

speculator in slate quarries and lead mines, and that he has discovered building and litigation to be expensive pursuits for a man of science. As a boy he disliked fat, but an open-air life has made him fond of it; he considers the new school of dentists no improvement on the old. He has never been able to use an oath, though he has frequently felt "those impulses and passions which in many people can only find adequate expression in such language." The union of high scientific attainments with simplicity of character is, of course, no new phenomenon, but autobiographical literature might be ransacked in vain for a more engaging example of the alliance than these pages disclose.

A prodigious memory, despite a head so shaped as to prove him, according to phrenology, to be "but moderately developed in form and individuality," enables Mr. Wallace to give a minute account of his childhood. A Micawber of a father who frittered away his means on an illustrated magazine and other disastrous investments, and an irascible head master of the Busby type, stand out from the much-elaborated picture of those early days. The philosopher laments that at Hertford Grammar School marbles were not made a text for a lesson on the immorality of gambling, nor peptops the vehicle for teaching in mathematics. Mr. Wallace, in fact, owed but little to his professed instructors, though the affection of an elder brother, who was a land surveyor and who for seven years took him over many parts of England and Wales in pursuit of their common avocation, must have counted for a good deal in his mental development. Mr. Wallace narrowly escaped becoming a watchmaker, and for a brief period he was a teacher in a school at Leicester. There he became acquainted with H. W. Bates, whom he afterwards accompanied to the Amazon, and there he studied Malthus's 'Principles of Population':—

"It was the first work I had yet read treating of any of the problems of philosophical biology, and its main principles remained with me as a permanent possession, and twenty years later gave me the long-sought clue to the effective agent in the evolution of organic species."

It is characteristic of Mr. Wallace that, after describing the influence on his mind of a great work like Robert Chambers's 'Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation,' he should proceed with much gravity to comment on the delineations of his mental powers as supplied by two phrenologists, both of whom seem to have been experts in the fine art of trimming.

Mr. Wallace's fascinating books have long since made the reflecting public familiar with his voyages on the Amazon and in the Malay Archipelago. But his autobiography agreeably supplements a story of whole-hearted and courageous devotion to science. Out of the 750 copies which formed the first edition of his 'Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro,' 250 remained unsold when he returned from the East, and the ultimate profit was only a few pounds. In Sarawak he wrote the memorable article which was his first contribution to the question of natural selection.

The magnanimous relations between the

author and Darwin have already been illustrated in ample detail by the latter's correspondence. The letters now published for the first time supply, however, some interesting examples of their agreements to differ. A survey of their chief divergences (vol. ii. pp. 16-22) supplies a luminous abstract of Mr. Wallace's modifications of the theory of natural selection. Examiners and examined—two sub-species of the genus *Homo* which, from the examples he gives of their blunders, would appear to be but dubious conformers to the doctrine of the survival of the fittest—will find it most useful.

Of Mr. Wallace the advocate of land nationalization and Mr. Wallace the believer in spiritualism we learn much in these guileless volumes. The Prime Minister comes under his condemnation for the "amazing statement" that if labourers all had from one to four acres on secure tenure, they could not live on their holdings. Despite Bellamy, whose 'Looking Backward' appears to have been the cause of Mr. Wallace's conversion to Socialism, the experiment would seem a trifle risky. Nor did a sister of Mr. Balfour rise to Mr. Wallace's requirements as an investigator of spiritualist phenomena. Many readers of these pages will, we think, be similarly unable to follow Mr. Wallace in his extraordinary faith, with the explanations and conclusions it involves.

SCIENCE

My Life. By Alfred Russel Wallace. 2 vols. (Chapman & Hall.)

ON p. 223 of the first volume of this autobiography we light upon 'Remarks on my Character at Twenty-One.' Mr. Wallace's narrative, in other words, can hardly be called a model of conciseness. Still its wonderful candour wins ample forgiveness for its prolixity. Mr. Wallace takes his readers into his confidence with an ingenuousness which will at once astonish and delight them. They will learn all about his diffident courtship of Miss L., who broke off the engagement because she suspected him of secret affections for the widow of an Indian officer "as utterly remote in my mind from all ideas of marriage as would have been an aunt or a grandmother." They will be told that Mr. Wallace has been an unfortunate