

things. So they went forth, alone, each their several ways into the world to explore the domain of life: Darwin to circumnavigate the globe, Hooker to climb the Himalayas, Huxley on H.M.S. *Rattlesnake* to study marine life, and Wallace to watch the ways of bird and beast in the forests of the Amazon and the islands of Malaya.

They made their journeys in quest of no special thing. They went that they might see the world of life. Their experience of nature in wild places and the physical sufferings which they endured taught them, as no tranquil laboratories could teach, the grim law of natural selection. Darwin and Wallace, who had suffered most, each learned that law. Huxley and Hooker, ripe with like experience, accepted it as a revelation of the mode of life.

All were big men, and as only big men may, they dealt comprehensively with things. Their wide review of life taught them the truth—repellant to more fearful men—that Nature uses the struggle for existence as the hand wherewith to pick out, from the bran tub of chance variations, the numbers which win the prizes of life.

Neither Darwin nor Wallace was a specialist. They took all nature for their province, and the wide range of their experience led them each to this conclusion. Yet by their behaviour when they learned that they had both made the same discovery they showed that Nature does not live by the struggle for existence alone.

Whether the generalisation of natural selection is completely valid; whether evolution is entirely the outcome of the stress of life and lucky numbers, matters little at this moment. This it is that matters, that these men gave to thinkers a larger outlook and a nobler problem than they had had before. This also matters, that though they uttered the theory in the assemblies of the learned, they were virile, much-travelled men of modest and powerful expression, and hence their voices carried to the ears of all mankind. The more conventionally minded made the accustomed protest, but the day was past when a man might be condemned to death for showing a clergyman a flea under the microscope. The theory of natural selection and the idea of evolution took with surprisingly short delay firm hold of the imagination of men.

It is idle for critics to say that the Darwin-Wallace idea of evolution was not new. They made it new by making it real. They made it real by reason of the mass of their evidence. Without that evidence evolution was an opinion, and opinions are but the small change of gossip. Thanks to the two pioneers, the historian, the politician, the social reformer, and even the philosopher, came to think with the naturalist in terms of evolution. In perceiving the continuity and filiation of life processes the thinkers and the workers too discovered a dignity in life and an incentive to their labours. Darwin and Wallace bent their weight against the closed doors of nature; those doors gave way so far as to yield a

glimpse of a new vision of life. In that glimpse the forms of life are seen in continuous series, proceeding with toil and pain from stage to stage of development, and evolution is shown as a mightier instrument of change than is the most cataclysmic revolution. None but the dead in imagination could fail to find new hope for the progress of mankind in the vision thus unfolded.

Now in these later days the eyes of some are tired as from gazing on a bright light, and now some suspect that it was but a mirage that was shown them. These are they that faint by the way. The men who can share the breadth of view which Darwin and Wallace had are yet of good courage, even though it may be that all visions are mirages. They know that though presently it be discovered that Nature effects evolution by more elegant methods, the discovery will not dim the fame of Darwin nor of Wallace. For it was they who propounded the problem and made it a great issue.

Wherefore all men do honour to-day, and for all time, to their names and memories. Wallace offered his life to the advancement of science. Fever-stricken and shipwrecked he escaped from his expedition to the Amazon, only to embark on another greater voyage in the Malay Archipelago. There he worked alone for eight years, discovered the unseen barrier—Wallace's line—which, set between the islands of Bali and Lombok, divides the oriental from the Australian floras and faunas.

From the experience gained in his wide travels Wallace wrote his greatest book, *The Geographical Distribution of Animals*, and also his most delightful volume, *Island Life*.

Like Darwin, Wallace was both robust and simple-minded, and hence he wrote well, obeying the famous rule of style, to have something to say, and to say it. Unlike Darwin, Wallace, as he grew older, was attracted to many subjects outside the range of natural science. To these subjects he bent a vigorous, naïve, and, as it would seem sometimes, an uncritical mind. But, right or wrong, there is always in what Wallace did the sign of the man who seeks truth with the ardour of a lover of truth and with contempt for conventional acceptances. He believed that the subtle are as apt to err as the simple, and in that belief all great men have shared. As he risked his life for science, so he risked his reputation in support of causes and beliefs uncongenial to orthodox science. In reverence it must be said that Wallace exemplified the divine truth that he that loseth his life shall save it.

His old age was serene, and like all serene old men, from Diocletian to Darwin, Wallace turned more and more in his advancing years to the cultivation of his garden.

Dr. Russel
Wallace

Alfred Russel Wallace,
O.M., died at Broad-
stone, near Bourne-
mouth, on Friday,

November 7, in his 91st year. Wallace was the last of great Victorian explorers of the domain of Natural History. Like his fellow naturalists of the 19th century he felt instinctively that the exploration of life must be world-wide, and that the discovery of the laws of life cannot come only from the study of dead and dissected