

the solar system, and especially the earth among planets, are very favorable for life, partly through apparently accidental circumstances. Putting aside, therefore, the biological fitness of the special climates of the earth both as a familiar fact, and as possibly in no small degree accidental, we may more advantageously give our attention at once to other phenomena which appear to be of a far more general character, — the occurrence of large quantities of water and carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and the fundamental meteorological processes which their presence involves. Nitrogen and various other substances automatically find a place beside water and carbonic acid, but it will be convenient to pass them by or to postpone the consideration until other aspects of the subject have been more fully developed.

VI

THE PRIMARY CONSTITUENTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Of course a consideration of the properties of water and carbonic acid might be approached from a study of terrestrial processes exclusively. But since the assumption that such phenomena are common occur-