SPIRITUALISM AND SCIENCE.

WHEN two men of a certain degree of scientific eminence, like Messrs. Crookes and Wallace, come forward in defence of so bizarre a doctrine as that of Spiritualism, every one must recognize the necessity of according them a thorough hearing, and it is with feeling of this necessity which has prompted us painfully and conscientiously, and with much receptiveness to their arguments, to read one of the most amazing books that it has ever been our misfortune to be compelled to peruse. Closing the second of them, we are left with a puzzle a shade less difficult than the majority of those which crowd their pages, we have not been spirited back some five hundred years to that dark age of superstition inseparable from us, in the latter part of the fourteenth century, instead of in this year of grace 1875. Verily, if the schoolmaster be abroad, these books suggest that he might just as well, if not better, have stayed at home.

We will pass on to what he says about certain "Mediums," and, firstly, Mrs. Marshall of whose integrity Mr. Wallace seems quite assured. What, however, says Mr. Edmonds, as a further test of Mrs. Marshall herself? "I sat next to Mrs. Marshall, and felt her strike the foot of the table with her toe in a manner which seemed likely to upset the brick map faced by Gall and Spurzheim. They placed, to take a single example, the seat of her mediumship. (Vide ENGLISH MECHANIC, p. 60), and who since has come to grief through the ingenuity of some Irish sceptics, who adopted the simple expedient of dropping a few crystals of potassium ferrocyanide into all the water to which the "medium" had access in the house, and, subsequently, discovered that one of the crystals had a bracing effect on the flowers which the "spirits" brought through her mediumship. (Vide ENGLISH MECHANIC, p. 71.) Mrs. Marshall, in the act of tilting her chair, when he was supposed to be rising, and pushing the table when the "spirits" were imagined to be moving it, has been detected by Mr. Edmonds, "while the case of Lyon v. Home in the Vice-Chancellor's Court will not have faded wholly from public recollection. Before quitting this particular division of our subject it may be unitestractive to notice, apropos of Mr. Wallace's persistent scepticism to a condition of such bite of the most famous of the American media, and one in whose presence the most stupendous marvels occurred. He is now, or was a few days since, playing Lord Yorke, who did all that the cleverest performers are ever expected, and then exposed the whole matter!

A remarkable chapter is headed "Evidence of the Facts." In it we have the well-known instance of the alleged conversation which appears on p. 36 of the book we are reviewing) in the teeth of the "spirits" were imagined to be moving it, has been detected by Mr. Edmonds, "while the case of Lyon v. Home in the Vice-Chancellor's Court will not have faded wholly from public recollection. Before quitting this particular division of our subject it may be unitestractive to notice, apropos of Mr. Wallace's persistent scepticism to a condition of such bite of the most famous of the American media, and one in whose presence the most stupendous marvels occurred. He is now, or was a few days since, playing Lord Yorke, who did all that the cleverest performers are ever expected, and then exposed the whole matter!

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"Spirit photographs" introduces us to a mass of wild nonsensical assertions as to circumstances in which human beings cannot pass at will through the substance of a brick wall or of a stout wooden partition. Now "Katie" was either a visitant from another phase of being or a confederate introduced into the cabinet for purposes of deception; but this was a physical impossibility.

(Sources: The English Mechanic and World of Science, No. 555, April 16, 1875."

- "Katie" is pretty obviously latent in a great variety of ways, while the "Summary of Physical Phenomena" simply reiterates succinctly what the author imagines he has proved by merely assuming it has been done and over again, and it could only be tedious to the reader to reproduce it. Moreover, our very rapidly falling in the "Medium" with an honesty which might be admired by a common dark lantern. Then when "Katie" appeared in front of the cabinet, the assistant would have rapidly seized and handcuffed her in a way familiar to all policemen, and would have held on to her while his principal went into the "Cabinet" and turned his light on the place where the "Medium" (or any other) lay. Some such recommendation as this must unhesitatingly have been made in Miss Cook's hearing; for Mr. Crookes tells us (p. 109), "Of late she had become very nervous, in consequence of certain ill-advised suggestions that force should be employed as an adjunct to more scientific modes of research."

And well she might, as, for example, a ball from an ordinary Colt's revolver, which could hardly make much impression upon the other, might interfere seriously with the comfort of a medium, in a trance or out of it; and how very intimate is the connection between the medium and the ghost, may be illustrated by a little anecdote, for the literal truth of which we vouch, which has long gone the round of the Scientific world; but which, so far as we know, has never yet appeared in print. One of the most (if not the most) rising among the younger astronomers of the day, who, after a distinguished career at Cambridge, is now a member of the Equity Bar, attended, by invitation, certain Sunday Evenings, and at the last and one of those whom Mr. Wallace parades as disinterested authorities. Here, after the "Medium" had become "entranced" in an extinguished cabinet, formed by a common clothes-horse, covered with black cloth, did ghostly forms appear, much to the bewilderment of the beholder. As his faith increased, so did one of these forms (like Mr. Crookes' rather substantial apparition), from being at first merely visible, became tangible; and having given the ghostly person whom we are referring its hand to grasp. He availed himself of the awful privilege; but, before doing so, quietly inserted his fingers into a pillbox full of vermilion in his waistcoat pocket, and opened the "Medium" with his own hand, and the "Medium" was resuscitated, there was a great smell of red paint in the middle of his hand!"

Spiritualists are so in the habit of referring to "the Report of the Committee of the Dialectical Society on Spiritualism" (or rather to those parts of it) that we can hardly imagine more appropriately than by quoting the words of their own Chairman (op. cit. p. 80), who speaking of Spiritualistic manifestations, says, "At present I can only arrive at the conclusion that they have their origin in unconscious action or self-delusion, unless they are the result of imposture. Certainty they are mischievous and delusive to the last degree."

That such books as those which form the subject of this notice should have been published at the present day with two such names upon their title-pages, is a simple scandal to the boasted intellectual progress and enlightenment of the nineteenth century.