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## Obituaries.

*Alfred Russel Wallace, O.M., D.C.L., F.R.S.*, the last survivor of the illustrious band of pre-eminent English Naturalists of the nineteenth century, passed away peacefully, after a brief illness, on the morning of November 6th, at the patriarchal age of nearly 91 years, he having been born at Usk, Monmouthshire, on January 8th, 1823. In this place we can refer only to his life-long connection with Entomological science. In 1845, when residing at Leicester, we find him actively engaged in collecting beetles in company with his afterwards famous colleague H. W. Bates, and in 1848 the two entomologists set out on their memorable expedition to the River Amazon. Wallace's adventures and observations in this wonderful region, and the sad disaster which befell him on the voyage home in 1852, involving the total loss by fire of his chief collections, are related in vivid and graphic manner in his earliest book "Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro." Two years later commenced his sojourn of eight years (1854-1862) in the islands of the remote East, some of which he was probably the first Englishman to visit, as he was certainly the first European to live alone on the mainland of New Guinea. The outcome of his wanderings in this region was the addition to our knowledge of thousands of new and often splendid forms of insect life (his collections including no fewer than 109,700 specimens of insects alone), and the publication in 1869 of the "Malay Archipelago," with one possible exception the most fascinating

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and suggestive book of Natural History travel that has ever been written. It was from Ternate, one of these islands, that he sent to Charles Darwin in 1858 the famous essay which led to the immediate publication of the "Origin of Species." On June 1st, 1863, soon after his return home, he was elected a Fellow of the Entomological Society by acclamation and without a formal ballot "as a slight recognition of the vast services rendered to Science by this distinguished Entomologist, Zoologist, and traveller." In 1871 and 1872 he occupied the Presidential chair of the Society, and his address at the close of his first year of office is a valuable contribution to the literature of Geographical Distribution; while in his great work, published in 1878, on this department of biological science—which may be regarded as his *magnum opus*—the distribution of certain groups of Insects throughout the world forms a leading feature. In the years immediately following his return from the East, a number of important papers from Mr. Wallace's pen on systematic and general Entomology, some of which have been reproduced in "Tropical Nature and other Essays," appeared in various scientific periodicals. It is not necessary here to do more than allude to his activities in other spheres of knowledge, and to the bestowal on him of almost every honour in the gift of Science, culminating in the Order of Merit conferred on him in 1908 by the late King Edward. Up to the very last his astonishing mental and physical powers were maintained, and it is only a few weeks ago that an important work, dealing with the social questions in which he took so deep an interest, was issued from the Press.—J. J. Walker