

account of the variety of chemical processes into which they can enter. They make up the active agents of inorganic chemistry, and it is safe to assume that their activity depends in great part upon the properties of oxygen and hydrogen.

The importance of oxygen and hydrogen in inorganic chemistry possesses a double significance in the present inquiry. In the first place it provides further confirmation of the view that the elements which make up water and carbon dioxide are unique. For the data of inorganic chemistry prove that hydrogen and oxygen are likely to confer great chemical activity wherever they are, and that they are quite unrivaled in this respect. Secondly, the occurrence of hydrogen and oxygen as primary factors of the metabolic process and as the chief constituents of the environment and of the living organism enables the latter to make use of other elements at need. Without hydrogen and oxygen, opportunities for the introduction of such other elements into the physiological processes would be necessarily much restricted, and in many cases the physiological utility of compounds containing the elements of inorganic chemistry is very great.

Chlorophyll, for example, contains mag-