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August 2007

## On the Cover

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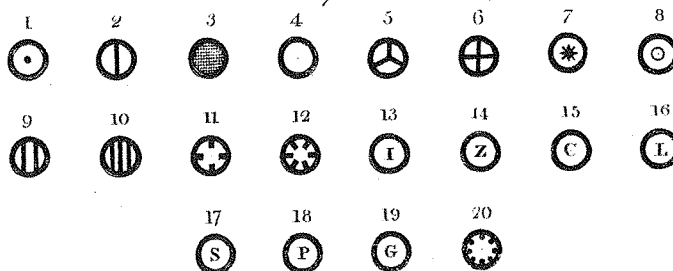
# SciTech News

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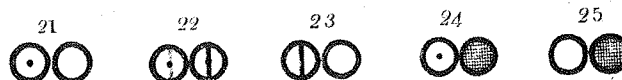
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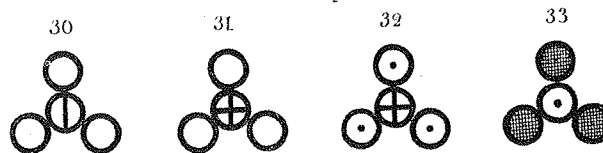
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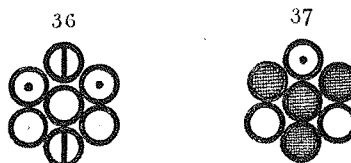
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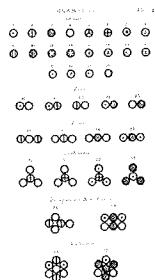
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# SciTech News

Ellis Mount, Editor Emeritus



## On the Cover



In *A New System of Chemical Philosophy* (1808), John Dalton introduced atoms into chemistry. He envisioned atoms as tiny spheres of different weights, to explain the different relative weights of the known elements. In this famous plate in his book, he proposed a new kind of chemical symbolism, in which each element is represented by a picture of its atom. The first atom, with a central dot, is hydrogen, the second, with a vertical line, is nitrogen, the dark atom (3) is carbon, and the empty atom (4) is oxygen. He could then combine these symbols to represent water (21), ammonia (22), and carbon dioxide (28). Note that Dalton did not yet realize that water is actually H<sub>2</sub>O and should have two hydrogen atoms in its symbol. (Photo and caption courtesy of the Linda Hall Library of Science, Engineering & Technology).

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