THE ORIGIN, SCOPE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF BACTERIOLOGY.*

Bacteriology is a child of the 19th century. It is the offspring of chemistry and biology, enriched by physics with the gift of the achromatic microscope.

By the end of the first quarter of the century, natural philosophy, natural history and chemistry had almost wholly displaced the magic and alchemy of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Natural law was the explanation indicated by natural knowledge for natural phenomena, and in most cases a natural explanation of these phenomena was either discoverable or conceivable. The Copernican theory, as developed by Galileo, Kepler, Newton and their successors, accounted satisfactorily for the obvious structure and operation of the solar system. The researches of Vesalius and Harvey, and their successors, had made comprehensible the anatomy and physiology of the animal body. The earth, in response to the inquiries of Hutton and Lyell, was yielding up the record of its slow but sublime history, its very rocks bearing eloquent testimony to their natural origin. The lightning of heaven, the thunderbolt of Zeus, interrogated by our own Franklin, had confessed its affinity

* Address delivered by the president before the Society of American Bacteriologists, Baltimore, December 27, 1900.
Editor's Summary

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