

CHAPTER VI

THE CHEMISTRY OF THE THREE ELEMENTS

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ORGANIC CHEMISTRY

A HUNDRED years ago the firm belief was held by all chemists that whatever substance is synthesized within the body of the living organism possesses special and peculiar characteristics of its own, which mark it off from all inorganic bodies, and divide chemistry into the two great and perfectly distinct departments of Organic Chemistry and Inorganic Chemistry. To be sure, even then many organic substances had been separated from the organism, purified, and subjected to the usual experiments of the laboratory, without at any stage manifesting unique properties. But, as Berzelius believed, a special vital force had presided over their formation, and this, therefore, he supposed to be impossible under any other circumstances.