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## LITERATURE.

*Stanford's Compendium of Geography and Travel: Australasia.* Edited and extended by Alfred R. Wallace, F.R.G.S., &c. With an Ethnological Appendix by A. H. Keane, M.A.I. (Stanford.)

MR. WALLACE'S *Australasia* embraces, besides Australia and New Zealand, the islands of the Malay Archipelago, including the Philippines, the Papuan Islands, and all the vast region hitherto known as Oceania or Polynesia. If all these are to be grouped together under a single name, perhaps "Australasia" is the best, for that name has generally included the most important portions of the area, and recalls besides the old "Terra Australis;" but Mr. Wallace's argument for its use, that the region in question is "geographically a southern extension of Asia," has, as regards the greater part of the area embraced, but a remote geological application.

Readers of Mr. Wallace's former books are familiar with the important qualifications which he brings to his present work—the faculty of close observation, of ingenious reasoning, and of clear and intelligent description. He has also the advantage of a personal acquaintance with some of the remoter places and people of whom he writes. The countries described resolve themselves naturally into two distinct groups; the one composed of the British colonies of Australia and New Zealand, to which one-half of the volume is devoted, the other a vast assemblage of islands inhabited by native races. These, speaking generally, comprise on the west the Malay Archipelago, mostly co-extensive with the great Eastern Empire of the Dutch; then New Guinea and the neighbouring islands, where we find the nucleus of the dark Papuan or Melanesian race; while over the vast region farther eastward lie scattered the homes of the fairer Polynesians. Mr. Wallace has succeeded well in the twofold object he no doubt had in view, viz., to combine a compendium of statistical information with a "readable" account of the regions described. In his account of Australia, especially, we are struck with the skill and effect with which he has carried out this purpose. Thus, in discussing the geology of that country, we have in the first place a good map, by which we find that the formations, not only of the entire coast, but of more than half the interior of this great island, which almost equals Europe in extent, have already been ascertained. Then, after some interesting speculations as to the former extent and direction of the Australian land, the author

takes the opportunity of giving in some detail a clear explanation, aided by sections, of the character and mode of formation of the gold deposits, and also of that "desert sandstone" which covers such vast tracts in the interior, though he does not account for the absence of fossils from this formation. Again, after explaining and speculating on the many remarkable characteristics of the flora, he describes the peculiar plants which form the different varieties of "bush" and "scrub," thus enabling the reader to whom these terms have been hitherto mere names to form a comparatively vivid conception of their appearance, and of the difficulties of Australian travelling.

Mr. Wallace gives all the necessary statistics of population, trade, revenue, education, and political constitution, which tell, with an eloquence of their own, the wonderful tale of rapid growth and of prosperity; but he might, we think, with advantage have added some notice of the conditions of political life and of society in these colonies.

In his description of the various islands of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and of the people who inhabit them, Mr. Wallace has again combined much pleasant reading with a record of statistics for reference, dwelling occasionally on points of more than usual interest. In a sketch of the career of the late Rajah Brooke, which, though an episode, is yet by no means out of place in a notice of the Malay Islands, Mr. Wallace bears cordial testimony to the value of a work which, as shown by its continued success under the present ruler, has now borne the test of time. While dwelling on the peculiar habits and customs of the Pacific races, Mr. Wallace might, we venture to think, have devoted a little more space to their political institutions, which, though now dying out, were in many of the groups very elaborate, and also to their religious systems. These matters, too, if of less value than linguistic or physiological evidence, have also their bearing on those ethnological questions which are discussed at length. Mr. Wallace, however, gives his opinion as to the effect on the Malays of Islam and of Christianity respectively. "Islam," he tells us, "has deprived even these of all higher aims in life, reducing their pursuits mainly to navigation and piracy;" while, when they become Christians, they merely "abstain from shaving their heads, or fling down their teeth, and drink wines and spirits." With these views as to the influence of the higher creeds, he may naturally consider the older ones as hardly worth recording. Though writing dispassionately about the Dutch, we gather that Mr. Wallace thinks highly of their colonial administration, and it is probable that their merits in this respect are hardly understood in England; nor do we always realise the great extent and value of their Eastern dominions, as these are brought home to us by Mr. Wallace's map and statistics. True, much of the territory appropriated has never been explored, much less occupied or administered; and such appropriations would perhaps not be recognised by any other Western Power which happened greatly to desire the territory in question. The validity of such annexations is a wide and a delicate question. We cannot, however, agree with

the author that the Dutch claim to the western half of New Guinea is "well supported," being founded merely on a series of coast surveys, and on their claim to suzerainty over the chiefs of some small neighbouring islands.

