

SCIENCE

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SOME PROBLEMS IN INFECTION AND
ITS CONTROL¹

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I EXPERIENCE a high sense of honor on this occasion with which is mingled no less trepidation in view of the master in whose memory this lectureship was founded, and the great names that in the past have been linked with the post I am to-day asked to fill. I must believe that Huxley would have felt a deep interest in the theme which I have chosen to discuss before you and would have found in its intrinsic importance a compensation for any shortcoming that may appear in the presentation. For Huxley evinced a penetrating appreciation of that branch of biological science that has come to be called bacteriology, and as president of the British Association in 1870 devoted the occasion of his address to an illuminating examination of the doctrine of abiogenesis, or spontaneous generation, versus the doctrine of biogenesis or descent from living ancestors. This subject, long holding a merely academic interest, had become in the two decades immediately preceding the ground over which the conflict raged and out of which was to emerge the modern science of microbiology. While Huxley clearly pointed out that Redi in the seventeenth century and Spallanzani in the eighteenth had delivered the first telling blows that later, through Pasteur, led to the overwhelming defeat of the spontaneous generationists and the establishment on an indisputable basis of the extrinsic origin of the contagious and infectious diseases, he did not fail

¹ The Huxley lecture, delivered at Charing Cross Hospital School of Medicine, London, October 31, 1912.