

(330.) This paucity of simple minerals, however, is probably rather apparent than real, and in proportion as the researches of the chemist and crystallographer shall be extended throughout nature, they will no doubt become much more numerous. Indeed, in the great laboratories of nature, it can hardly be doubted that almost every kind of chemical process is going forwards, by which compounds of every description are continually forming. Accordingly, it is remarked, that the lavas and ejected scoriæ of volcanoes are receptacles in which mineral products previously unknown are constantly discovered, and that the primitive formations, as they are called in geology, which bear no marks of having been produced by the destruction of others, are also remarkable for the beauty and distinctness of character of their minerals.

(331.) The great difficulty which has been experienced, in attempts to classify mineral substances by their chemical constituents, has arisen from the observed presence, in some specimens of minerals bearing that general resemblance in other respects as well as agreement in form which would seem to entitle them to be considered as alike, of ingredients foreign to the usual composition of the species, and that occasionally in so large a proportion as to render it unjustifiable to refer their occurrence to accidental impurities. These cases, as well as some anomalies observed in the classification of minerals by their crystalline forms, which seemed to show that the same substance might occasionally appear under two distinct forms, as well as some remarkable coincidences between the forms of substances quite distinct from each other in a chemical point of view, have within a recent period given rise to a branch of the science of crystallography of a very curious and important nature. The *isomorphism* of certain groups of chemical elements has already afforded us an example illustrative of the manner in which inductions sometimes receive unexpected verifications (see 180.). The laws and relations thus brought to light are among the most curious and interesting parts of modern science, and seem likely in their