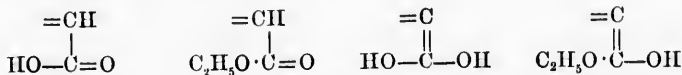


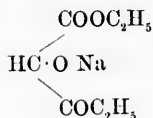
It is therefore necessary to assume if one wishes to bring the two formulæ into concordance, that although the ester itself is the carboxylic ester of acetone, it is capable of reacting as its tautomer, giving derivatives of the oxycrotonic ester.

Chemical reactions used alone for proving the constitution of a compound of this kind, are apt to lead to difficulties which cannot be explained away by any hard and fast rule.

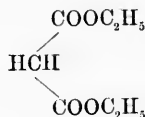
To the second class of Laar belong the ketones, aldehydes and phenols, and also the acids and their esters.



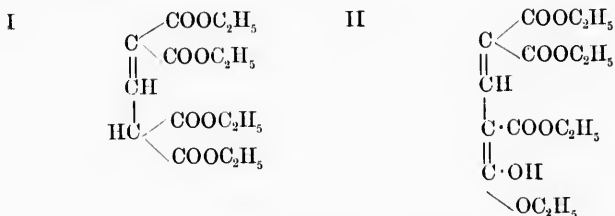
The possibility is therefore present that ethyl malonate may act in a tautomeric sense, and, indeed, Michael has suggested that the sodium derivative of malonic ester may be represented by the formula,



whereas the free ester certainly has the formula,



The closely allied dicarboxyglutaconic ester, on the other hand, appears to have the enol formula in the free state, and would possess the second of the following two constitutions:



This would be an example which, compared with acetic ester, would tend to prove the law of Claisen, that the enol form is the more likely