

THE REVOLT OF DEMOCRACY. By Alfred Russel Wallace, O.M., F.R.S. New York: The Cassell Co.

Only a few days after the appearance of this little book, the illustrious author of it died. His own last work, to tell the truth, is a little slight and disappointing, but the excellent biographical notice of Dr. Russel Wallace contributed by Mr. James Marchant,

is both interesting and timely. In a periodical quite uncommitted to any prejudice in favor of dogmatic Christianity, there occurred a short while ago a passage which sums up most justly the great results of Dr. Wallace's life. We quote the passage, and put in italics the remarkable sentence with which it closes.

What Darwin and Wallace really did was not so much to invent a theory of evolution by Natural Selection, as to furnish and marshal the large and varied evidence necessary to establish it in the world of science, and to exhibit its far-reaching consequences in the life of thought. In this work Wallace was an able though an independent lieutenant. *But his true service to his age was in furnishing a stout barrier to the torrent of quasi-scientific rationalism, which, drawing over-freely from the new evolutionary teaching, threatened to submerge all the landmarks not merely of dogmatic religion, but of morality and humanitarianism.*

It is certain that a later and more definitely religious generation than our own will abundantly confirm this verdict. It will look back upon Russel Wallace not only as a man who saw a valuable, though partial, scientific truth, but also as a man who saw this truth in proper relation to other truths that were far more important—truths that proclaim the spiritual nature and destiny of the whole human race. In this respect he differed from Darwin. As Mr. Marchant puts it, "Darwin thought that Natural Selection alone was sufficient to explain the development of man, in all aspects from some lower form. Wallace. . . . thought that as an intellectual and moral being some other influence—some spiritual influx—was required to account for his special mental and psychic nature." Darwin, again, believed that acquired characters were inherited, Wallace thought not. To sum up, Wallace had philosophy enough to see that biological formulæ could not be applied beyond their proper sphere without great danger to individual, to political, and to social life. Unfortunately, many prominent leaders in thought and action seemed quite unaware of this. As a result both trade and politics have suffered terribly. Apply the doctrine of the survival of the fittest to trade, and we get the warrant for savage competition, in which the weaker always goes to the wall, and the employee becomes a mere pawn in a game of giants; apply it again to international politics, and we have a sufficient excuse for the tyranny and destruction which "imperialists" wage against inferior races.

Wallace saw what was going on, and the latter part of his life was mainly occupied in protesting against the false deductions drawn from what may be truly called his own scientific premises. He proclaimed that man was the master and not the slave of material forces; that the laws of the spirit "could utilize, modify, or abrogate and override the physical laws of evolution for their proper purposes," and that man had to look above himself and not beneath himself for the highest truth and for the most powerful inspiration. In his search after spiritual truth he held, and sometimes relinquished, many tentative opinions at variance with revelation; but that was to be expected. At any rate he was moving in the right direction, and he took many followers in his train. His influence, perhaps, more than that of any of his contemporaries, tended to assuage the bitterness of conflict between science and religion; and the force of that benevolent influence is increasing rather than not, for it has become contagious.