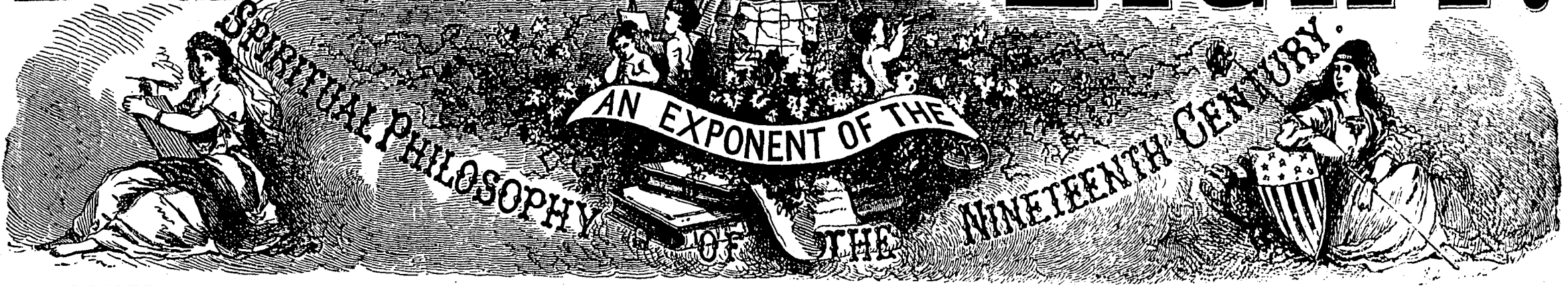


BANNER OF LIGHT.



VOL. XLII.

COLBY & RICH,
Publishers and Proprietors.

BOSTON, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1877.

\$3.15 Per Annum,
In Advance.

NO. 4.

Banner Contents.

FIRST PAGE.—Original Essays: Spiritualism a Logical Necessity; Materializations.

SECOND PAGE.—Poetry: The Minute Men of Acton. How to Try Remarkable Experiments at Home. Spirit Communism—Verification of Spirit Messages. Literary, Iowa Spiritualists' Convention.

THIRD PAGE.—Poetry: Beyond the Mortal. Banner Correspondence: Letters from Missouri, New York, Minnesota, Michigan, and California. The Omro (Wis.) Meeting—A Grand Victory. Foreign Correspondence: A Word from J. M. Peabody. Meeting Notices, etc.

FOURTH PAGE.—A Splendid Church, Hon. Thomas R. Hazard's Sermon in Rhode Island, From "Over Sea," Amory Hall Meetings, etc.

FIFTH PAGE.—Brief Paragraphs, Short Editorials, New Advertisements, etc.

SIXTH PAGE.—Message Department: Spirit Messages through the Mediumship of Mrs. Jennie S. Studt and Mrs. Sarah A. Danekin.

SEVENTH PAGE.—Mediums in Boston, Book and Miscellaneous Advertisements.

EIGHTH PAGE.—The Bliss Trial, Foreign Items, New Publications, etc.

Original Essays.

SPIRITUALISM A LOGICAL NECESSITY.

BY GEORGE A. BACON.

The distinguishing feature between Spiritualism as a form or basis of religion, and the more popular systems of the historic religions; between the legitimate deductions of this later revelation and the familiar fictions of the earlier theologies, is practically this: one rests on facts, the other on fancy; one is a matter of science, the other of speculation. The difference is no less favorable than fundamental; revolutionary, but progressive in the direction of the heavens. The desire or dream of the ages, has been for a system of religious thought satisfactory to, and commensurate with, the highest demands of its growing intelligence; that which satisfies its scientific side and equally responds to man's spiritual aspirations. Failing to answer this vital demand, Materialism and its disciples have continued to flourish, despite all combinations of Church and despotisms of the State. The blood of its respective devotees becomes as fruitful without, as within the pale of the Church. Opposition stimulates activity. Destruction produces life. Martyrdom, whether in behalf of the Church or in defence of mental liberty, always ensures a measure of success. Thus has there always been a sturdy, valiant band, ready to oppose every assumption or dogma which the Church has felt to adopt. Antagonisms, desperate and prolonged, mark the development of all progressive theological ideas. Born amid bloodshed, they have had to fight for a foothold and a continued existence. That spiritual truth, the utterance of religious convictions, the voicing of man's deepest intuitions, should ever depend upon and be maintained by the most carnal of weapons, is the appalling anomaly of all time. Great truths, however, the wide world over, are bought at a costly price.

