SCIENCE.

Darwinism: an Exposition of the Theory of Natural Selection, with some of its Applications. By Alfred Russel Wallace. (Macmillan.)

Among the great and pregnant thinkers of a great and pregnant age of thought, it is probable that Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace has never yet received his due meed of recognition. Most discoverers, indeed, are amply satisfied if in the course of a lifetime they strike out a single grand and epoch-making conception. Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace has struck out two such on very different planes of speculative and practical thought. That one and the same man should have evolved in biology the theory of natural selection and in ethics the theory of land nationalization is truly astonishing. After ages, looking back upon those two great accomplishments in belief and practice, will wonder that this age, so heedless of its own greatness, should have allowed so powerful and original a thinker to remain for life in such comparative obscurity. The popular, or humanity nowadays begin to get known only as they verge towards the bourne of eighty.

Mr. Wallace's new book may be regarded in either of two lights—first as a popular exposition, and secondly as a manifesto. For it is addressed to two worlds at once—to the general public, and to the world of popular science; and to the scientific few, to whom it will come as an authoritative exposition of its author's final ideas on organic evolution.

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The acceptance of Weismann's theory, in particular, how so fashionable among biologists—probably because it comes to us from the historic past of biology and the historical growth of the artistic and intellectual faculties, the birth of genius, the rise of civilization, and the very existence of individual character generally. If we take that principle away, it is hard to see how the facts of human life can be accounted for at all. Weismann does take it away, and takes it for the future of science. The Spencerian doctrine of the inheritance of functionally acquired modifications of structure appears to hold out our only chance of explaining, not merely the origin and development of the nervous system, and the higher nature of man, but the historical growth of the artistic and intellectual faculties, the birth of genius, the rise of civilization, and the very existence of individual character generally. If we take that principle away, it is hard to see how the facts of human life can be accounted for at all. Weismann does take it away, and takes it for the future of science.

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implications—to land ourselves once more in a slough of uncertainty; but so long as its basis remains in the present condition, we are justified in refusing to burden our minds with so terrible a weight in our pursuit of truth.

Once away from this debateable ground, however, nothing can exceed the rigorous logic of Mr. Wallace's reasoning. The book is especially noticeable for three points. In the first place, it contains many new facts and theories of value, often drawn from recent but unfamiliar sources, especially American. In the second place, Mr. Wallace, while ignoring the modern laboratory school of biologists, is never afraid of accepting fresh views, even from quarters usually deemed heretical. And in the third place, he is, as always, a remarkably candid, courteous, and just controversialist. Whether he agrees with any particular writer, or whether he differs, one feels at least throughout that his ally and his opponent alike are being treated with scrupulous fairness and equal courtesy. There is not a word anywhere that even Mr. Samuel Butler could consider harsh or disingenuous. It is impossible to lay down the book without feeling a pleasant consciousness that we have been here in the company, not only of a deep thinker, a finished naturalist, and an acute reasoner, but also of a generous, broad-minded, and honourable gentleman.

GRANT ALLEN.