

In the course of time, however, a long series of successful syntheses of undoubted constituents of animals and plants, among which Wöhler's preparation of urea in 1828 is the most famous, completely destroyed the old erroneous assumption. The compounds of organic chemistry gradually came to be recognized as different from inorganic substances only in the special characteristics of the elements carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen when in chemical union with one another, just as the compounds of any other elements have their own specific characteristics. No other difference remains; every principle of chemical science applies to organic and inorganic substances alike; and accordingly life has been forever subjected to the general laws of chemistry.

As syntheses multiplied, the organic chemist found many fields for investigation where life was not concerned. The application of his new substances in the arts, as well as many fascinating theoretical problems, led him on, until, about the middle of the century or a little later, it became clear that organic substances in the original sense are but a small part of his scope. His occupation had become the study of all the compounds of carbon, wherever and however they might