At a time when the average religious food, served up by the high stewards of the Church, failed to furnish the requisite sustenance necessary to maintain either mental or moral growth; when skepticism, relative to the fundamental principles of our spiritual nature and relationship, was increasing on all sides; when among representative thinkers, scientists and savants throughout the civilized world, belief in the Bible, or in Christian faith as an indispensable element of Church doctrine, was in an eclipse; when atheism, materialism and other phases of a general system of Negation were adding to its ranks constantly; in short, at a time when the need was most pressing, the sun of Spiritualism arose with its answering demands of the soul for "more light."

Unlike the religions of the past, it asks not assent or acceptance, save as it appeals with irresistible power to the highest reason and deepest consciousness of the individual soul. It calls not for faith in insoluble mysteries, but for facts in nature and human experience. As the cry of the old was Believe, the mandate of the new is Investigate. Whatever speculations arise, must legitimately grow out of positive proof, and proceed from the domain of absolute knowledge. It demands not for doubt; on the contrary, recognizing the justice of its claims, it always welcomes a proper spirit of disbelief, forevermore saying, dissent, till the demonstrations conclusively convince.

On what do the foundations of Spiritualism rest? What the nature and character of its evidence? Cicero says, "As the scale of the balance must give way to the weight that presses it down, so the mind must of necessity to demonstration." The authorities define Evidence as that which "includes all the means by which any alleged matter of fact, the truth of which is submitted to investigation, is established or disproved." (*Greenleaf on Evidence*). "Any proof, be it the testimony of men, records, or writings." (*Conell*). "Evidence and proof are used as synonymous." (*Blackstone*). Thus evidence may vary in kind as well as in degree. Intuitive evidence irresistibly demands and commands belief without any process of argumentation; "which perceives the truth as the eye doth the light, by being directed toward it." Thus, for instance, no number of words can make this fact more real—that two are more than one.

Inductive and deductive evidence respectively require for proof various consecutive steps of reasoning—the latter of course being chiefly available in the evolution of unknown, from known truths. Demonstrative evidence is mathematical in its character, and applies to necessary, while moral or probable evidence applies to contingent truth.

The evidences of Christianity are usually classified

under three heads—external, internal, and collateral. The former seeks to demonstrate the authenticity, credibility, and divine authority of the Scriptures. Internal evidence deals with the moral excellence of the doctrines taught, their consistency with the character of Deity, and their tendency to promote the happiness of men. Collateral evidence is drawn from the history of Christianity itself; from its diffusion; its effects upon society, &c. Archbishop Paley classifies his "Evidences of Christianity" under the heads of Historical and Auxiliary.

Practically, however, all the facts which evidence brings before us may be referred to two sources—through our own perceptive faculties, or the observation of others.

Direct evidence, then, is the result of personal experience; indirect, the evidence of testimony. The character of evidence depends upon the reliability or non-reliability of the witness. Naturally enough, each person feels to rely most strongly on the knowledge gained through the operation of his own faculties. The facts of consciousness form part of our existence; hence the greatest confidence is felt by each one concerning those matters which come, as it were, before the judgment-seat of his own reason, the Supreme Court of his individual soul. What are the evidences of the phenomena occurring through media being of spiritual origin? In other words: Is the spiritual hypothesis the true one?