It must have been by an oversight that, in his sketch of the history of Java, Mr. Wallace makes no mention of the period of English occupancy under Sir Stamford Raffles, to whose enlightened administration the island owes so much, and whose Reports are still so valuable. We find, too, occasional repetitions, and a few inconsistent statements. For instance, at p. 569, we read that "the native rat, which entered New Zealand with the Maories, is now being extirpated by the Norway variety;" but we had read, on p. 559, that the native rat has been so completely "destroyed that no specimen of it is known to exist, and it is therefore uncertain whether it was a true rat or some allied animal;" while its having been brought there originally by the natives is, we are now told, only a "tradition." Again, at p. 498, Mr. Wallace argues the great antiquity of the Polynesian race from their ignorance of the art of making pottery, "its practice being so simple and at the same time so useful, that, once known, it would certainly never have been lost;" but on the next page he admits that, in the progress of migration from island to island, the art "might have been lost for want of suitable materials." That the Polynesians should have been so ignorant of pottery is the more mysterious, in that the Samoan group, the point from or through which the last great migratory movement probably passed to the eastward, was not without intercourse with Fiji, which produces perhaps the best pottery in the Pacific. The art would, therefore, seem rather to have lapsed. Mr. Wallace meanwhile appositely reminds us that "we cannot measure the status of human advancement merely by progress in the mechanical arts." His facts and statistics are not invariably correct. Thus he is mistaken in speaking of cannibalism as still practised in Fiji, and we fear he overstates by at least one-third the population of that group when he puts them at 150,000. Nor, therefore, can there well be "50,000 children attending school." His remarks on the decline of the native races are somewhat contradictory; thus at p. 530 he ascribes it to the action of the missionaries, while at p. 505 he attributes the increase of the population on Niue to the fact that there are no Europeans there except the missionaries.

Mr. Wallace writes of the Polynesians that "their ceremonies are polluted by no human sacrifices; cannibalism with them has never become a habit." We fear that the history of Hawaii militates against the first of these assertions, while the Marquesas and even New Zealand would lead us to qualify the second. Among the Polynesians as known to us, cannibalism was certainly exceptional, and was never perhaps so ingrained a habit as among the Papuans; but the distinction between an inveterate habit and a constant practice is a fine one! To the general reader Mr. Wallace's use of the term "Malay" race and language, now including and now excluding, as he does, such sections as the Javaneses or the Dyaks, will, we fear, be confusing. A

few discrepancies occur between statements in the text, and others in the ethnological appendix contributed to this as to the other volumes of the series by Mr. A. H. Keane. When these differences occur on such points as the relation of different races to each other, or the dates or circumstances of their migrations, they are not to be wondered at, nor, indeed, are they necessarily a disadvantage to the reader; but while Mr. Keane, for instance, holds the more usual view that the Javanese and Battak alphabets are derived from the Devanagari, Mr. Wallace considers they are independent inventions.

It may be remembered that Mr. Wallace, in his *Malay Archipelago*, held a peculiar view of the mutual relations of the Pacific races. Other observers had questioned the close connexion in blood and language between the Malays and the brown Polynesian race implied in the term "Malayo-Polynesian," but Mr. Wallace, besides denying this connexion, held that these Polynesians were only a variety of the dark Papuan race. The latter opinion, we gather from the present work, he has considerably modified, but he still considers the Polynesians and Malays to be "radically distinct," linguistically and otherwise. Mr. Keane, on the other hand, pronounces them to be "fundamentally one in speech, no less, or rather more decidedly, than in physique." Almost all recent students of the languages in question agree with Mr. Wallace that too much has been made of superficial and verbal resemblances, but as to the physical characteristics there is not the same consensus. Mr. Wallace quotes from his former work the "trenchant remarks," as he rather quaintly calls them, in which he draws the distinction between the Malay and the Papuan, and, by implication, between the former and the Polynesian; but the remarks in question were not universally convincing, for several of those best acquainted with the Polynesian, as Messrs. Whitmee and Turner, and, we think, Mr. Ranken, hold that his description of the Malay applies also to the Polynesian in every respect, except as to height, and partly as to the hair.

Mr. Keane quotes from a recent paper by van Rosenberg some curious, though hardly "conclusive," evidence in favour of the theory he adopts of the origin of the Polynesian race, viz., that they were the *autochthones* of the Malay Archipelago. Van Rosenberg tells us that the people of the Mantaway Islands, to the west of Sumatra, are totally unlike the inhabitants of the neighbouring lands, and strikingly resemble in physique, and also—though to what extent is doubtful—in speech, the Eastern Polynesians, of whom accordingly Mr. Keane "inevitably concludes" them to be a remnant, perhaps the sole remnant, uninfluenced by subsequent Mongolide invasions. But other instances of tribes taller and fairer than the surrounding Malays, and equally differing from their Papuan neighbours, have been already noticed at various points in the Archipelago. Mr. Wallace, indeed, himself found such a people in the island of Gilolo, though he attaches no special significance to their presence there, or probably considers that any conclusion from the fact would be premature; but it would have been interesting if he could have

told us more about their language than that it is "highly peculiar," and a closer investigation of the whole question is very desirable. This island of Gilolo, by the way, was the point whence Mr. J. R. Logan traced a great migration towards the Pacific, and which carried with it, as he believed, from these regions the name of "Java," to re-appear in the various forms of Hawaii, Savaii, &c.\* Mr. Keane refers the origin of the name to Savaii in Samoa, which no doubt was, much later, a centre of dispersion; but other considerations seem fairly to justify the older derivation, though we cannot follow the ingenious Mr. Fornander in tracing the name still farther west to Saba, in Arabia. Mr. Keane, in his appendix, pronounces very confidently against the theory maintained by former writers, and more recently, on different grounds, by Drs. Huxley and Bleek, of the relationship of the Australians to the Dravidian races of India. On this, as on other questions, the writer, owing, no doubt, to limitation of space, has confined himself to stating his views without adequately discussing them. His theory of the origin of the Papuan race in lands now submerged beneath the Central Pacific seems to suggest quite as many difficulties as the one above referred to; but, short as the appendix is, it adds considerably both to the interest and the completeness of the work.

We should add that the volume is liberally supplied with maps, well executed and of convenient size, and the arrangement of the subject-matter is throughout clear and systematic.

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\* See *Quarterly Review*, No. cclxxxvii., p. 193.