

ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE.

MORE than half a century has passed since Darwin and Wallace put before the world their great discovery, and yet one of them has only just died. It is true he lived to be ninety, but he continued to take an active part in the controversies of our time almost to the end—the last, or almost the last survivor of a great period in the history of human enlightenment. The public, indeed, were right in giving the chief credit for the discovery of Natural Selection to Darwin; since it was he who not only furnished the great mass of evidence on which it rests, but who best saw its full scope and consequences; but Wallace had no reason to complain of want of recognition. The simultaneous discovery will surprise no one who recognises that the sciences develop in a natural order, and that the work of one generation suggests and controls the problems to be solved by the next. The case of the Infinitesimal Calculus, reached almost simultaneously by Newton and Leibnitz, offers a close parallel. It is pleasant to remember that the conflicting claims of these two biologists of the nineteenth century produced no such outburst of temper as marred the dignity of the two mathematicians to whom we owe the Calculus. Though Wallace and Darwin were not strictly sociologists, their work in Biology profoundly influenced Sociology—in fact, for a time it seemed that their great success threatened to reduce the latter science to a mere province of the former. No one, however, was less inclined to fall into this error than Wallace himself. He had wide social interests, and in his later years these occupied a large part of his time. He never claimed to settle social questions by “natural selection” alone; and if he ignored Sociology, it was not because he failed to recognise the importance of many problems that lie within the field of that science.