

When men of scientific eminence quit, even for a time, the special field of action on which their spurs were won, and venture the perilous attempt to pass the mystic portals of the "spirit world," a feeling akin to regret steals over us lest their own science might lose by their absence, and one, also, of fear lest the treasures expected to be brought to light might ill
reward the time and attention expended in the search. *Est nauta natura coatic-visa, and philosophers are but
ten, and many among them have a "heel of Achilles." We
do not doubt that the authors of the works before us are most
thoroughly sincere in their profession of faith." Indeed,
that it demands as much of the reader's time and attention as a
well-known American convert: "Judge Edmonds, for example, affirms that
the spirits which he has seen are from three inches to twenty
feet in height—the largest that he has seen being a majestic
and well-proportioned female, twenty feet high; that
he has seen spirits who have been 18,000 years in the celestial
spheres, and yet retain the form of monkeys, while others
are said to have been seen in pictures." This remarkable experience is not included by our authors in
their historical summary of phenomena. Perchance they
may have thought that the brains of the learned judge at
the time he penned it might have been somewhat muddled by
the too laborious discharge of his judicial functions, or
they may have remembered the old line beginning "Quem
Deus," etc.

Greatly more has been heard of late of spirit-photographs. It has struck
us as singular that in the numberless impressions of "mediums" taken in former years the spirits
made no earlier sign. One point, however, seems tolerably clear:
that in such pictures there could have been no psychical
influence on the spirit-photographs, for the "spirit" is
therefore taken out of nature, whatever else might be concerned in their production. But,
what need of photographic pictures, when spiritually-manu-
ufactured hands, visible and palpable, bearing Flora's gifts, so
often move among the "assistants at the sciences"; or when,
according to Mr. Crookes, the lovely form and indescribable
charm of manner of "Katie King" graces the scene? To
thought (sceptics that we were) that the earlier recorded
features, indeed, rivalling those recorded of the
"spiritual" and "miracle" by an extension of the sphere
of spiritualism "abolishes the terms
of law and the realm of nature." His own immediate object
in Ireland, a gentleman's butler, in their presence and in
their historical summary of phenomena. Perchance they
may have remembered the old line beginning "Quem
Deus," etc.

The little work of Mr. Crookes, mostly controversial, is
confessedly a reprint, and therefore need not specially occupy
us, inasmuch as the actual phenomena detailed are common to
both works—indeed, to all the works hitherto published on the
subject. And we the theory is based thereon, they form the most
fitting subject of doctrine. It is the object of the
works at the head of our page to obtain for
discipline, that spiritualism "abolishes the terms
of law and the realm of nature." His own immediate object
in Ireland, a gentleman's butler, in their presence and in
their historical summary of phenomena. Perchance they
may have remembered the old line beginning "Quem
Deus," etc.

The work of Mr. Wallace is larger, more ambitious, embodying
a much fuller amount of general spiritualistic material.
A considerable portion is devoted to the subject of miracles.
He states, however, that spiritualism "abolishes the terms
'supernatural' and 'miracle' by an extension of the sphere
of spiritualism, and claims that a 'miracle' is a synonym
for the force of Hume's argument. So far as our
ability permits us to discern, Hume's "witheers are unwrong."
When Mr. Wallace, in all seriousness, narrates "that Lord
Orrery and Mr. Valentine Greatak both informed Dr. Henry
More and Mr. Glanvil that at Lord Conway's house, at Ragley,
in Ireland the gentleman's butler, in their presence and in
broad daylight, rose into the air and floated about the room
above their heads," we would ask our readers which they con-
side the more probable, the truth of the miracle, or the falsity
of the testimony? When we remember, moreover, that Mr.
Valentine Greatak was a reputed miracle-worker, we might,
perhaps, appositely quote Hume's own remarks, "The many
instances of natural prodigies, including solar eclipses, and
doomed events, which, in all ages, have either been detected by contrary
evidence, or which detect themselves by their absurdity,
prove sufficiently the strong propensity of mankind to the extra-
ordinary and the marvellous, and ought reasonably to beget a
suspicion against all relations of this kind."
But the question
as to what really constitutes a miracle has been so ably and
sufficiently treated in the first volume of the work on
"Supernatural Religion," and in the posthumous "Essays" of John
Stuart Mill, that it is quite superfluous to reopen the discussion.
The eventful history just detailed excepted, we had always
thought (scopites that we were) that the earlier recorded
doings of the "spirits" were by no means of an imposing,
moreover, that such sweet visitants, of supernal mould, will be so
exclusively, and not visit outside the charmed circle. What
losses do we not sustain from feeble faith?

