

Transcription, January 2021:

*Nature* 67(1740) (5 March 1903): 415-416 (S. Irwin Crookes).

[p. 415]

‘Genius and the Struggle for Existence.’

Permit me to point out that Dr. A. R. Wallace’s statement (p. 296), “the comparatively short lives of millionaires,” is not supported by facts, at any rate by those for the last three years.

The following has been obtained from the details concerning estates on which death duties were paid. Nine millionaires died during 1900, leaving in the aggregate 19 millions. The average age of these nine testators is seventy-four—the youngest was fifty-nine and the oldest ninety-one years.

During 1901, we find that the deaths of eight millionaires are recorded whose joint estates were valued at 10 1/2 millions. In this case too, we find that the average age is above the allotted years and ten, being seventy-two. The

[p. 416]

youngest in this year was fifty-three, and the oldest—Baron Armstrong—was ninety.

Last year—1902—the same story is repeated. Five millionaires died in 1902, and their average age is seventy-eight. It is also worth remarking that if our inquiries are carried further, it will be noticed that longevity is a striking feature of those whose estates are valued at between 500,000/ and 1,000,000/.

It seems to me that one might have expected this state of things to exist, if we consider how the wealthy—though their wealth—can secure the advantages of change of scene, change of climate, scientific progress, and last, but not least, the aid, skill and advice of our greatest doctors and surgeons. One would have liked to take up other points, but I fear I have already taken up too much of your valuable space.

S. Irwin Crookes.

Secondary and Technical Schools, Clay Cross,  
Chesterfield, February 17.

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