

were strictly proved, still autogeny would not be explained by it.

The experiments on autogeny have likewise as yet furnished no certain and positive result. Yet we must at the outset most distinctly protest against the notion that these experiments have proved the impossibility of spontaneous generation in general. Most naturalists who have endeavoured to decide this question experimentally, and who, after having employed all possible precautionary measures, under well-ascertained conditions, have seen no organisms come into being, have straightway made the assertion, on the ground of these negative results: "That it is altogether impossible for organisms to come into existence by themselves without parental generation." This hasty and inconsiderate assertion they have supported by the negative results of their experiments, which, after all, could prove nothing except that, under these or those highly artificial circumstances created by the experimenters themselves, no organism was developed. From these experiments, which have been for the most part made under the most unnatural conditions, and in a highly artificial manner, we can by no means draw the conclusion that spontaneous generation in general is impossible. The impossibility of such a process can, in fact, never be proved. For how can we know that in remote primæval times there did not exist conditions quite different from those at present obtaining, and which may have rendered spontaneous generation possible? Indeed, we can even positively and with full assurance maintain that the general conditions of life in primæval times must have been entirely different from those of the present time. Think only of the