

ward forms, yet that they themselves are immutable and indestructible, constant in number and quality and form, not subject to any law of evolution ; in other words, totally unaffected by time.

If we ask for the evidence on which this generalisation is founded, we have to appeal to various delicate weighings, conducted chiefly by chemists for practical purposes, and very few of them really directed to ascertain whether the law is true or not. A few such direct experiments are now, indeed, being conducted with the hope of finding that the law is not completely true ; in other words, with the hope of finding that the weight of a body does depend slightly on its state of aggregation or on some other physical property. The question has even been raised whether the weight of a crystal is altogether independent of its *aspect* : the direction of its plane of cleavage with reference to the earth's radius ; also, whether the *temperature* of bodies has any influence on their weight ; but on these points it may