

*principle, in the explanation of a thing as a purpose or object of Nature.'*

He expresses himself most decidedly against the mechanical explanation of organic nature in the following passage (§ 74): "It is quite certain that we cannot become sufficiently acquainted with organized creatures and their hidden potentialities by aid of purely mechanical natural principles, much less can we explain them; and this is so certain, that we may boldly assert that it is absurd for man even to conceive such an idea, or to hope that a Newton may one day arise able to make the production of a blade of grass comprehensible, according to natural laws ordained by no intention; such an insight we must absolutely deny to man." However, this impossible Newton did really appear seventy years later in Darwin, whose Theory of Selection has actually solved the problem, the solution of which Kant had considered absolutely inconceivable.

In connection with Kant and the German philosophers whose theories of development have already occupied us in the preceding chapter, it seems justifiable to consider briefly some other German naturalists and philosophers, who, in the course of our century, have more or less distinctly resisted the prevailing teleological views of creation, and vindicated the mechanical conception of things which is the basis of the Doctrine of Filiation. Sometimes general philosophical considerations, sometimes special empirical observations, were the motives which led these thinking men to form the idea that the various individual species of organisms must have originated from common primary forms. Among them I must first mention the great German geologist, Leopold Buch. Important observations as to the geographical dis-