself by volatilizing and taking the form of the other elements, as those take that of earth in fixing; it, therefore, appears quite useless to seek for a substance of pure earth in terrestrial matters. The transparent lustre of the diamond dazzled the sight of our chemists, when they considered that stone as a pure elementary fire; they might have said with as much foundation, that it is pure water, all the parts of which are fixed to compose a solid diaphanous substance. When we would define Nature, the large masses should alone be considered, and those elements have been well taken notice of by even the most ancient philosophers.