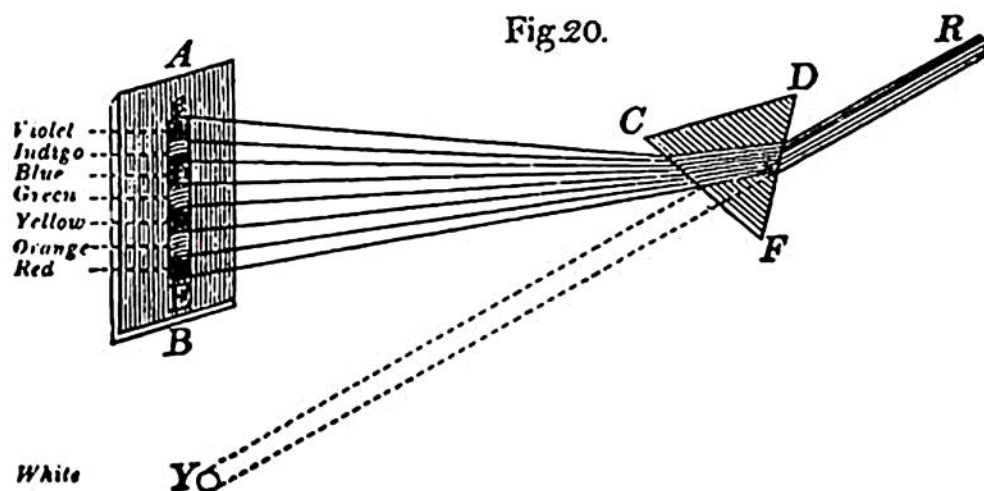


Decomposition of Light.—When a ray of light, R , Fig. 20, traverses a prism, $C D F$, instead of passing onward in the direction Y , it is refracted into the spectrum $E e$; which spectrum when received upon the screen, $A B$, will be found to consist of seven different colours, in the order, and of the kind described, each having, of course, different refractive powers; the red being the least, and the violet the most, refracted from the original direction $R Y$, of the



solar beam. This oblong image is called the *solar*, or sometimes, the *prismatic spectrum*; and Sir Isaac Newton found that each colour consists of light no longer separable, like white light, into others, but having uniform refractive properties: hence he called all the seven colours simple, or homogeneous; in opposition to white light, which he called compound, or heterogeneous.* This important fact presents a clue to,

* Sir David Brewster has lately shown that there are, in fact, but three simple colours, the *red*, the *yellow*, and the *blue*; and