

it did not always produce a natural, but frequently a purely artificial, compound. The practical effect of this discovery has been remarkable, not to say astonishing. New industries have been founded, and a branch of science has been created called "organic chemistry," but more correctly the "chemistry of carbon compounds," which was undreamt of in the beginning of the century. At that time "organic chemistry" meant that branch of the science which dealt with the compounds which were found in the structures of the vegetable and animal kingdoms, and which were peculiar to them.¹ This meaning of the term "organic chemistry" has disappeared; but the branch of science which deals specially with the substances contained in living matter has not disappeared. Only the development of chemistry on the lines pre-eminently prescribed by the atomic view of nature has diverted the attention of many investigators and philosophers from the original problems of organic chemistry—the study, the analysis, and the reproduction or synthesis of such compounds as are immediately connected with living matter.

To the extent that these problems which have not lain

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Change in
definition of
organic
chemistry.

¹ The merit of having upheld the twofold aspect of organic chemistry and of having urged the necessity of two distinct ways of analysing organic substances, belongs in this century pre-eminently to Chevreul. Not only are his 'Recherches sur les Corps gras d'Origine animale,' carried on from 1813 to 1823, a model work of great theoretical and practical value; but he has in various writings, notably in his historical memoirs ('Journal des Savants,'

1852-60), insisted on the necessity of studying what he terms, after Fourcroy, "les principes immédiats, qui constituent les végétaux et les animaux." This study is based upon quite a different method from that usually called "analyse élémentaire." Chevreul's great work has been continued and developed by M. Berthelot in his celebrated book, 'Chimie organique fondée sur la Synthèse,' 1860, two vols.