

As Wollaston and Dalton were thus arriving independently at the same result in England, other chemists, in other countries, were, unknown to each other, travelling towards the same point.

In 1807, Berzelius,⁷ intending to publish a system of chemistry, went through several works little read, and among others the treatises of Richter. He was astonished, he tells us, at the light which was there thrown upon composition and decomposition, and which had never been turned to profit. He was led to a long train of experimental research, and, when he received information of Dalton's ideas concerning multiple proportions, he found, in his own collection of analyses, a full confirmation of this theory.

Some of the Germans, indeed, appear discontented with the partition of reputation which has taken place with respect to the Theory of Definite Proportions. One⁸ of them says, "Dalton has only done this;—he has wrapt up the good Richter (whom he knew; compare Schweigger, T, older series, vol. x., p. 381;) in a ragged suit, patched together of atoms; and now poor Richter comes back to his own country in such a garb, like Ulysses, and is not recognized." It is to be recollected, however, that Richter says nothing of multiple proportions.

The general doctrine of the atomic theory is now firmly established over the whole of the chemical world. There remain still several controverted points, as, for instance, whether the atomic weights of all elements are exact multiples of the atomic weight of hydrogen. Dr. Prout advanced several instances in which this appeared to be true, and Dr. Thomson has asserted the law to be of universal application. But, on the other hand, Berzelius and Dr. Turner declare that this hypothesis is at variance with the results of the best analyses. Such controverted points do not belong to our history, which treats only of the progress of scientific truths already recognized by all competent judges.

Though Dalton's discovery was soon generally employed, and universally spoken of with admiration, it did not bring to him anything but barren praise, and he continued in the humble employment of which we have spoken, when his fame had filled Europe, and his name become a household word in the laboratory. After some years he was appointed a corresponding member of the Institute of France; which may be considered as a European recognition of the importance

⁷ Berz. *Chem. B.* iii. p. 27.

⁸ Marx. *Gesch. der Cryst.* p. 202.