

32.
Malthus.

The ideas and reflections contained in this celebrated essay, which has played a prominent part in the philosophical literature of economics, could not have occurred to any one who had studied human society or nature merely in individual specimens or isolated cases; for they referred not so much to the natural history of a single being, as to the peculiar relations and complications which arise in a community or society of beings, some of these being applicable quite as much to animal and plant life as to the life of men. In fact, it was a chapter in the science of bionomics. Malthus, Darwin, and Wallace were not "laboratory naturalists, to whom the peculiarities and distinction of species, as such, their distribution and their affinities, have little interest as compared with the problems of histology and embryology, of physiology and morphology."¹ The problem of population, whether it refers to man or other living creatures, is one that will force itself upon those who study nature and mankind on the large, on the outdoor, scale, not as does the collector or dissector of specimens. How has the face of the earth been peopled by plants, animals, and human beings? What are the forces which

ones to be destroyed. The result of this would be the formation of new species. Here, then, I had at last got a theory by which to work," &c. Prof. Haeckel, in his 'History of Creation,' has dwelt exhaustively on this connection of Darwin with Malthus, quoting a letter of Darwin's to him, dated 3th October 1864, in which he says that for years he could not comprehend how any form should be so eminently adapted to its special conditions of life, but that when through good fortune Malthus's

book on Population came into his hands, the idea of natural selection came into his mind ('Schöpfungsgesch.,' chap. vi.) In the first paper which Darwin published in the 'Journal of the Linnean Society' ("Letter to Asa Gray," vol. iii. p. 51), he uses the term "Natural Selection," and refers in the abstract which he there gives to Malthus; whereas Wallace (ibid., p. 56) introduces the term "Struggle for Existence."

¹ Quoted from Wallace, 'Darwinism,' preface, p. vi.