

LECTURE VII.

ON LIGHT.

PART II.—THEORIES OF LIGHT—INTERFERENCES— DIFFRACTION.



TWO theories only, entitled to any consideration as rational and intelligible explanations of the phænomena of Light, have been advanced—the one proposed by Sir Isaac Newton, commonly known as the “Corpuscular;” the other by Christian Huyghens, as the “Undulatory” theory. According to the former, light consists in “Corpuscles,” or excessively minute material particles darted out in all directions from the luminous body, in virtue of some violent repulsive power, or other energetic form of internal action, acting under such circumstances, and under such laws, as to give them all the same *initial* velocity which they retain unchanged in their progress through space, as well as their initial direction according to the general laws of motion (to all which they implicitly conform), until they meet with some material body by whose action their course is changed. All