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[p. 125]

### ‘The Future of Our Race.’

Alfred R. Wallace thus reviews a recent work by De Candolle on the Doctrine of Natural Selection: In the last section, on the probable future of the human race, we have the following remarkable speculations, very different from the Utopian views held by most evolutionists, but founded nevertheless on certain very practical considerations. In the next few hundred or a thousand years the chief alterations will be the extinction of all the less dominant races and the partition of the world among the three great persistent types, the whites, blacks, and Chinese, each of which will occupy those portions of the globe for which they are best adapted. But taking a more extended glance into the future of 50,000 or 100,000 years hence, and supposing that no cosmical changes occur to destroy the human race, there are certain well ascertained facts on which to found a notion of what must by that time have occurred. In the first place, all the coal and all metals available will then have been exhausted, and even if men succeed in finding other sources of heat and are able to extract the metals thinly diffused through the soil, yet these products must become far dearer and less available for general use than now. Railroads and steamships, and everything that depends upon the possession of large quantities of cheap metals, will then be impossible, and sedentary agricultural populations in warm and fertile regions will be best off. Population will have lingered longest around the greatest masses of coal and iron, but will finally become most densely aggregated within the tropics. But other and more serious changes will result in the gradual diminution and deterioration of the terrestrial surface.

Assuming the undoubted fact that all our existing land is wearing away and being carried into the sea, but, by a strange oversight, leaving out altogether the counteracting internal forces which for countless ages past seem always to have raised ample tracts above the sea as fast as sub-aërial denudation has lowered them, it is argued that even if all the land does not disappear and man so finally become extinct, the land will at least become less varied and will consist chiefly of a few flat and parched-up plains and volcanic or coralline islands. Population will by this time have greatly diminished, but it is thought that an intelligent and persevering race may even then prosper. They will enjoy the happiness which results from a peaceable existence, for without metals or combustibles it will be difficult to form fleets to rule the seas or great armies to ravage the land.

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*The Alfred Russel Wallace Page*, Charles H. Smith, 2015.