

Notices of Books.

THE SCIENTIFIC ASPECT OF THE SUPERNATURAL.*

IN our last number we drew the attention of our readers to this excellent little work in vindication of an inquiry into Spiritualism by men of science. It is written by one of themselves, and one well known amongst them as an explorer of the field of discovery and science in its physical aspects. These gentlemen—"the men of science"—have had many appeals made to them by Spiritualists, to whom they are always able to turn deaf ears; but also, not seldom, they have been attacked from behind, by one of their own body, who has become a convert to the new and unwelcome facts, and who has had the courage to avow himself a believer, and adjure them to come into the same realm of inquiry, and investigate the facts he brings before them.

Mr. Wallace is now repeating this experience for their benefit, and he invokes a hearing from them. Whether or not he will get it at their hands, we may appeal to our experience of former instances to decide. They will not only not give him a hearing,

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but will henceforth consider him as one of the infected flock, and subject him to the force, or rather the weakness of their ridicule. We have lately had a notable instance of this, in the way in which Mr. Bray, the well-known philosopher, has been treated by the Press, for including spiritual forces amongst those which should be taken into account in any proper investigation of forces and phenomena. For giving facts well accredited and proved, Mr. Bray is described by one of these "men of science," as being "up to the very waist in the mud and muck of clairvoyance, ghosts, and spirit-rapping."

We hope Mr. Wallace has not laid his account for any better or different treatment, for if he has, we fear he will be disappointed. In vain for him to appeal earnestly and with simple words to the necessity of such an inquiry as he advocates, and to remind his sceptical readers that Sir John Herschell has told them that "*they should have their eyes, as it were, opened, that they may be struck at once by any occurrence which, according to received theories, ought not to happen; FOR THESE ARE THE FACTS WHICH SERVE AS CLUES TO NEW DISCOVERIES.*" In vain to treat prejudices by reason, for there is no judge in those empty courts by whom the final appeal can be heard! We have often tried this same useless method with the insane—we have tried to reason them out of their insanities, but we have not succeeded, for the same cause, that the reason to which we appealed was obscured or for the time non-existent.

And yet we can refer again to the delights we have experienced, when one of these poor people, having had the film drop from his eyes, has suddenly awakened to the truth and importance of the new facts, and tells us how he pities his former state, and will endeavour to impart to others his newly acquired knowledge, and to brave the obloquy and ridicule which he knows he must meet.

This is the only way the world moves on. It is the only way of progress, and no new truth is born, but like the car of Juggernaut, it is carried over the bodies of its victims. Mr. Wallace is willing to brave all these dangers and difficulties, and in coming before the public in his new character, we do not know a better handy-book of Spiritualism, than he has given us. He has, moreover, dealt with the subject in the way most valuable, not only for Spiritualists, but for those outside the movement, and his views are extremely interesting as shewing what is thought of us, by a scientific man of eminence who comes new to the inquiry. He has succeeded in writing a little book, which shews him to be able to grapple, not only with the subject itself, but with its detractors, the men of science, on

their own ground ; and we commend the book to all who wish to see the best arguments in favour of inquiry, put forward in the best way. We should much desire to give long quotations in proof of what we have said, but we should have more difficulty in leaving out, than in putting in the portions to which we should wish to draw the attention of our readers. We are glad to find an eloquent tribute to Miss Hardinge, and to her powers as displayed in her lectures at Harley-street, which appear to have made a deep impression upon Mr. Wallace. It is just such men as he whom we wish to attract to the subject, in order that it may receive the scientific investigation which it demands, and be carried into new branches of inquiry, where discoveries, greater than any which have yet astonished the world are awaiting us, so soon as we are prepared for them.

It was a fitting close of an eventful year to have borne such welcome fruit, as the public announcement by Mr. Wallace, that there is something worth inquiring into in Spiritualism.
