

**THE CENTURY SCIENCE
SERIES. JUSTUS
VON LIEBIG: HIS LIFE
AND WORK, 1803-1873**

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the century science series. Justus von Liebig: his life and work, 1803-1873 by W. A. Shenstone

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W. A. SHENSTONE

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THE CENTURY SCIENCE SERIES

EDITED BY SIR HENRY E. ROSCOE, D.C.L., F.R.S., LL.D.

JUSTUS VON LIEBIG

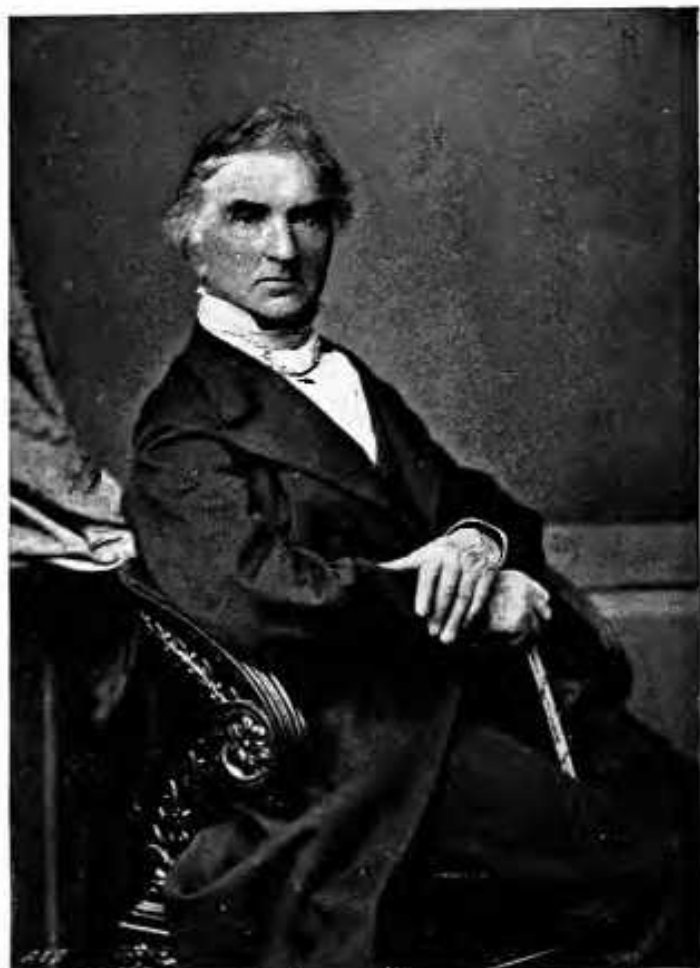


Photo by Franz Hußfenzl, Munich.

JUSTUS VON LIEBIG.

Born May 12, 1803.

Died April 18, 1873.

THE CENTURY SCIENCE SERIES

JUSTUS VON LIEBIG

HIS LIFE AND WORK

(1803—1873)

BY

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PREFACE.

THE name of Liebig is doubtless familiar to most of us, but I fear that very few have any clear idea what he did, why chemists admire and esteem him, or, indeed, are aware that they do admire and esteem him. As the result of many inquiries, made among cultivated people, I have found the prevailing impression concerning Liebig to be that he was a man who gained a large fortune by making "extract of meat." Now and then one meets someone who "seems to have heard" of his name in connection with agriculture. Scarcely anyone, now, seems to know that he was one of the greatest of that class in whose work Mr. Balfour finds "the causes which, more than any others, conduce to the movements of great civilised societies." I have therefore made it my object, in writing this little book, not so much to dwell upon Liebig's private life as to tell what he was, what he did, and why all chemists and all those who are versed in the history of science admire and esteem him so greatly.

Fortunately for my purpose, most of Liebig's work is not only of great general interest, but it lends itself admirably to a non-technical method of treatment. Consequently, I have only found it necessary to employ the language of chemistry in parts of two chapters. As I have been careful to explain technical terms when I have used them, and as I have not very

often employed them, I do not think they will be a real source of difficulty or repel anyone.

If any chemist should read this life of Liebig, he may not improbably feel disposed to complain that it does something less than justice to Liebig's labours in pure chemistry. I admit that this is very true. But it is right that it should be so, for, vast as were Liebig's services to pure chemistry, they lack in some degree the splendour of his contributions to some other departments of equal intrinsic importance and of far wider general interest.

In concluding these few introductory words, I desire to express my thanks to several very kind helpers: to Liebig's son, Dr. Georg Baron Liebig, who has assisted me most graciously in several ways; to my friend and colleague, H. Clissold, who has most carefully read the proofs for me; and to my wife, who has very materially lightened my task by helping me to go through the greater part of the numerous bulky volumes which contain Liebig's published correspondence.

W. A. S.

Clifton, May, 1895.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.—INTRODUCTION	9
„ II.—LIEBIG AND WÜHLER	25
„ III.—CHEMICAL DISCOVERIES	40
„ IV.—LIEBIG AND DUMAS	51
„ V.—FERMENTATION	64
„ VI.—CHEMISTRY OF AGRICULTURE	80
„ VII.—PHYSIOLOGICAL CHEMISTRY	126
„ VIII.—EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER WORK	173
„ IX.—CHARACTER AND LATER YEARS	197