

any other from the same source. Whatever might be the subject or the scientific importance of the work, it could not fail to be agreeable reading.

But Mr. Wallace has another, and perhaps a greater claim to the attention of his fellows. It is he who shares with Mr. Charles Darwin the glory of the discovery of the law of the origin of species by natural selection. Indeed, the principle which lies at the base of the Darwinian theory was (rather obscurely) announced by Mr. Wallace in 1855. It is gratifying to notice how free are these two pioneers from a petty jealousy of one another's fame. Thus, in the preface to the present work, Mr. Wallace says, "I have felt all my life, and I still feel, the most sincere satisfaction that Dr. Darwin had been at work long before me, and that it was not left for me to attempt to write *The Origin of Species*. I have long since measured my own strength, and know well that it would be quite unequal to that task. Far abler men than I, may confess that they have not that untiring patience in accumulating, and that wonderful skill in using, large masses of facts of the most varied kind; that wide and accurate physiological knowledge; that acuteness in devising and skill in carrying out experiments; and that admirable style of composition, at once clear, persuasive, and judicial—qualities which in their harmonious combination mark out Mr. Darwin as the man, perhaps of all men now living, best fitted for the great work he has undertaken and accomplished."

These words are manly and generous, and perfectly truthful. The latter peculiarity, indeed, is all that gives value to the former. As a mere empty compliment, they would be worth little, compared with their value as a calm, judicial opinion, reflecting credit on the author's ability to discern, as well as his generosity to admit, the excellence of his rival.

This volume consists of essays contributed by Mr. Wallace to various periodicals during the last fifteen years, together with others now printed for the first time. The book is, therefore, not as closely knit together, free from repetitions in thought or phrase, and well-balanced in its parts as it would be were it a homogeneous whole, written within a single period of reasonable brevity, and intended to present symmetrically the whole of its subject. There is a perceptible difference between the vague and cautious tone of the earlier essays and the positive aggressiveness of the later ones, written after the author had found himself reinforced by the great strength of Mr. Darwin. The essays on "Mimicry and other Protective Resemblances among Animals," and "The Swallow-tailed Butterflies, as Illustrative of the Law of Natural Selection," are satisfactory and full; those on the "Development of Human Races under the Law of Natural Selection," and "The Limits of Natural Selection as applied to Man," are provokingly brief and sketchy.

But, take it all together, this is the most fascinating book that has been written on the subject of Darwin's theory. It states, explains, illustrates, defends, and limits that theory, in a style far more attractive to the reader than that of Darwin himself; and if any man would learn at once, and with pleasure to himself, the actual character and position of the matter as it now stands among the *savants*, he can not do better than to peruse these essays.

Mr. Wallace does not wholly agree with Mr. Darwin at every point; but the great fundamental principles of the law of multiplication in geometrical proportion; the law of limited populations; the law of heredity, or likeness of offspring to their parents; the law of variation; the law of unceasing change of physical conditions; the law of the equilibrium of nature—these they both cordially agree in maintaining. A deeply interesting chapter is that in which Mr. Wallace undertakes to show that birds do not necessarily build their nests by instinct, that is, absolutely without instruction or previously acquired knowledge. Indeed, he handles very ably the whole question of instinct in man and animals; and certainly, whatever may be the stronghold of the theory of instinct, he has driven it from its lodging-place in the nests of the birds.

Literary.

Contributions to the Theory of Natural Selection. A Series of Essays. By Alfred Russel Wallace, author of *The Malay Archipelago*, etc. Macmillan & Co., London, and No. 63 Bleecker street, New-York. 1870.

MR. WALLACE'S book on the Malay Archipelago is one of the most bewitching that ever a naturalist wrote. What Izaak Walton is to fishermen, that may Mr. Wallace almost claim to have shown himself for the chasers of butterflies—not indeed by imitating in any way the gentle philosophizing of the old angler, since it is science, not sentiment, which he blends so charmingly with personal experience and description. Perhaps our notion of the resemblance will be best summed up in saying that, as Walton's book is the one we would put into the hands of an intelligent person whom we desired to win over to the piscatorial art; so we know of nothing more likely to inspire enthusiasm for the naturalist's pursuits than *The Malay Archipelago*. The quality and the success of that book are such as to predispose the reading world in favor of