But, au sérieux, let us again endeavour critically to seize the
thread of this strange narrative of phenomena, at least as
much of a proselytising, character. There seemed a

We are willing to admit the reality of some of the phe-
omena included under the head of "Spiritualism": willing
even to admit that they may be produced by some "psychic" or "psychic"
"sheer flimsy theories" or a circle of persons under some peculiar psychical
condition. It is mainly with the conclusion drawn, with the ab
extra hypothesis, that we join issue.

If in the category of illusion, Time but repeats its old errors.
As, in barbarous ages, every unusual phenomenon was attributed to
the direct agency of some deity, and almost every inanimate
object was supposed to be haunted by his spirit, so now that certain
occult phenomena, probably dependent on some hereto-
fore ill-recognised natural force, reproduce the belief in the
"supernatural," and are, in like manner, attributed to the
direct operation of the invisible intelligence postulated by
"spiritualism." But increasing knowledge may in this depart-
ment bring eventual enlightenment.

Disembodied spirits! Toward simply from our actual scientific
stand-point, it is a pseud-term, one of mere word-jugglery.
At the very name we instinctively turn to the most available and
trustworthy sources for our secular guidance and information.
As of physiology—ask of the sister-science, psychology,
even at this moment that we write, if they have one tittle of
positive evidence to offer in support of the existence of conscious
mind or spirit apart from a material substrate? If not alto­
gether silent, the probable confession would be that the answer
to such a question came not within the pale of their teaching.
And—apart from our Faith—within the pale of what teaching
is the reassuring answer to be found?
Some—many—unsatisfied by orthodox doctrine, have found
this answer so needed for their unrest in the teaching of
Spiritualism. For the theory of “disembodied spirit” is its
tory par excellence. Confident in its power at such a jun­
ture, it offers a remedy for at least our scientific impotence.
Hear Mr. Wallace (“Theory of Spiritualism,” p. 102)—“Under
certain conditions disembodied spirit is able to form for itself
a visible body out of the emanation of living bodies in a
proper magnetic relation to itself; and under certain still
more favourable conditions the body can be made tangible.
Thus all the phenomena of mediumship take place. Gravity
is overcome by a form of life-magnetism, induced between the
spirit and the medium; visible hands or visible bodies are
produced, which sometimes write, or draw, or even speak.”
In some such manner (“Historical Teachings”) he would
explain the nature of the intelligent spiritual being
to which Socrates believed attended him through life.
Without raising the question anew as to whether such
belief were of a truly sane character or partook of that of
hallucination, we may hazard the remark en passant that
the cursory allusion made hardly aids the cause of “Spiritualism.”
It is not even clear that the “demon” might not have been
the “inner voice” intensified. On the other hand, our author
leaves entirely unnoticed what history further records as to
the real religious attitude of the son of Sophroniscus and
Phaonarete.
But let Mr. Wallace proceed (“Moral Teachings,” etc., p. 213):
1. Man is a duality, consisting of an organised spiritual
form evolved coincidently with and permeating the physical
body, and having corresponding organs and development.
2. Death is the separation of this duality, and effects no
change in the spirit morally or intellectually. 3. Spirits can
communicate through properly endowed mediums...
Should these views be accepted, of course the entire ground
as to the agency of the phenomena is covered. We demand,
and with instance, that crucial test which shall lay the ghost
of our distrust, and compel even an unwilling allegiance to
a creed now professed by many millions, and believed as
destined more or less rapidly to supplant our old one. But
let us not forget that this latter, too, teaches us to believe in
an unseen universe, where, also, spirits dwell; to believe, also,
in an immortal destiny, not by means of waltzing tables, or
of rapping mediums, but by the solemnity of its appeal to
our reason and our conscience. Which shall we choose?
Whatever our choice, whatever our convictions, one thing is
certain—they confer no possible right to quarrel with the
conscientious belief of other people; enough that we maintain
our own inviolate. But we are quite entitled to inquire as to
how far the ground for any new form of belief is valid.
While claiming this right we may once again state (and it is
just to do so) that we are persuaded the authors hold a per­
fecdy honest belief as to the prethuman character of the
phenomena they have witnessed, and that neither self-decep­
tion nor complicity had any share in their production. Messrs.
Crookes and Wallace have done quite enough of good and
original work in their own particular departments to entitle
them to our respect, however widely we may dissent from
their latest views on the subject of Spiritualism.
They imagine that, by cumulative proof, they have brought
their argument to its logical culmination, and that the fact of
a constant prethuman communication with this nether world
is the legitimate outcome. But we may hint that that
awkward material fallacy of the non-causa pro causad still
looms in its background; and until the subject-matter the
prethuman character of the phenomena is placed upon a much less
doubtful and assailable basis, we opine that the conclusion
attempted to be drawn will not be accepted by those accus­
tomed to sift and to weigh the evidence which is to enforce
conviction in such grave matters as those submitted for our
consideration.