

ADVANCE AND REVIEW TRACT NO. 1.

A
SPIRITUAL FEAST;

OR,

Materialization Extraordinary.

**An Interesting Account of a Materialization
Seance Held at Kansas City, Mo., Monday
Evening, April 18, M. S. 34, (1881.)
Mrs. James A. Bliss, Medium.**

BY PETER GANNON.

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A SPIRITUAL FEAST

Or Materialization Extraordinary.

To the Editor of Mind and Matter :

DEAR SIR :—I am going to attempt to describe to your readers the marvelous manifestations, witnessed by a small party selected by the guides of Mrs. Bliss at a "guides' seance," through the mediumship of that wonderful medium. But while I take the task upon myself with pleasure, I feel my utter incapacity to do the subject justice. It is as if we had caught a glimpse of the fabled paradise through the half-opened gates, and then attempted to describe the glory and brilliancy of its streets of gold and gates of pearl and precious stones.

The seance was held on Monday evening, the 18th instant, at the residence of Mr. Matt. Clary, where Mrs. B. has found a pleasant home and kind and loving friends since her arrival in this city. For the benefit of those of your readers who

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are not far advanced in the knowledge of the glorious philosophy, I would state that the circle at a "guides' seance," is composed only of persons selected by the spirit guides of the medium. The persons present at this seance were, Dr. J. Dooley, Mrs. Dooley and Miss Eva Dooley; Mr. and Mrs. Clary and Miss Clary; Mr. Jos. N. Lucas, Mr. Justin Robinson and myself. Mrs. Clary's three young children were also in the room.

I commenced the earnest investigation of these phenomena ten months ago, through the mediumship of Mrs. M. M. Jamieson, one of the noblest-hearted and most truthful women I have ever met. She passed to spirit life last December, deeply regretted by all who knew her. Since my first sitting I have been a constant and zealous investigator; but I doubt if I was a thorough believer until my second sitting with Mrs. Bliss. When I first commenced this interesting study, an old friend of mine, an investigator for over thirty years, said to me, "It is like living in the atmosphere of the tomb." Well, if Mrs. Clary's pleasant seance room is the "atmosphere of the tomb," it is a very good place to be in.

Mrs. C. had a small table loaded down with rich cakes, made for the occasion, wines and fruits, and flowers in profusion. It was like preparations for a feast, and it was a feast such as mortals seldom enjoy. Mrs. B.'s baby's nurse was very ill

this evening, and that occasioned a little delay; but shortly after 8 o'clock Mrs. B. was controlled and went into the cabinet. She was dressed in her usual costume—a dark grey woolen dress with tight fitting sleeves, and no trimmings or ornament whatever, with the exception of a lace tie around her neck. The circle sang "The Sweet By-and-by," and shortly afterward "Billy the Boot-black" spoke through his trumpet, bidding us all good evening. "Billy" has made many warm friends since his advent in Kansas City. After speaking, "Billy" pulled the curtains aside and stood there fully materialized. He had scarcely dropped the curtains before they were opened again, and Jessie, Mrs. Clary's oldest daughter in spirit life, showed herself. She is a charming maiden of nineteen years.

The next picture presented to us, was indeed a beautiful one. Billy and Jessie stood there arm in arm. They showed themselves twice. From where I sat I could not see Jessie's full form, but I distinctly saw her arm drawn through Billy's, in a perfectly natural manner. We sang again, but were interrupted by the appearance of another spirit, Valentine, Mrs. Clary's son. I have attended four circles since Mrs. B. has been here and I have met this spirit every time; his individuality is unmistakable. We were called up in turn and presented to him by his mother. He

had a chain in his hand, made of Mrs. C.'s hair, and mounted in gold. His mother presented it to him in Philadelphia last November. When he put the chain in my hand his hand touched mine. He left the chain with his mother until the next seance. His mother gave him a bouquet; he dropped the curtains, but immediately raised them again, and the bouquet was fastened on his coat. He then kissed it and returned it to Mrs. C. He dropped the curtains long enough to rap for Mrs. Dooley. When she came forward he picked a bouquet from the table and presented it to her. Valentine appeared dressed as he always does—in full evening suit. He is a tall, slender young man, apparently 22 years old, with a delicately formed face and light moustache. Valentine remained materialized probably five minutes.

