

Transcription, January 2021:

*Nature* 54(1388) (4 June 1896): 101 (J. McKeen Cattell).

[p. 101]

“The Primary Factors of Organic Evolution.”

In a review of Prof. Cope’s “Primary Factors of Organic Evolution” (*Nature*, vol. liii p. 553), Dr. Alfred R. Wallace denounces its “extraordinary statements,” its “misstatements,” and its “absurd arguments,” and finds it refreshing to turn to the original ideas and acute reasoning of another book. The fact that the first book is by an opponent and the second by a follower of the reviewer, perhaps accounts for, though it does not justify, opinions that depart widely from what will be the judgment of the most competent. A work of unusual originality such as Prof. Cope’s, is apt to contain much that is open to criticism; but it is no small matter to have brought together, as he has done, the evidence in favour of finding in the environment, in the movements of animals and in consciousness, the efficient factors of organic evolution. The present writer finds the arguments inconclusive, but he does not understand how any one can read the book without admiring the intimate knowledge of facts and the great powers of generalisation which it discloses. Dr. Wallace states that it is “absolutely untrue” that “the variation which has resulted in evolution has not been multifarious or promiscuous, but in definite directions,” yet the evidence offered for this proposition—due perhaps more to Prof. Cope than to any other—has within the past few months proved convincing even to Prof. Weismann. Prof. Cope’s book and his work should be adequately described and seriously criticised; but Dr. Wallace has done neither.

J. McKeen Cattell.

Columbia University, New York, May 9.

*The Alfred Russel Wallace Page*, Charles H. Smith, 2021.