which arise from the combination of a few (about seventy) elements that are incapable of further analysis; some of them play a most important part in every branch of life. It has been shown that one of these elements —carbon—is the remarkable substance that effects the endless variety of organic syntheses, and thus may be considered " the chemical basis of life." All the particular advances, however, of physics and chemistry yield in theoretical importance to the discovery of the great law which brings them all to one common focus, the " Law of Substance." As this fundamental cosmic law establishes the eternal persistence of matter and force, their unvarying constancy throughout the entire universe, it has become the pole-star that guides our Monistic Philosophy through the mighty labyrinth to a solution of the world-problem.

Since we intend to make a general survey of the actual condition of our knowledge of nature and its progress during the present century in the following chapters, we shall delay no longer with the review of its particular branches. We would only mention one important advance, which was contemporary with the discovery of the law of substance, and which supplements it—the establishment of the theory of evolution. It is true that there were philosophers who spoke of the evolution of things a thousand years ago; but the recognition that such a law dominates the entire universe, and that the world is nothing else than an eternal " evolution of substance," is a fruit of the nineteenth century. It was not until the second half of this century that it attained to perfect clearness and a universal application. The immortal merit of establishing the doctrine on an empirical basis, and pointing out its world-wide application, belongs to the great scientist Charles Darwin;