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CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOIL MICROBIOLOGY FROM THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES^{1, 2}

By Dr. F. B. SMITH

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SOIL microbiology may be defined as that branch of science which treats of the microorganisms in soils, their character, life-history and function and their relationships to the fertility or crop-producing power of the soil. It is not enough to isolate microorganisms from the soil, to study them in pure culture, to characterize and classify them to define the science. The relationships of the microorganisms to the crop-pro-

ducing power of the soil is fundamental in the concept of the science.

It is quite generally known, by the soil microbiologist at least, that productive soils contain greater numbers of microorganisms than unproductive soils and that those soil management practices which have proved to be effective in building soil fertility also stimulate desirable microbiological action in soils. However, to many who make a business of growing plants, even this does not indicate the very close relationship of the soil microorganisms to the growth of plants. To fully appreciate the almost complete de-

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