As evidence of the truthfulness of Spiritualism, and in verification of its claims, there are over twenty kinds of manifestations, which appeal to us objectively and subjectively, the facts of which, arising from each kind, not only warrant but necessitate the acceptance of the spiritual theory. The aggregation of these indisputable facts, resulting from the various kinds of manifestations, overwhelm the mind in favor and support of the spiritual philosophy. The variety of these manifestations being familiar, their enumeration is unnecessary. But consider, for a moment, one phase of the physical manifestations—the moving or lifting of ponderable bodies without physical contact. Thousands have witnessed this kind of manifestation in every section of the country, under the severest and most crucial conditions, utterly precluding all possibility of deception. What does even one such unquestioned fact imply? when all know that inertia is a common property of matter, every particle of which, to be overcome from a state of rest, requires a corresponding measure of force—this being a fundamental law of mechanics. Of course, within the realm of reason, no effect of this kind could possibly be produced without adequate cause; yet it has been repeatedly produced in the writer's presence, and no ordinary cause was visible, nor is any ordinary cause known whereby it can be satisfactorily accounted for. It must therefore have been produced by an extraordinary cause, which, it is claimed, was no less than spiritual, and superintended by those who knew how to overcome, for the time being, the law of gravitation. What is the candid, impartial materialist going to do with facts of this character, for the evidence of which, reliable witnesses have the majority of their senses—sight, sound and feeling? Applying the principle of inductive reasoning, the source of which is founded in observation, to the myriad of genuine facts of every kind and class, growing out of physical manifestations, and how far short of the highest degree of moral certainty becomes that evidence which thus sustains the spiritual hypothesis?

With reference to another phase: It is an axiom in mental science, that intelligence must either come from mind in the form or from mind out of the form—the embodied, or the so-called disembodied. No other sources are recognized. Now it is a common experience, proven in numberless instances, that statements are made and subsequently verified, that intelligence is imparted and information given beyond all ordinary sources of knowledge, either of the party receiving it or the party through whom it is conveyed, and beyond the knowledge of any person living—it follows of necessity that this intelligence must proceed from a disembodied source. No other explanation will suffice, and this, moreover, is a perfectly rational one. Were mankind, concerning these things, free from all prejudice and untrammelled by educational bias, one well authenticated fact of this character would be sufficient. Yet many like facts are doubtless within the experience of every intelligent investigator; still the present popular voice, because of its superficial prejudice, seeks to put its condemnation upon those who, by virtue of these experiences, are gratefully obliged to receive these heaven-descending proofs. In rejecting these proofs, who the losers and who the gainers are, the common-sense of mankind will one day gladly determine, only sorrowful then that they were not wiser long before.

The intuitional evidences of mankind each and all directly support, and are in entire harmony with, the spiritual hypothesis. As profoundly significant of the verity of Spiritualism, and in striking confirmation of the truthfulness of the distinctive teachings of the Spiritual Philosophy, is the fact that, amid the infinite variety of human beliefs as collective expressions of the religious element in man, we find that these simple, yet grand, central and eternal truths, are common to the soul of man; namely, a belief in immortality; a belief in the nearness of the immortal world; and in some form of intercommunion between the two worlds. Hence the idea so prevalent, among all people in every age and clime, of this instinctive faith. Hence the nymphs of mythology; the priestesses of Pagan nations; the consulting of oracles; the thirty thousand gods of the Greeks; the Druids of Celtic Europe;

the Undines of Germany; the Banshees of Ireland; the second sight of the Scotch Highlanders. Hence the fairies and elfs of past ages; the medicine men and prophet lodges of the Indians; the ghosts and haunted places in our own day. Whence all these, if they are not common to the nature of man? Whatever is common and instinctive to the nature of man must have a foundation in nature itself, is an axiom in mental science. Dr. Samuel Johnson says: "That the dead are seen no more, I will not undertake to maintain against the concurrent and unvaried testimony of all ages and of all nations. There is no people, rude or learned, among whom apparitions of the dead are not related and believed. This opinion, which prevails as far as human nature is diffused, could become universal only by its truth; those that never heard of one another would not have agreed in a tale which nothing but experience could render credible. That it is by single cavillers can very little weaken the general evidence; and some who deny it with their tongues confess it by their fears." Verily the intuitions of mankind favor and support the spiritual theory no less emphatically than satisfactorily.

