

DR. A. R. WALLACE

On an Insoluble Mystery

By W. J. FARMER

SOME people at present have a great feeling of superiority to the Victorian Age; that age had its defects; it was an age when the pursuits of profits in our factories ran ahead of the proper consideration of those who worked in the factories, but, with all its defects, it is the fact that in the intellectual world "there were giants on the earth in those days."

Of the many well-marked characters of that period, I consider that Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace was one of the most admirable. As we get older, one of our greatest trials is the losing of old friends. I never had the privilege of personal contact with this very fine man, but I knew him so intimately by his writings that when he died I felt a great sense of personal loss.

His Great Work

The present generation seems to have small knowledge of him, but he wrote many books, especially on natural history, that are full of interest, and his life is in itself a deeply interesting book. He was the co-discoverer or announcer of the theory of evolution with Darwin, and had not Darwin, in Dr. Russell Wallace's absence abroad, been the first to publish his conclusions, it is very likely that Wallace would be much more talked of to-day. Dr. Wallace should be very well known to Spiritualists by his most interesting book, *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*.

He was an agnostic until he came in contact with Spiritualism, but from that time forward he was an enthusiastic and, at the same time, a well-balanced believer in it.

Human Misery

He was born at Usk, Monmouthshire, on January 8th, 1823. His work as a naturalist took him abroad to South America and Malaya, and his books on these regions are very good reading. He says that on his return home he saw more human misery the first day of his arrival in England than in all the years of his life amongst savages. We know that such was the case, and is still the case, but at any rate there is at present more of a public spirit which seeks to help the down and out and to uplift all men; to the production of this goodwill some credit must be given to this grand old man.

Dr. Wallace's Letter

He was ever ready to do a kindly thing. He has corresponded with me, and as one of his letters to me is of some general interest, I am now publishing it.

I have always had a good deal of interest in natural phenomena, and, like many more, have been filled with wonder at the goodly feathers of the peacock and the beautiful markings on many other animals. It struck me as very astonishing that one patch of colour on, say, a cow, should be white and the next red, all out of the same blood, and I thought it would be as well to discuss the matter with this expert. He most kindly replied

to me in a very full and characteristic letter, which is here given:—

Old Orchard,
Broadstone, Wimborne,
December 3rd, 1908.

W. J. Farmer, Esq.

Dear Sir,—Thanks for your interesting letter after reading *My Life*.

I presume your question, "Why?" as to the varying colour of individual hairs and feathers, and the regular varying of adjacent hairs, etc., to form the *surface pattern* applies to the *ultimate cause* which enables these patterns to be hereditary, and in the case of birds to be reproduced after moulting yearly.

The *purpose* or end they serve I have, I think, sufficiently dealt with in my *Darwinism*, the *method* by which such useful tints or markings are produced, because useful, is, I think, clearly explained by the law of "natural selection" or "survival of the fittest" acting through the universal facts of heredity and variation.

But the "why" which goes farther back to the *directing agency*, which not only brings each special cell of this highly complex structure of a feather into its exactly right position, but further carries pigments, or produces surface striae (in the case of the metallic or interference colours) also to their exactly right place and nowhere else, is the *mystery* which if we knew we should (as Tennyson said of the flower in the wall) "know what God and man is."

The idea that cells are all conscious beings, and go to their right place has been put forward by Butler in his wonderful book, *Life and Habit*, and now even Haeckel seems to adopt it.

All theories of heredity, including Darwin's Pangenesis, do not touch it, and it seems to me as fundamental as life and consciousness, and to be absolutely inconceivable by us till we know what life and what spirit is, or what matter is, and it is probable that we must develop in the spirit world some few thousand million years before we get to this knowledge, even if then.

My book, *Man's Place in the Universe*, shows, I think, indications of the vast importance of that Universe as the producer of *man* (which so many scientific men to-day try to belittle) because of what may be in the Infinite.—Yours very truly,

ALFRED R. WALLACE.

