

STUDIES, SCIENTIFIC AND SOCIAL. By ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE. [2 vols. 1067 pp. 8vo. 18s. Macmillan. London, 1900.]

In the evening of an honourable and eager life, Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace has gathered together, in two deeply interesting volumes, some of the articles contributed by his pen to reviews and other periodicals during the thirty-five years from 1865 to 1899. In many cases these articles have been largely rewritten; and where the subject has admitted it, the scientific papers have been, in addition, profusely and attractively illustrated. But on these latter, which fill the first volume, a writer for the *Economic Review* must, however regretfully, preserve silence, daring only to express a hope that a wide circle of

readers may derive from them the same delight and stimulus which he himself has done.

Concurrently with his great work in the field of natural science, Dr. Wallace has earnestly and energetically investigated social problems. Nearly half a century ago, shortly after his return from his travels in the Amazon valley, as he himself tells us, he read Mr. Herbert Spencer's *Social Statics*, and from it first derived the conception of the radical injustice of private property in land. From that time his convictions never wavered; and, many years after, an article in the *Contemporary Review* of November, 1880 (here reprinted), led in the following year to the establishment of the Land Nationalization Society. Four articles in this volume deal with what, in Dr. Wallace's eyes, is the most pressing question of social reorganization; but there should be no need to discuss here the adequacy or value of a scheme which has been widely considered and canvassed, and which is simply and clearly stated in his pamphlet on *Land Nationalization, its Necessity and Aims*.

Freshness and directness of vision is the endowment of the enthusiastic and successful naturalist.

"Age cannot wither him, nor custom stale  
His infinite variety."

It is at once the privilege and the limitation of the idealist to focus his gaze severely and exclusively. A slashing reviewer would find it no arduous task to demonstrate his ideals visionary, and to expose his schemes as crude and unpractical. A sympathetic one might admit that his strength lay rather in raising and pressing home fundamental questions, than in indicating the necessarily tentative processes of solution. Dr. Wallace has little of the temper of compromise; his drastic specifics—land nationalization, the abolition of interest funds, the repudiation of trust obligations—must necessarily render him an object of distrust, if not of contempt, to "that insidious and crafty animal, the politician." But he is one of the forces which keep public opinion alert and healthy, one of the influences to which in the long run the politician has to bow. An article on "Disestablishment and Disendowment," which appeared in *Macmillan's Magazine*, April, 1873, supplies an apposite illustration. Dr. Wallace sketches the details of a proposed national Church. There is to be a new Anglicanism with its exponent, the new rector. The functions of the new rectorship will be the propaganda of science and culture, and the maintenance of amicable relations among jangling sects. The rector "must have a fair knowledge of physiology, and of simple medicine and surgery, of the rudiments of law and legal procedure,

of the principles of scientific agriculture, and of the natural history sciences, as well as of whatever is considered essential to the education of a cultivated man." "He might, himself, lecture in the church on moral, social, sanitary, historical, philosophical topics." Might he lecture also on comparative religion, which he would have an exceptional opportunity of studying? He must be "of a religious frame of mind," though of no religion—at least, dogmatic. While his qualification for the post is an attitude of superiority to any particular religion, he must be amiably respectful to all, and win the respect of their professors. It is unnecessary to give further details. Dr. Wallace sees, as clearly as Coleridge did, the evil of a national Church which no longer fulfils its idea, a national Church which has, in fact, shrunk into an "establishment." Unfortunately for his schemes the supply of men who believe in undogmatic religion is a very limited one. To be religious has come to be, by a historical process, to believe a definite creed.

In a short paper on "White Men in the Tropics," Dr. Wallace speaks with the authority of a singular experience. "The fact is that white men *can* live and work anywhere in the tropics, *if they are obliged*, and unless they are obliged they will not, as a rule, work even in the most temperate regions. Hence, wherever there are inferior races, the white men get these to work for them, and the kinds of work performed by these inferiors become *infra dig.* for the white man. This is the real reason why the myth, as to white men not being able to work in the tropics, has been spread abroad. It applies in most cases to agricultural work only, because natives can usually be got to do this kind of work, while that of the skilled mechanics has usually to be done by white men. And another reason is that it is only by getting cheap labour in quantity that fortunes can be made in most tropical countries." This verdict of an expert is especially important, in view of questions likely to be hotly debated in the immediate future. In the paper which follows, dealing with the civilization of savages, the writer propounds a question of deep interest. "Have any self-supporting, free, and national Christian Churches arisen among savages? If not—if the new religion can only be kept alive by fresh relays of priests sent from a far-distant land—priests educated and paid by foreigners, and who are, and ever must be, widely separated from their flocks in mind and character—is it not the strongest proof of the failure of the missionary scheme?" Here, as often in this volume, the conclusion may be too hasty, but the arguments by which it is supported will be seen to be worthy of the most serious consideration.

The last essays of the volume contain an impressive warning against the spurious and mischievous conclusions which have been drawn from the new revelation of nature which Dr. Wallace shares the honour of discovering. Evolution has never been to its true teachers—Darwin, Wallace, and Huxley—a doctrine of despair. It may supply guidance to action ; it can never, rightly interpreted, demonstrate the futility of human effort. Granted that Darwin's hypothesis of *pangenesis* must give place to Weismann's "continuity of the germ plasm,"—suppose acquired characteristics cannot be inherited,—then, argues Dr. Wallace, it is a relief to feel that all the evil and degradation, entailed by our present social arrangements, will have no permanent effects, whenever a more rational and more elevating system of social organization is brought about. Reason for surrender of faith there is none ; "the selection of the fittest may be ensured by more powerful and more effective agencies than the destruction of the weak and helpless." The pioneer of science has found it in no wise inconsistent to be the preacher of justice and social reform. He has neither found in the cosmic struggle a plea for the coward word "inevitable," nor does he assert with cynical bankruptcy the creed of naked might. The work of his life has been to repudiate with just indignation the complacent acceptance of "that beneficent private war which makes one man strive to climb on the shoulders of another, and remain there through the law of the survival of the fittest." Justice between man and man—justice impregnable against the attacks of logic, or theology, or expediency—is well fitted to become the watchword of the social reformers of the twentieth century.

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