The historical evidence in support of the spiritual hypothesis is overwhelming, both in quantity and quality; and extends uninterruptedly from the earliest records to the present hour. The Hindu religion, the oldest known to man, teaches the doctrine of attendant spirits, and also of a subtle invisible body within the material body. Homer and Hesiod, poets who flourished nearly one thousand years before Jesus, repeatedly avow their belief in guardian spirits, and none so well as poets know how to express the popular faith of the people. Hesiod says:

"Pass through the midst and bend the all-seeing eye,
For three ten thousand holy demons rove;
This breathing spirit, the immortal soul from Jove,
Guardians of men, their glances alike survey;
The upright judgments and the unrighteous ways,
Earth-wandering spirits that their charge began,
The ministers of gods, and guards of man,
Hovering they glide to earth's extremest bound,
A cloud of mist which forms and forms again,
Mantled with mist of darkling air they glide,
And compass earth, and pass on every side;
And mark with earnest vigilance of eyes,
Where just deeds live or crooked wrongs arise."

Herodotus, who visited Egypt four hundred and forty eight years before Christ, to collect materials from the priests who were celebrated for having carefully preserved the records of past ages, and whose history has come down safely to the present time—Herodotus says the following prayer was repeated at the Egyptian funerals: "Deign, ye gods, who give life to man, to give a favorable judgment of the soul of the deceased that it may pass to the eternal gods;" showing that a continued state of existence after the death of the body was a common and publicly acknowledged belief five hundred years before the birth of Christianity; yet Christians are ever boasting that the founder of their system brought immortality to light centuries afterwards! Confucius, who lived about five hundred years anterior to the Christian era, inculcates the worship of spirits, and ceremonial observances to the souls of ancestors. And the highest moral truth which Jesus taught, as recorded in the Gospels—that embodied in the so-called Golden Rule, we find was enunciated five centuries before, by this Chinese philosopher and teacher. Zsoulapulus had a temple at Tarns, where it was common to make invocations to the dead. Socrates distinctly affirmed that he himself was controlled by disembodied intelligences. What can be plainer than these words of his? "I am moved by a certain divine and spiritual influence." This began with me in childhood, being a kind of voice which, when present, always directs me from what I am about to do. . . . This has been enjoined me by the Delty, by oracles, by dreams, and by every mode by which any other divine decree has ever enjoined anything for man to do."

Plato says, that between God and man are the spirits who are always near us, though commonly invisible to us, and know all our thoughts. They are intermediate between gods and men. Aristotle says: All these invisible beings are as substantial as the material beings—that is, in the spiritual realm spirit existence is as real as physical existence is in this life. Pythagoras, Apollonius and many others, might be quoted as teaching substantially the same doctrines. Pythagoras, in fact, declares "the intelligent soul has a subtle body of its own, which protects it from the gross outer body;" and the greatest orator of ancient times testifies to the spiritual facts of his day, and which are so plentifully duplicated in our day. Cicero says: "They whose minds, scorning the limitations of the body, . . . behold things which they predict." And again: "The worship of the gods . . . is not to be imputed to chance or folly, but to the frequent appearance of the gods themselves. Their voices have been often heard, and they have appeared in forms so visible that he who doubts it must be hardened in stupidity or implicity."

Titus, he who destroyed Jerusalem, in a speech to his soldiers, encouraging them to deeds of valor, as reported by Josephus, says: "For what man of virtue is there who does not know that those souls which are severed from their fleshy bodies in battles by the sword, and received by the ether, that purest of elements, and joined to that company which are placed among the stars; that they become good demons and propitious heroes, and show themselves as such to their posterity afterwards." Our evidence on this point really becomes burdensome. "The whole system of the ancients," says Howitt, "is one of divine supervision and interference in the affairs of man. The gods not only direct human events by their counsels, but personally appear to men and cooperate in their aims and achievements."

The reader must remember that all this consistent testimony was long anterior to Christianity, since which, however, the Christian Fathers supplement and confirm these views of the Pagans. Justin Martyr, of the first century, says: "With us even hitherto are prophetic gifts for which you Jews ought to gather, that what formerly belonged to your race is transferred to us. . . . with us may be seen both males and females with gifts from the spirit of God." In his time the Christians sent a document to the Emperor of Rome, in which these words occur: "Is it not equal and worthy of human reason, oh ye Emperor, to yield up our faith to the Divine Spirit, who moves the mouth of the prophets as his instruments? . . . I call them prophets, who, being out of themselves and their own thoughts, did utter forth whatsoever by the impelling power of the spirit he wrought in them; while the divine operator served himself of them, or their organs, even as men do of a trumpet, blowing through it."

