

more of great importance, and at present is perhaps essential to clear thinking. Such a procedure manifestly influences not at all the validity of any conclusions which may be reached; only it must not be forgotten that the conclusions apply directly to our limited field of inquiry alone.

VII

THE ULTIMATE PROBLEM

Such is the outcome of a preliminary glance at the many departments of science which are necessarily involved in the question of fitness of the environment. Living things permit themselves to be simplified into mechanisms which are complex, regulated, and provided with a metabolism; the environment, by a series of eliminations, is reduced to water and carbonic acid. These are simplifications counseled solely by expediency. Neither logical process is necessary; each involves a disregard for many circumstances which might be of weight in the present inquiry. But in the end there stands out a perfectly simple problem which is undoubtedly soluble. That problem may be stated as follows: In what degree are the physical, chemical, and general meteorological char-