

sulphurous and the sulphuric; and these acids form, with earthy or alkaline bases, sulphites and sulphates; while sulphur directly combined with another element, forms a sulphuret. The term *oxyd* (now usually written *oxide*) expressed a lower degree of combination with oxygen than the acids. The *Méthode de Nomenclature Chimique* was published in 1787; and in 1789, Lavoisier published a treatise on chemistry in order further to explain this method. In the preface to this volume, he apologizes for the great amount of the changes, and pleads the authority of Bergman, who had exhorted De Morveau "to spare no improper names; those who are learned will always be learned, and those who are ignorant will thus learn sooner." To this maxim they so far conformed, that their system offers few anomalies; and though the progress of discovery, and the consequent changes of theoretical opinion, which have since gone on, appear now to require a further change of nomenclature, it is no small evidence of the skill with which this scheme was arranged, that for half a century it was universally used, and felt to be far more useful and effective than any nomenclature in any science had ever been before.

CHAPTER VII.

APPLICATION AND CORRECTION OF THE OXYGEN THEORY.

SINCE a chemical theory, as far as it is true, must enable us to obtain a true view of the intimate composition of all bodies whatever, it will readily be supposed that the new chemistry led to an immense number of analyses and researches of various kinds. These it is not necessary to dwell upon; nor will I even mention the names of any of the intelligent and diligent men who have labored in this field. Perhaps one of the most striking of such analyses was Davy's decomposition of the earths and alkalis into metallic bases and oxygen, in 1807 and 1808; thus extending still further that analogy between the earths and the calces of the metals, which had had so large a share in the formation of chemical theories. This discovery, however, both in the means by which it was made, and in the views to which it led, bears upon subjects hereafter to be treated of.

The Lavoisierian theory also, wide as was the range of truth which it embraced, required some limitation and correction. I do not now