After another interval of singing, Capt. Hodges, Mrs. B.'s head control or guide, raised the curtains and stood in the doorway of the cabinet. The captain is probably a familiar acquaintance of many of your readers, but for the benefit of the large majority who have not seen him, I will describe him. He is a powerful man, when materialized, I should judge nearly six feet in height; has a moustache and strong physique, and always comes dressed in the United States uniform. A greater contrast than between him and the spirits preceding him cannot well be imagined. The

captain reached out to the table, picked up a bottle of wine, smelt it, slapped the bottle with his hand and laid it down again. We were then presented to him in turn, I being the last. I had met the captain several times before, but never had the pleasure of shaking hands with him until this evening. When I approached him I said: "Captain, I am delighted to meet you." He slapped himself violently on the breast several times, probably to show me he was solid, and then grasping my hand firmly gave me a good, hearty shake. Capt. Hodges has a large hand, and everybody notices this fact.

After this spirit's disappearance the most wonderful occurrences of the evening commenced, and, Mr. Editor, if my testimony was not supported by the testimony of other unimpeachable witnesses I would be reluctant to send it forth to the world. A spirit known as Capt. Davis (he was, I believe, a sea captain) stepped entirely out of the cabinet. He was well known to the rest of the circle; I had only seen him once before. But I had a splendid opportunity of observing him this evening. He had, as usual, a white wrapper on, and was a smaller and shorter man than Capt. Hodges. He pushed the table away from the cabinet, quite close to the circle, and about five feet away from the cabinet door. The spirit then picked up various things upon the table, and

raised them up, as one holds out a weight. He then picked up the knife from the table and striking the point upon the frosting of one of the cakes produced electric sparks. With a gesture he invited us around the table to observe this phenomenon. I think the spirit then returned to the cabinet for strength. When he came out again he took up the knife, raised it aloft so we could see it plainly, and drawing one of the cakes to him cut it, and, like a man, he cut some pieces large and some small. You can imagine the intense attention and interest manifested by our little circle. When the spirit had cut the cake to his satisfaction, he invited Mr. and Mrs. Clary, by a gesture, to come forward to the table. He then took up the wine bottle and a glass, passed out some wine, and handed the glass to Mr. C. He repeated the action, handing the glass to Mrs. C., and then, taking another glass and pouring wine in it, touched his glass to theirs and drank. I heard the wine make a peculiar gurgling sound as he swallowed it, and he smacked his lips afterwards. Dr. and Mrs. Dooley next approached the table, and wishing the spirit health, drank with him. When Mr. Robinson, Mr. Lucas and myself approached, I placed myself at the end of the table, quite close to the spirit, and saw his face in profile. He was a fine looking man, with a round, small head, and full beard, cut short. When he

handed me the glass my hand touched his. I did not drink my wine, but touched glasses with this convivial, powerful spirit, and wished him health. With a round of applause from the little circle the spirit then retired into the cabinet, but kissed Mrs. C.'s little boy and girl before he dematerialized.

After another short interval, Grandmother Smith, an old lady, 89 years old, and whom I have seen closely several times, spoke in the cabinet. The old lady showed her face, and calling Mrs. C. to her, praised the arrangements, but said she couldn't eat anything, but she took a bouquet from Mrs. C. Grandmother Smith is always a welcome visitor. After her disappearance, an angel form in spotless white, stepped out of the cabinet. But before her appearance, the spirit rapped for Dr. Dooley. Dr. D. had purchased three bouquets, one for Miss Western, one for Miss Neilson, and one for Rosie. Miss Western would not come out of the cabinet until the Dr. presented her bouquet to her; although the spirits were not promised the flowers, they evidently knew they were intended for them. The spirit took the bouquet from Dr. D. smelled it audibly, and dropping the curtains, immediately raised them again with the flowers pinned on her dress. She was recognized by every one at once. It was Lucille Western, the actress. I have seen and

