

Correspondence.

ALL NATURE MIRACULOUS.

To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."

SIR,—Mrs. Newton Crossland equally objects to the definition of a miracle given by Hume, and to the amendment by Mr. Wallace, but her own definition seems to include both.

Hume's Definition.—"A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature."

Mr. Wallace's Definition.—"Any act or event implying the existence and agency of superhuman intelligence."

Mrs. Crossland's Definition.—"A transgression of a known and established law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity, or by the interposition of some superhuman intelligent agent."

Johnson's Dictionary.—"Something above human power."

Now in all these definitions the difficulty remains of deciding with our limited knowledge and experience and assumptions of finality, as to what is and must be supernatural and superhuman, in the sense of *progressive development which cannot and never has been anticipated.*

Mr. Wallace includes in his definition the presence and action of disembodied spirits, though in another place he does not consider those spirits to be supernatural and hardly—as being in our midst—supermundane.

Then I beg to suggest that as we have no evidence of any supernatural violation of the laws of nature, so far as we can possibly know—and Modern Spiritualism has certainly exhibited no such interferences—that we had better cease to speak of miracles, because if by a miracle we mean the action of an unknown, transcendental and mystical cause, then all causation is such, and as such must ever be accounted miraculous, as utterly beyond the penetration of the human mind, which mind itself in regard to its cause is the crowning miracle, and to know more than which would be doubly miraculous. Once attain to a clear conception of the fundamental truth, and of the shallow nature of all our knowledge, and we shall cease to be continually startled or alarmed on the first appearance of novel phenomena which we cannot immediately account for, or rather find a place for in the register of previous experience; but rather let us reflect with such minds as Newton and Bain and Humboldt on the vast unknown regions of knowledge still lying unexplored before us, remembering that no one thing can be more wonderful than another, the causes being equally well known.

To take the simplest instance, to show how difficult it is with our limited knowledge and experience to decide whether a novel phenomenon is or is not contrary to the laws of nature,—there was supposed to be a principle of levity opposed to the law of gravity to enable a ship to float, or any light body such as a bubble or a balloon to rise from the earth contrary to the supposed order and law in respect to gravitation. But a little additional knowledge in regard to the collateral laws of fluid action, &c., brought the whole diversified action under the one primary law of gravitation. How careful then we ought to be in denouncing this or that alleged phenomenon as contrary to the laws of nature, when may be it is only different from the yet observed order.

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