

CHAPTER IV

CARBONIC ACID

TWO chemical individuals stand alone in importance for the great biological cycle upon the earth. The one is water, the other carbon dioxide. The one, for reasons which we have just reviewed, is the most familiar of all the varieties of matter. The other rarely is seen except by chance, and without scientific research never could have been known for what it is in value to living things. Yet these two simple substances are the common source of every one of the complicated substances which are produced by living beings, and they are the common end products of the wearing away of all the constituents of protoplasm, and of the destruction of those materials which yield energy to the body.¹

¹ A man weighing 60–70 kilograms excretes daily the following quantities of material:—

Water	2500–3500 grams
Carbon dioxide	750–900 grams
All other substances	60–125 grams