

development of the poetic faculty. Dr. Moir had honoured my address with his presence ; he had listened with apparent attention to a view very much opposed, as I was told after the breaking up of the meeting, to one which he himself had promulgated to the Institution only a few weeks before ; and on the publication of his little volume he politely sent me a copy, accompanied by a kind note, in which he referred to the point apparently at issue between us, as involving rather a seeming than a real difference. ‘ Our antagonism respecting the relations of poetry and science,’ he said, ‘ is, I doubt not, much more apparent than real, and arises simply from the opposite aspects in which we have regarded the subject.’ I read his work with interest ; and at first deemed the difference somewhat more than merely apparent. I found the lecturer speaking of ‘ staggering blows’ inflicted on the poetry of the age by science in not a few formidably prosaic shapes,—in the shape, among the rest, of ‘ geological exposition ;’ and of ‘ rocks stratified by the geologists as satins are measured by mercers,’ and, in consequence, no longer redolent of that emotion of the sublime which was wont to breathe forth of old from broken crags and giddy precipices. But his *definition* of poetry re-assured me, and set all right again. ‘ Poetry,’ he said, ‘ may be defined to be objects or subjects seen through the mirror of imagination, and descanted on in harmonious language ; and if so, it must be admitted that the very exactness of knowledge is a barrier to the laying on of that colouring by which facts can be invested with the illusive hues of poetry. Wherever light penetrates the obscure and illuminates the uncertain, we may rest assured that a demesne has been lost to the realms of imagination.’ Now, if such be poetry, I said, and such the conditions favourable to its development, the poets need be in no degree jealous of the geologists. The stony science, with buried creations for its domains, and half an eternity