

CORRESPONDENCE.

To E. & S. — It seems to me weirdly strange that Dr. A. R. Wallace, the author of so many excellent treatises on natural selection and organic evolution, should now require to ask—“(1) How are the superior persons in an entire population to be discovered, and (2) How, when discovered, are they to be put in the position of rulers over less superior persons?” (E. & S., No. 9.)

Surely the biological answer to these queries must be logically evident to every right-thinking man who has accepted as true the leading principles of Darwinian philosophy.

The business of “Superior Persons” is to “discover” themselves by their own aggressive virility. They are under no obligation whatever to be selected by “less superior persons.” Their strength and will is their all-sufficient warrant. The victor *is* ruler by the very fact of his victory.

It is non-essential for superior persons to be “placed” in the position of rulers. They invite themselves, and inaugurate themselves.

Dr. Wallace writes more than one unanswerable chapter to prove that this is the good and ancient procedure among all animatic herds—and might I ask him what is an “entire population” of humans, what is a nation, but a herd of animals?

When roaming the prairies and forests (in a non-captive state), the strongest bull, stallion, boar or ram is master, champion, leader, and king of the herd. He is not “voted” into this position by his inferiors—he fights himself into it against their will. He is self-selected by battle, nay, by generations of battle. He is the animal that “Can.” (The words Can and King are from the same root.)

This is also the law and rule among men or history lies most abominably. The battle for supremacy in South Africa between Kruger and Rhodes, between English and Dutch, ought to be a convincing object-lesson as to the absolute truth of this contention—divine right to rule and reign is given by Conquest—by ability to do things. No voting is needed.

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We are very pleased to give Dr. Redbeard space for expounding his teaching that Might is Right. Writing lately to Mr. W. T. Stead we said: “We preach the doctrine that Might is Right as a *defensive* measure only. We do not mean that the mighty *may* do what they please [truth to tell they have never asked our permission], but that they *will* do what they please.” Until the facts of life are ethical, what’s the use of talking about ethics? Even Tolstoi is convinced by the Boer hunt, now being carried out by those who are proud to be known as Christian pig-stickers, that “a sordid, soulless commercialism rules the world.” To think that there are still men of repute who have only thus been awakened from the “dream of life”! Tolstoi finds this war “incomprehensibly unbelievable.” We ourselves find such a miracle of Rip Van Winkle, ethical-damned foolishness *almost* “incomprehensibly unbelievable.” A devotee of Tolstoi discussing with us the exploit of a Tommy Atkins, who christened his bayonet with the entrails of a Boer (who had done nothing contrary to the rules of war) tried to seduce us from Life to “Ethics” by saying “The most important thing, after all, is to know what *you* would do under such circumstances.” It was very painful to wound such Christ-like simplicity, but we felt compelled to say, “I am much more interested in knowing what the man with the bayonet will do—if he can run faster than I can.”