

not so those of hydrogen and oxygen. In almost equal frequency the latter elements take part in the reactions of inorganic chemistry, and help to form its molecular structures. As an illustration of their importance in this department of the science I have counted the compounds and the classes of compounds mentioned in the table of contents of the second edition of Erdmann's "Lehrbuch der Anorganischen Chemie." In all 435 substances are referred to; of these 259, approximately 60 per cent, contain oxygen; 130, or 30 per cent, contain hydrogen. There seems to be little doubt that this is a fair test, for the work is compendious, and all important substances and classes of substances are mentioned. Even if the acids, and the small number of bodies which are referred to in connection with their water of crystallization, be eliminated from the above count the great importance of the two elements remains clearly evident.

Only about one fourth of all the compounds mentioned contain neither hydrogen nor oxygen. A very large proportion of these consist of the chlorides, bromides, iodides, sulphides, fluorides, and other similar binary compounds, whose importance certainly does not depend upon the variety of chemical