

CHAPTER V

THE OCEAN

AT every stage of our inquiry we have seen that the unique properties of water and carbonic acid contribute vitally important characteristics to the ocean. Such conclusions accord with the ordinary experiences of life, and they gain in significance from the undoubted fact that organic beings first existed, and for a very long time existed only in the waters. On this account it will be well to pause before attacking the problems of organic chemistry, and, in somewhat greater detail, to examine the ocean in its relation to the inhabitants of the globe. Thus we shall be able more clearly to perceive the manner in which, in one most important instance, the properties of water and carbonic acid operate to fit the world for life.

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THE REGULATION OF PHYSICO-CHEMICAL CONDITIONS

The most striking of all the ocean's qualities is its constancy. No doubt since its origin