

CHAPTER VII

THE ARGUMENT

THE statement of evidence for the biological fitness of the environment is at length completed. Whatever favorable properties of water, carbonic acid, and the compounds of the three elements, whatever results favorable to life, I have succeeded in finding, have been set forth.

Now, therefore, we may return to the examination of this evidence in the manner suggested in Chapter II. We may inquire into the exhaustiveness of the preceding treatment of important physical properties, seeking to discover what things have been overlooked. Thus it may be possible to decide the weighty question whether another group of elements can possess another group of equally important properties. Next, we may consider if there be other elements or compounds which rival carbon, hydrogen and oxygen, water and carbonic acid, in the qualities which make these fit for the organic mechanism, taking such properties as a whole. Unfortunately,