

compare the properties of water and carbonic acid and of the carbon compounds with those of other substances. It will be necessary to find out whether these substances are not only fit but fittest, — and this no doubt is a task of a very different sort. It may even seem at first sight an impossible one, but I hope to show that this is not the case, and that in spite of the incompleteness of our physical and chemical knowledge, it may be pressed to a satisfactory issue. A few remarks may now indicate the general line of thought we shall pursue, and then the actual study must provide the proof.

## VIII

### THE METHOD OF SOLUTION

The very constant temperature of the ocean is a most important factor in the economy of nature. It constitutes, for example, a vital regulation of the environment of a large proportion of all the living organisms of the world, and it has many other important “functions.” This constancy of temperature is in large part due to the magnitude of the specific heat of water. Other things being equal, the greater the specific heat of water, the more constant must be the temperature of the ocean. If,