

has entirely changed the aspect of this science, and has elicited a new system of mineralogy, in which the natural-chemical combinations are ranked with those which are artificial; which affords a confirmation to the laws of crystallography, as being the same in both cases.

It has been objected to the truth of the position, that the laws of natural combinations are the same as those which artificial combinations follow; that chemistry can decompose minerals; but that, in the formation of these combinations, natural laws have been in activity, which art would in vain attempt to reproduce: but this objection is groundless. The chemical affinity which acts in artificial combinations is a power of nature, as well as the affinity which regulates the composition of natural combinations: chemical affinity, in general, is a quality of matter. In this objection, modifying circumstances have been confounded with laws. The chemist would very easily refute the objection, if he could compose minerals of their elements, and produce artificial combinations similar in all their characters to minerals themselves. From such researches, there would, at the same time, be diffused a new light upon geological investigations. In this manner many phenomena would be reproduced, which have taken place at the formation of the earth; geological observations would be repeated by experiments, which might be varied at pleasure, for confirming these observations; and the recurrence in nature itself would be sought of those phenomena which have been produced in the laboratory;—inquiries, which are, however, of great importance, because they may be arbitrarily disposed and arranged according to the theory in view.