

*Reply to Mr. Hampden's Charges against Mr. Wallace.*

OUR readers are acquainted with the details of the now famous "Old Bedford Canal Experiment," its result, and the subsequent abuse which has been showered on Mr. Wallace. The challenge was originally made by Mr. Hampden, and his advertisement in *Scientific Opinion* contained the following passage:—"He [Mr. H.] will acknowledge that he has forfeited his deposit if his opponent can exhibit, to the satisfaction of any intelligent referee, a convex railway, river, canal, or lake." The challenge was accepted by Mr. Wallace, and the convexity of the water-surface proved to the "satisfaction of an intelligent referee." Mr. Walsh was at first appointed sole referee, but Mr. Hampden subsequent to the deposit of the money asked Mr. Wallace to allow of a second referee specially to represent him (Mr. H.). In reply to this Mr. Wallace wrote "Your wish to have a second referee is quite reasonable, and I accede to it at once, only stipulating that he shall not be a personal acquaintance of your own, and shall be a man in some public position as editor, author, engineer, &c." Trusting in Mr. Hampden's honour, Mr. Wallace accepted Mr. Carpenter as the second referee, being at the time unaware that Mr. Carpenter was a man of decided and pronounced opinion on the question to be decided, and that Mr. Hampden had some months previously purchased the copyright of his referee's writings. The spot where the trial was to take place was also chosen by Mr. Hampden and accepted by Mr. Wallace, without any intimation being made that an experiment had been previously tried which proved (?) the water-surface to be absolutely flat for six miles. As the actual experiments occupied Mr. Wallace some days, and Mr. Walsh could not attend for so long a time, Mr. Coulcher, a surgeon, was appointed in his stead. The two referees, however, gave opposite decisions on the same facts, and as Mr. Carpenter would not join in the appointment of an umpire, Mr. Walsh was appointed at Mr. Hampden's request, and the whole matter was left in his hands. Mr. Walsh gave his decision and handed over the stakes to Mr. Wallace, but since that time those gentlemen and their friends have received letters, post-cards, and pamphlets expressed in "terms of the most violent abuse." To such an extent has this been carried that Mr. Hampden has been bound over to keep the peace, and cast in damages to the amount of £600, which, however, Mr. Wallace has not received, and does not expect to obtain. The action was brought to enable Mr. Hampden to publicly justify his writings: yet that gentleman made no defence, but suffered judgment by default. All this is clearly set forth in a little pamphlet published by Mr. Wallace in which the facts are stated plainly, in some instances the words of his opponents being used, and in every case reference made to the place where full particulars will be found.

Mr. Wallace concludes as follows:—

"Under these circumstances I have issued this reply, every statement in which can be verified by the papers referred to, which are mostly those published by Messrs. Hampden and Carpenter. All who believe Mr. Hampden to be an ignorant but very foul-mouthed libeller, will oblige me by burning unopened and unread any further communications they may receive from him. I am unwilling to resort to a criminal indictment, but should any considerable number of my friends think it due to myself or to them to take this course, I shall not hesitate to do so."

We feel assured that any one who has the slightest knowledge of Mr. Wallace will not be influenced by the vulgar abuse of Mr. Hampden or of his friends.