Irenaeus, another of the Christian fathers, and Bishop of Lyons, who suffered martyrdom in 202, as quoted by Eusebius, says: "Some most truly and certainly cast out demons, so that frequently those persons themselves that were cleansed from wicked spirits believed and were received into the church. Others have the knowledge of things to come, as also visions and prophetic communications. Others heal the sick by the imposition of hands, and restore them to health." Again he says: "We hear of many brethren in the church who have prophetic gifts, and who speak in all tongues through the spirit, and who also bring to light the secret things of men for their benefit, and who expound the mysteries of God."

We omit, for lack of space, to quote similar passages from St. Ignatius, St. Polycarp, Montanus, Eusebius, St. Cyprian, Origen and others, concluding this branch of our evidence by the testimony of Tertullian, the most celebrated Father of his age for eloquence, &c. He says: "There is at this day, living among us, a sister who is a partaker of the gift of revelation, which she receives under ecstasy in the spirit, in the public congregation." During our religious service on the Sabbath, she commonly falls into a crisis or trance, wherein she converses with angels, and sometimes with the Lord, and hears divine mysteries, and discovers the hearts of some persons, and administers medicine to those who desire it. . . . We were speaking of the soul once, when our sister was in the spirit. After the service was over, and the rest of the people had departed, she communicated to us what she had seen in her ecstasy. She informed us she had seen a soul in a bodily shape; that it appeared to be a spirit, but not empty or formless, and wanting a living constitution, but that its form appeared as substantial that you might touch or hold it. It was tender, shining, of the color of the air, but in everything resembling the human form." How singularly happy this description of a spirit-form, written fifteen centuries ago, corresponds with those seen to-day by so many of our media, by many of our personal friends, and finally by herself. But these spiritual gifts and manifestations are not only affirmed by representative Pagans and confirmed by the Christian Fathers, but the history of the Catholic and Protestant churches are replete with them. Enough, however, historically.

Under the head of collateral evidence, may be mentioned the unparalleled fact that, in less than three decades of time, since it had its modern advent, Spiritualism has extended its name and knowledge around the entire habitable globe. In this country alone it numbers its media by thousands, and its believers by millions. Ecclesiastical history knows nothing approximating to this. It is entirely unprecedented. Its acceptors belong to no one grade of life. Representatives of each and every class of mind are among its adherents and supporters, who are mainly characterized by a spirit of free inquiry, theological independence, impartiality and love of truth. While the greatest variety of opinion exists on the part of its believers touching every other issue, the cardinal points of Spiritualism are fully accepted by all of its acknowledged adherents. What is too often a matter of faith with the popular religionist, becomes by means of experiment an item of knowledge to the Spiritualist. The pure, simple, unquestioned morality and practical bearing of the main doctrines of Spiritualism have never been exceeded, cannot be overthrown, or result in aught else but present and future well-being. The more its great truths are realized, appreciated and consistently exemplified, the better and nobler the individual, the community and society generally. Inevitably, as "Creation feels through each minutest pore the genial influence of the seasons," so civilization feels, permeating its entire circuit, the higher impulses born of Spiritualism.

By the established laws of evidence, it is irresistibly held as one of the strongest proofs in favor of any hypothesis, when all the relative phenomena are in harmony with it. Now if it has been shown that, with reference to the spiritual manifestations occurring all around us, a consistency, a similarity with those of former times, clearly deducible from the same general causes, we claim your logical acceptance, whether they happen to agree with your preconceived notions, your educational bias and theological conceits, or not.

Spiritualism then becomes a logical necessity, 1st. Because the facts themselves, their obvious origin and necessary deduction, prove and proclaim it.

2d. Because it is responsive to the universal and instinctive aspiration of mankind.

31. Because it is verified by every human tradition, as proven by history.

4th. Because it is in harmony with human reason.

5th. Because it is supported by universal analogy.

6th. Because it is affirmed by our intuitions.

7th. Because our mental, moral and spiritual natures absolutely need and demand it.

Thus through all kinds and degrees of evidence, analogical, historical, intuitional and spiritual—evidence possible and probable, personal and positive, evidence direct and indirect, moral and mathematical—one is forced to accept their conclusions. Thus through a series of reasons, which taken in their unification and aggregation are proof that the spiritual hypothesis is true, as anything this side of absolute and universal knowledge can make it. The golden-linked chain of History, Observation and Experience establishes it beyond the shadow of a doubt—establishes it on a basis at once demonstrable, irrefutable and forever.

