

characters of matter ; and moreover, possess certain remarkable properties in common, upon the nature of which, we shall, in the next place, make a few remarks.

SECTION II.

Of the Forms of Aggregation of the ultimate Molecules of Matter.

MATTER in the aggregate, and as it appears to exist in the world around us, is known to us principally in three forms or conditions:—the *Solid*, the *Liquid*, and the *Gaseous* (the latter including the state of vapour, and the etheriform condition of matter). These three forms or conditions of matter, in their well marked states are sufficiently distinct ; though the whole gradually run into each other—the solid into the liquid, and the liquid into the gaseous, by such imperceptible grades, that in many instances, it is not easy to say, where one ends, and the other begins.* The notions, which the mechanician or natural philosopher employs in reasoning on these forms

* It may be proper here to observe that some bodies, as water, for instance, are capable of existing in that imperfectly gaseous form denominated *vapour*, under all ordinary circumstances ; thus even ice gives off vapour rapidly, as we shall find hereafter.