

PREFACE

THE fundamental nature of chemical science is probably only appreciated by very few. Chemistry is playing an indispensable rôle in the development of many other sciences, and tending to bind them together as one great subject—the knowledge of Nature. At the present time chemical principles and technique are being brought to bear on such profound problems as the formation of the earth from primitive matter, and the appearance, evolution and maintenance of life upon the Earth. With the advance of civilisation man has discovered much concerning the nature of minerals, and animal and vegetable substances, so much so that to-day his knowledge is being increasingly applied in the production of commodities that are constituting the necessities of modern life.

In this book I have endeavoured to sketch, in simple language, an outline of the many ramifications of chemistry. Sufficient of the elementary principles of chemistry is given in the earlier part to make the book intelligible to the reader who has acquired no previous knowledge of chemistry. It is hoped that the book will be found of interest to all who desire to learn something about the world and things around them.

It is felt that before a student commences on a course of elementary chemistry much benefit would accrue, on account of the broadened outlook, if he were first introduced to a general sketch of the subject. For this reason, I venture to hope that this book may be of service to teachers. In addition, it is believed that the book will appeal to those who have already some knowledge of the subject but who wish to know something of the advances made in modern chemistry.

In conclusion I wish to record my warmest thanks to the several firms who kindly furnished me with photographs from which the pictures have been reproduced.

H. T. S. BRITTON.

University College,
Exeter,
October, 1931.