graphite, rarely as diamond. Of combinations of elements in meteorites some, not yet recognized among terrestrial minerals, comprise alloys of iron and nickel and various sulphides and silicates. But others have been identified with well-known minerals of the earth's crust, including olivine, enstatite and bronzite, diopside and augite, hornblende, anorthite and labradorite, magnetite and chromite, etc. There is likewise a carbonaceous group of meteorites containing carbon, both amorphous and as black diamond, also combined with hydrogen and oxygen, and in some cases combustible, with a bituminous smell. Some iron meteorites contain a large proportion of occluded hydrogen, nitrogen, or carbonic oxide, occasionally as much as six times the volume of the meteorite itself.

Various theories have been propounded as to the origin or source of those bodies which come to our planet from space. But at present we possess no satisfactory basis of fact on which to speculate. Whether these stones belong to the solar system, or, as seems more probable, reach us from remoter space, they prove that some at least of the elements and minerals with which we are familiar extend beyond our planet.

But, in recent years, a far more precise and generally available method of research into the composition of the heavenly bodies has been found in the application of the spectroscope. By means of this instrument, the light emitted from self-luminous bodies can be analyzed in such a way as to show what elements are present in their intensely hot luminous vapor. When the light of the incandescent vapor of a metal is allowed to pass through a properly arranged prism, it is seen to give a spectrum consisting of transverse bright lines only. This is termed