



Chemistry Embracing the Metals and Elements Which Are Not Metallic (Classic Reprint)

John Henry Pepper

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Excerpt from Chemistry Embracing the Metals and Elements Which Are Not Metallic

"I was formerly a bookseller and binder, but am now turned 'philosopher' which happened thus: whilst an apprentice, I for amusement learned a little chemistry and other parts of philosophy, and felt an earnest desire to proceed in that way further. After being a journeyman for six months under a disagreeable master, I gave up my business, and through the interest of one Sir H. Davy filled the situation of chemical assistant to the Royal Institution of Great Britain, in which office I now remain, and where I am constantly employed in observing the works of Nature, and tracing the manner in which she directs the order and arrangement of the world."

On the 18th March, 1813, it was resolved "That Michael Faraday be engaged to fill the situation lately occupied by Mr. Payne, on the same terms."

Faraday accompanied Sir H. Davy to Rome, and was re-engaged by the Royal Institution managers on the 15th May, 1815; and as his first private and original sacrifices of time, energy, and talent were made to "Chemistry," his portrait is placed at the head of this section.

What income Faraday derived from the Royal Institution is not exactly known. The writer has heard the late Mr. Robert Murray say that he had only £200 per annum, and apartments, for a very long period; until somebody suggested that he was no longer an assistant, but a "master," and ought to be paid as a "philosopher." Much or little, it affected not Faraday: his private charities and good deeds are known only to the Great Giver of all things.

The "Mechanic's Magazine," speaking in the hearty truthfulness of independent journalism, said, in October, 1859, that which carried conviction to the hearts of many who see how often science is degraded into "flunkeyism," instead of being elevated to "Faradism," -

"The other characteristic of our time to which we refer is its boldness, comprehensiveness, and certainty of mental inquiry, which expresses itself in its favourite term - science. We had a notable example of this in the speech of the Prince Consort at Aberdeen, which we reprinted in our journal a fortnight ago. It was a fine specimen of the best mind among us. What choice, pure English the language was, and of such delicate precision and beauty! What graceful personal modesty the speaker showed! How full the discourse was of the old German solidity and seriousness of purpose, that marks all the German people, whether in the old Fatherland or in Angleland. The term 'science' in this address is made to embrace the whole range of the human mind. There are three objects of man's contemplation and inquiry - Nature, Man, God. The human mind has two methods of working - analysis and synthesis. It dissects into parts, observes, examines, reasons about each part; or intuitively it grasps the law that binds and controls the parts and knits them into a whole. All follow this method, says the Prince - the child, the man of mere practical instinct, or the philosopher. The child, as soon as his first surprise and ecstasy at the new universe subside a little, begins to ask the how and why of things. He practises his analysis by pulling his toy to pieces to discover how it works; or he performs

a splendid generalization; as, for example, when the fire burns him, he affirms to himself that fire burns in every instance, at all places and times, though he has only experienced one instance of its burning power.

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