

One is sorry that Cardinal Vaughan and Dr. Mivart have had all this trouble about Jonah and Habakkuk. Vainly does a non-expert hope to understand these things; they always turn out to be something quite different from the plain English of them. When the Master of Balliol was asked if he would sign the Thirty-nine Articles, he replied, 'Yes, if someone will kindly lend me a pen.' But Dr. Mivart would not sign some profession of faith tendered to him by Cardinal Vaughan, and so he has been excommunicated. That I take to be the plain English of it, but doubtless I am entirely mistaken. Excommunication no longer means that the learned naturalist is to be boycotted by all sorts and conditions of men; that was the real pinch of excommunication in ancient days. Dr. Mivart really cannot believe that an angel picked up Habakkuk by the hair, as he was addressing himself to his soup, and carried him to share his soup (or it may have been broth) with Daniel in Babylon. It is a pity that Dr. Mivart cannot accept this anecdote, but then probably Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace *can*. It is not a bit odder than the sudden appearance of Mrs. Guppy, not in full dress, in the middle of a room at a distance from her home. To be sure, the distance—say, from Bayswater to Hampstead—was not so great as in Habakkuk's case; but once you admit a hundred yards, and a thousand miles is just as easy to accept. Then there was the lady, a couple of years ago, who appeared in Mr. Stead's own tabernacle at Wimbledon, while a 'halibi' was put in, to the effect that she was simultaneously in Bayswater. Mr. Wallace, to the best of my memory and belief,

held the theory that spirits carried this lady to Mr. Stead's tabernacle; and if ordinary spirits can do this, why should not an angel carry Habakkuk? Fairies often do this kind of thing; and there are half a dozen cases in the record of *The Miracles of Madame St. Katherine of Fierbois*. One must decide that scientific eminence does not diminish man's powers of belief. Mr. Wallace is among the most distinguished men of science, and he can (or could) believe in the story of Mr. Stead's 'lady friend,' even though not vouched for by a canonical writer—not *her* fault, of course, but merely because no canonical writers are left alive. Then Dr. Mivart, equally scientific, is more sceptical. My hope is that the Church will not conceive any prejudice against science merely because of Dr. Mivart, for Mr. Wallace can make up for Dr. Mivart's unlucky deficiencies as a believer. But could not Dr. Mivart himself 'take a thought,' and reconsider the whole subject of Habakkuk? He may say that *Bel and the Dragon* (in which the phenomena are described) is not a work of great authority, and that the evidence is remote. But the evidence for Mrs. Guppy and Mr. Stead's 'lady friend' is fresh, and rests, no doubt, on the affidavits of honourable men. Then there exists such a large chapter of similar instances, which Dr. Mivart will easily find when he begins to examine the topic carefully, that I do not despair of seeing him convinced, and reconciled to the Cardinal. The cases of the Habakkuk phenomena among the Australian blacks and the Scottish Celts are most persuasive. After all, Habakkuk was only what science calls an *apport*; the thing is so common that it has a recognised name. Yes, I feel sure that Dr. Mivart has been a little hasty, or has spoken without making a thorough comparative study of cases like Habakkuk's and Mrs. Guppy's. A calmer, wider survey of things in general often brings theological peace where there has been 'fruitful hot water for all parties.' After all, I am not certain that I do not err very gravely indeed; for the Pope says that 'miracles are *not* the startling effect of natural law,' and my argument is that, given angels and other powerful beings, they are as much in nature as a brickbat is, and that, if they carry Habakkuk or Mrs. Guppy up and down, it is startling, no doubt, but perfectly natural. I should much like to discuss this view of the case with the learned and amiable Pontiff; for if an angel is *not* in nature, in the name of metaphysics, what *is* he in? An unbelieving person may cavil at the evidence for the existence of the spirits that convey Mrs. Guppy about. But, granting their existence, surely they are

*in rerum natura*; or, if not, where are they? I think St. Augustine hath a passage in which he leans rather to my side of this question.

