

Dr. Wallace's conclusion is:—

Nothing less fundamental and far-reaching than the agency of disembodied intelligences, acting in co-operation with our own powers of thought-transference and spiritual insight, can afford a rational and intelligible explanation of the whole range of the phenomena.

This is not merely a republication of the author's opinions in 1874, but may be understood to be his conclusion to-day; for it is contained in each of two essays on Apparitions, which were printed in 'The Arena' in 1891, and are added to this edition of Dr. Wallace's very valuable work.

'MIRACLES AND MODERN SPIRITUALISM.*

Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace's 'Miracles and Modern Spiritualism' is so well and so favourably known to Spiritualists that the third edition of that classic, just issued by Mr. Redway, needs no elaborate recommendation from 'LIGHT.' Those of our readers who do not know the work should get it at once, for it will both nourish and brace them up; those who have read 'Miracles and Modern Spiritualism' in years gone by could hardly do better than read it over again, for it is a book that does not grow old, and it will act as a corrective of the lame and far-fetched 'explanations' of the phenomena that are all the fashion at present. In these days, when to label a phenomenon with some name that connects it with a hypothetical cause is mistaken for an explanation, it is well, for instance, to be reminded that:—

The 'second' or 'subconscious self,' with its wide stores of knowledge, how gained no one knows, its distinct character, its low morality, its constant lies, is as purely a theoretical cause as is the spirit of a deceased person, or any other spirit. It can in no sense be termed 'a known cause.' To call this hypothesis 'scientific,' and that of spirit agency 'unscientific,' is to beg the question at issue.

The reflection that comes uppermost after a re-perusal of Dr. Wallace's book is: How little real progress has been made during the last twenty-five years in the methods of scientific inquiry into the phenomena! In a powerful 'Answer to Hume, Lecky, and Others,' the author shows with clean-cut logic that 'the argument that dependence is to be placed upon the *opinions* of men of science rather than on the *facts* observed by other men, is opposed to universal experience and the whole history of science'; yet it is with opinions rather than facts that our enemies fight us to-day; and any opinion seems good enough for a missile, whether it be the opinion of a man of science, of a pressman, of a conjurer, clergyman, doctor, or what not—the only qualification required in the giver of the opinion being that he should know little or nothing about the subject.

What, again, could be more timely than to be reminded that 'the cardinal maxim of Spiritualism is, that everyone must find out the truth for himself'? Or more seasonable, now that those who have constituted themselves our attorneys in the matter are unable to cross the threshold of serious investigation on account of their unbelief, than the advice to the inquirer to prepare himself for the more striking phenomena by first satisfying himself in his own family circle that there really exist invisible powers and intelligences, independently of any possible fraud? Our Psychical Researchers, again, surely never have read what the author wrote twenty-two years ago about 'exposures.' By substituting 'she' for 'he,' and 'Cambridge' for 'Paris,' in the following sentence, does it not exactly apply to Eusapia?—

The fact that he was so easily found out at Paris, or rather that he there possessed no extraordinary powers, would surely prove rather that there could not possibly have been any imposture in the former case when he stood every test, and instead of failing succeeded.

How true, again, is the following:—

The exposers and explainers have never got beyond those first difficulties which constitute the *Pons Asinorum* of Spiritualism, which every believer has to get over, but at which early stage of investigation no converts are made. By explaining table-turning, or table-tilting, or raps, you do not influence a man who was never convinced by these.

Another acute observation of our author is that in investigation into Spiritualism the greater the experience of the investigator the stronger is his tendency to believe. Were the phenomena spurious the opposite of this would be the case, for it is the inexperienced who in all cases are the more likely to be taken in if fraud really exists; the experienced discover trickery at once.

* 'Miracles and Modern Spiritualism.' By ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE, D.C.L. LL.D., F.R.S. Revised edition, with chapters on Apparitions and Phantoms. (London: George Redway, 1896. Price 5s.)