

4 THE FITNESS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

unable, however strong their desire, to account for the facts with a plausible theory. The dogma of final causes had led a thousand times to the truth by teaching the investigator that the true description of an organ or physiological process was to be found in its utility to the organism as a whole. Such considerations were far too numerous and too patent for science to shirk some explanation, and the only weighty explanation at hand seemed the teleological one.

II

FITNESS

With a suddenness which to many seemed catastrophic Darwin's hypothesis of natural selection changed the whole aspect of the problem. Law appeared as the basis of *purpose* just as it had appeared as the basis of *order*, and adaptations became, in the judgment of most men, the necessary results of an automatic process. To-day, after a half century, there is no longer room for doubt that the fitness of organic beings for their life in the world has been won in whole or in part

ics Considered with Reference to Natural Theology." London, 1834, 4th ed., p. ix.

To this series such men as Whewell and Sir Charles Bell contributed.