The Directing Agency

It will be noted that Dr. Wallace speaks of "the Directing Agency" in the building up of organisms, and to a rational mind it is not possible to conceive of mere chance evolving a peacock or, indeed, a much less elaborate animal. We cannot in this life ever explain away all the difficulties of pain and evil in the world, which seem inconsistent with an Almighty Creator, but we cannot, as rational beings, regard the world of life as arising by chance.

We speak of the materialisations in the seance room as being wonderful, as indeed they are, but they are perhaps even less so than the permanent materialisations of peacocks and human beings. Possibly there is some connection in the laws which govern both; we can only explain them in terms of mind behind them.

Never forget that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. Act only under definite spirit guidance of a tried and tested quality.

Much that passes for mental science and faith healing is but the removal of undesirable spirit attachments.—From *Psychic Healing*, by Harry Boddington. Obtainable from *The Two Worlds*, 1s. 1d. post free.

FOR SPIRITUAL HEALING

The *Scotsman* publishes a lengthy and sympathetic account of a meeting for spiritual healing held recently at the Edinburgh Y.M.C.A. by the Edinburgh branch of "The Seekers."

Mrs. Saintsbury, describing the work of the Centre, claims that they had between forty and fifty patients on their lists. They often get excellent results with one or two treatments; but cases of rheumatoid arthritis and chronic asthma, and others of long standing, were slow to heal.

Mrs. Saintsbury was careful to say that they were not trying to tell anyone some new thing. Two thousand years ago Jesus and His disciples gave the command to heal the sick, and they showed how it should be done. They were merely trying to follow an excellent example.

Rev. A. Gordon James, of the Central Hall Methodist Church, presided. He claimed that it was one of the greatest heresies to imagine that God spoke to the world in olden times and had never spoken since.

Mr. Edmund, who had been a missionary in China for fifteen years, spoke of the work which had been done by "The Seekers," and he claimed that they had had cases where healing was really miraculous.

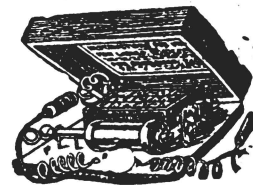
REGAIN YOUR HEALTH AT BARGAIN PRICE.

"ELECTRICITY IS LIFE."

One Week's FREE TRIAL!

Listed at \$1-1-0. Now reduced to 12/6. Sent for 2/6 Deposit.

Just send 2/6 deposit and the world-famed "Medicoil" will be sent you immediately on 7 days' free trial. After experiencing the wonderful effects for one week, you can either send 10/- in settlement or return the apparatus and deposit is refunded in full. Finest Remedy for Rheumatism, Nerve Troubles, Weakness, etc.



ENTIRELY BRITISH MADE. MONEY BACK

NOT SATISFIED.

THE BRITISH ELECTRIC INSTITUT
(Dept. 346.), 25, Holborn Viaduct, London, E.C.

TRUE SKIN CURE

I hereby claim that my Regd. True Skin Cure Domino Brand Ointment is the best on earth, and offer to test it against any other for £100. Failures with padded-up nostrums astounded with one dressing, many cases being cured in a night as if wiped away with angels' hands. This grand old specific must not be classed with disappointing patent medicines. Whatever skin it touches curing begins; you feel it exhilarating, soothing, cooling. Cruel burning and itching gone. The same True Cure made by the same man for 45 years with amazing success in most hopeless cases of Sore Legs, Eczema, Lupus, Psoriasis, Children's Eruptions, Dermatitis, Pimples, Boils, Blackheads, Abscesses, Chilblains, Burns, Fles, Insect Bites, and Skin Trouble. Counter case crammed with letters testifying success. 1 oz. 1/3, by post 1/6; 4 oz. 3/-, post free. Posted by return privately packed, "Skin Elixir" Booklet Free from Maker, JOHN A. CAMPBELL, Skin Expert, "Learnock," 1, St. Andrew's Drive, Glasgow, S.1.



SEMI-PERMANENT
AND
IRON BUILDINGS
For all purposes.
Estimates & Designs
Free.
GINGER, LEE & CO., L
Plymouth Avenue,
Longsight, Manchester