

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS.

Mr A. R. Wallace, writing from Dorking, Surrey, to a contemporary, says:—
“My attention having been called to a discussion in your paper in October last, in which both Captain Hutton and ‘Veritas’ appears to misunderstand the points on which I differ from Mr Darwin, may I be allowed briefly to explain my views on the special matters referred to. Firstly, then, I fully accept the doctrine of Evolution and the theory of descent as applied to the development of all organic forms, including man, while my objections refer solely to the assumption that no other agencies than ‘spontaneous variation’ and ‘natural selection’ have caused such development. Even Mr Darwin now admits that there are such unknown laws or agencies at work, and those who deny this are more Darwinian than he is himself. As regards man, I hold that his descent from a lower animal is almost demonstrated; but I maintain that in his case there are plain indications that other causes have been at work in addition to those which have operated in the case of the lower animals. I also hold that there is much reason to believe in a radical change of nature having occurred in man in correlation with the development of the human form. This is a very different thing from ‘not including man in the theory of descent,’ imposed on me by Captain Hutton. As to my belief in the phenomena of Shinitualism proving that I am a bad logician, I would remark that if belief in facts or phenomena, after careful personal investigation, implies bad logic—merely because these facts are unpopular, and are disbelieved by those who have not investigated them—then all the founders of science have been illogical. I maintain, on the contrary, that the ‘bad logic’ is theirs who decide a priori what is and what is not possible, and ridicule the careful researches of men who, like Mr Crookes, the late Professor De Morgan, Mr C. F. Varley, and many others, have fully considered the sources of possible error or delusion, and yet, after long observation and repeated tests, have arrived at the conclusion that these phenomena are realities.”