McLure, Oct. 1st, 1877.

"MATERIALIZATIONS."

BY GEORGE WENTZ.

"I have heard (but not believed) the spirits of the dead many weeks ago." Winter's Tale, Act III., Scene 3.

There appears to be some difference of opinion among Spiritualists as to the importance or necessity of "materializations"; some, who are well assured of the fact of spirit communication, questioning the need as well as doubting the genuineness of posthumous personal appearances. Generally speaking, the species of evidence which appeals to the intellect or understanding may be more trustworthy than the species of evidence which is addressed to the senses, because it is more difficult to guess correctly any special knowledge than to counterfeit successfully the human form.

The annexed instance of form-manifestation is extracted from a recent number of the Church Quarterly Review, and, as the production of an Orthodox pen, should be credited with its full value:

"It was after midday, in midwinter, many years since, that the writer left his study, which opens into the passage on his way to his early dinner. The day was rather foggy, but there was no density of vapor, yet the door at the end of the passage seemed obscured by mist. As he advanced, the mist, so to call it, gathered into one spot, deepened and formed itself into the outline of a human figure, the head and shoulders becoming more and more distinct, while the rest of the body seemed enveloped in a gauzy, cloak-like vestment of many folds, reaching downwards so as to hide the feet, and from its width, as it rested on the fluted passage, giving a pyramidal outline. The full light of the window fell on the object, which was so thin and tenuous in its consistency that the light on the panels of a highly varnished door was visible through this lower part of the dress. It was altogether colorless—a statue carved in mist. The writer was so startled that he is uncertain whether he moved forward or stood still. He was rather astonished than terrified, for his first notion was that he was witnessing some hitherto unnoticed effect of light and shade. He had no thought of anything supernatural, till, as he gazed, the head was turned toward him, and he at once recognized the features of a very dear friend. The expression of his countenance was that of holy, peaceful repose, and the gentle, kindly aspect which it wore in daily life was intensified (so the writer, in recalling the sight, has ever since felt) into a parting glance of deep affection. And then, in an instant, all passed away. The writer can only compare the manner of the evanescence to the way in which a jet of steam is dissipated on exposure to cold air. Hardly, then, did he realize that he had been brought into close communion with the supernatural. The result was great awe, but no terror, so that instead of retreating to his study, he went forward and opened the door close to which the apparition had stood. Of course he could not doubt the import of what he had seen, and the morning of the next day's post brought the tidings that his friend had tranquilly passed out of this world at the time when he was seen by the writer. It must be stated that it was a sudden summons; that the writer had heard nothing of him for some weeks previously, and that nothing had brought him to his thoughts on the day of his decease."

Attention is called, in this vivid description, to the fact that, as the process of materialization proceeded to completion, the head of the figure was turned toward the observer, showing spontaneous motion as a distinct act on the part of the form itself. The writer remarks:

"The fact is that this class of what are called 'ghost stories' is so numerous, and so thoroughly well authenticated, that the hesitation would rather be as to whether they be properly supernatural at all. We mean that the question arises whether it may not be possible in the nature of things—under certain circumstances—for the departing spirit to manifest itself to distant friends at the instant, the fleeting moment of transition from this world to the other? If any one replies, 'If so, why is it not even more common?' our answer is easy. There are numbers of things quite natural which are much more uncommon than the well-ascertained instances of this class of events."

If the spirit may "manifest" at the moment of transition, why may it not do so at any time subsequent to that event? And why may not these manifestations begin now to be more common, and the "conditions" come to be ascertained? The "glance of deep affection" which is ascribed to the spiritual visitant, opens up the question of the moral necessity of form-manifestations.

"Materializations" are not mere pictures formed by color rays upon the retina, because color combinations are not self-moving, and do not speak. Nor are they material atoms concentrated into forms which dissolve into nothingness, for when these atoms have disappeared to ordinary vision the eye of the clairvoyant, or clear-seer, can yet perceive a real form which

New York Advertisements
