

that chemists recognise upwards of *fifty* forms of matter, all of an elementary character; at least, we cannot at present say, that one of these forms, is more elementary than another. Again, the number of molecules in each of these elementary principles, great as it is, is *limited*; the properties of the molecules also are fixed and definite; all which circumstances throw further insurmountable difficulties in the way of the supposition, that the whole have existed, as they now exist, from eternity. For how has it happened, it may be asked, that the number and properties of the elements, or that the number of the molecules of which these elements consist, are just what the economy of nature requires; and are neither greater, nor less, nor different? How has it happened, that what is supposed to be infinite in some respects, should be finite and limited in those respects, in which we are actually able to trace them; nay, what is more, most luckily finite and limited, just where they appear to be required to be so? He who can satisfactorily answer these questions, may contend with some prospect of success for the eternity of matter, and of its properties, in their present form. In the mean time, we assert without fear of contradiction, that the molecular constitution of matter is decidedly artificial; or to use the words of a celebrated writer, that the molecules of matter have all "the essential cha-