

to give that view of the subject, which, after twenty years of close attention and no ordinary labour, we have been induced to consider as the most simple and consistent with the phenomena. The general reader, who feels no interest in such enquiries, but who at the same time wishes to be apprized of the nature of the arguments deducible from the divisibility and molecular constitution of matter, is referred to the end of the present, and of the following chapters, for a summary of these arguments.

## SECTION I.

### *Of the Divisibility of Matter.*

THE first point which naturally claims our attention in the consideration of molecular operations, is the *size* of these molecules ; a subject usually discussed under the head of the divisibility of matter. Matter, or rather space, may be conceived to be divisible *ad infinitum* ; at least no limits can be assigned beyond which its subdivision cannot necessarily proceed. But, there cannot be the least doubt that matter, as it exists in the world around us, is composed of ultimate particles or molecules, incapable of further division or change ; at least, by ordinary