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THE PROBLEM

We may now return to the problem of the fitness of the environment. So long as ideas of the nature of living things remain vague and ill-defined, it is clearly impossible, 'as a rule, to distinguish between an adaptation of the organism to the environment and a case of fitness of the environment for life, in the very most general sense. No doubt there are clear instances of both phenomena which require no close analysis for their interpretation. Thus the hand is surely an instance of adaptation, and the anomalous expansion of water on cooling near its freezing point an instance of environmental fitness. But how much weight is to be assigned to adaptation and how much to fitness in discussing the relations between marine organisms and the ocean? Evidently to answer such questions we must possess clear and precise ideas and definitions of living things. Life must by arbitrary process of logic be changed from the varying thing which it is into an independent variable or an invariant, shorn of many of its most interesting qualities to be sure, but no longer inviting fallacy through our