

ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE.

On November 7 Alfred Russel Wallace's long life came to an end. He died in his 91st year. One of his friends, describing his last days, says he was about to begin writing another book when suddenly he fell asleep of old age. Yet until this sleep suddenly came upon him the world-famed scientist retained his mental faculties almost unimpaired: it was his body rather than his mind that grew old. His death takes away from us one of the giant minds and most highly civilised and unblemished personalities of modern times. He was one of the great representative men of science, and ranks far above all his scientific contemporaries as a pioneer of social progress.

We had hoped to include in the present issue of *THE SOCIALIST REVIEW* an appreciation of the life and work of our illustrious comrade—for we are entitled to speak of him in that name—from the pen of a distinguished Socialist and biologist. Unfortunately the article has not arrived before going to press, and its publication will have to be deferred. In our "Outlook" notes for July, when reviewing his last finished book, "Social Environment and Human Progress"—which is the last testament of his faith—we spoke of him as belonging, by virtue of the loftiness of his aim in the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom and the noble simplicity of his character, to the order of seers and lawgivers in the epic days of the world's history. His forecast in that book of human progress was expressed in terms of the law of Natural Selection, with the discovery and exposition of which his name is imperishably associated with that of Charles Darwin:

It is my firm conviction that when we have cleansed the Augean stable of our present social organisation, and have made such arrangements that *all* shall contribute their share of either physical or mental labour, and everyone shall obtain equal reward for their work, the future progress of the race will be rendered certain by the fuller development of its higher nature acted on by a special form of selection which will then come into play.

Emphatic and ultra-revolutionary as was his conception of Socialism, he nevertheless on scientific as well as political grounds looked to social reform rather than rash or violent change as the means by which Socialism will be realised. He was enthusiastic for land nationalisation, and propounded himself the first practical scheme in this country for the acquisition and use of land by the nation. He took the keenest interest in the industrial struggle, and warmly supported the Labour Party. At all times it was a delight to him to feel himself in close touch with the propaganda work of the movement, and on May Day and other commemorative occasions joined in sending through the columns of the *Labour Leader* and other Socialist journals greetings to workers at home and abroad, and his last public message was one of congratulation to *The Daily Citizen* on its first anniversary. He is now asleep, having done all he could do to help us to understand better the nature of the world we live in, and how to make our lives in it happier together.

THE EDITOR.

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