

SCIENCE

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FRIDAY, JULY 22, 1898.

PROBLEMS OF BIOLOGY.

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A book entitled 'Problems of Biology' has recently been issued from the press of Swan, Sonnenschein & Co., which is in many respects remarkable. Its author, Mr. George Sandeman, is evidently a metaphysician whose knowledge of biology is limited largely to theoretical writings. His style is peculiarly obscure and incoherent; *e. g.*, the following is the preface: "This volume contains the criticism of the contemporary biological systems. That enquiry is necessary as an introduction to the study of the problems of organic life, but it is not in itself a doctrine of biology. The argument ought to proceed to the discussion of the philosophy of nature." There is a flavor of dogmatism, pedantry and extravagance about the book, and often one does not know whether the author is in earnest or is perpetrating a huge satirical joke. But, in spite of all these imperfections and uncertainties, there are many keen and just criticisms of certain popular biological doctrines and methods.

The contents are divided into five chapters, the first of which is a far-going criticism of the Methods of Biology. There is, we are told, a remarkable anarchy within the science as well as a certain indefiniteness in its scope. "The inner confusion of biology depends upon the form of the science. The *necessary* form is a theory of individuality. The *professed* form is the

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