spoken to this spirit face to face, but this evening she was materialized perfectly. She was met with words of admiration and welcome by every one. She advanced to the table, and picked up various things; the dish of flowers, cakes, etc. She did not seem pleased with the way Capt D. had cut the cake. She picked up the knife, but in doing so upset a glass on the table, and dropping the knife to the floor, drew back with that peculiar drawing in of the breath through the teeth. The action was perfectly natural, and the attitude of the spirit, beautiful and graceful beyond expression; she spoke then in a whisper, "The knife, the knife," pointing to the floor. Genial Mat. Clary said, "Oh! that's nothing—break everything if you want to!" and stooping in front of the spirit, picked up the knife and handed it to her. Miss Western then cut the cake again, but accidentally, I suppose, left one of the large pieces. She then passed the cake around the circle, and I happened to get the large piece, and said to her as I took it, "Why, Miss Western, I have got half the cake here." (I forgot to mention that the young ladies, Misses Dooley and Clary, had remained down stairs to get the baby to sleep. They entered the seance room shortly before Miss Western materialized, and stood behind our chairs.) When the circle had all got cake the young ladies came forward. Lucille allowed Miss D. to take a piece,

but when Miss C. reached out, the beautiful spirit drew back the plate with a tantalizing motion, and materializing a cloud of lace from her arm, threw it over the plate with a graceful motion. She repeated this manoeuver several times to the great amusement of the circle and discomfiture of the young lady. At length Miss C. said: "Oh! please Lucille, let me have a piece; you have given all the rest some." Lucille could not resist the pleading voice, held out the plate, but drew it back again, and raising it gracefully over her head, she put it on the table, and Miss C. got no cake. The sweet, tender beauty of this scene will never be forgotten by those who witnessed it. Lucille then set the plate down, and picking an orange out of the dish, offered it to Dr. D. But she would not let it go; so they both squeezed until the result she evidently wished—the breaking of the skin—was attained. She then wrenched it from his fingers with a quick motion and put it to her lips. We could distinctly hear her sucking it. She then gave it to the Doctor. After the seance he explained to me how it was done. Miss W. then retired into the cabinet, allowing us to see her dematerialize as she did so.

The cabinet is set in an alcove, and the music box stood outside on a chair near Mrs. C. The spirit soon came out again, wound up the music box, which played a waltz, and danced very grace-

fully, turning completely round several times; yet I could not distinguish the slightest vibration of the floor. There was no jar as if a mortal were dancing. Mr. Robinson, who was an actor for many years, and played with Miss Western, then asked the spirit to act the listening scene in "East Lynne." She did so to perfection, and, as Mr. R. said, quite naturally, seeming to fall backward into the cabinet in her despair. She then acted parts of the "French Spy" and "Gypsy Queen," each part being recognized by Mr. R., the spirit corroborating him by rapping on the table. She retired into the cabinet again. Every performance was greeted by a round of applause from the small and select, but very appreciative audience. There was silence for about a minute; then a figure almost entirely in black stood in the doorway. I could just see the bottom of a white dress—something white on the head. The face was covered. This sombre figure glided out quickly, directly in front of me; the dark cloak was thrown aside and Lucille Western, in all her angelic loveliness and spotless white, stood there in a theatrical attitude. It was a scene from the "French Spy," and the effect was startling in the extreme; and although a little used to such things, it sent a chill through every fiber in my body. The spirit then shook hands with the circle. I carried her hand to my lips, after a slight hesitation on her part; the skin

felt a little colder and much softer than a human hand. There was all the natural difference between Capt. Hodges' hand and Miss Western's.

The next spirit that showed herself was Lizzie Walker, one of the medium's guides, who had not materialized before in Kansas City. She spoke her name plainly. After Lizzie, Miss Adelaide Neilson came. I think this is the fifth time she has appeared. I did not get near enough to the spirit to describe her; but she called Dr. D. up and shook hands with him, and the doctor presented her with a boquet. I could see that she was splendidly attired, with shining specks upon her dress. Dr. D. said the spirit was attired in white satin with leaves of gold. After Miss Neilson came another interesting spirit, well known in Philadelphia, I believe. "Aunt Liza," the colored woman, came out to the table, examined it critically, but didn't take anything; but she danced for us, we singing lively Negro melodies. When she ceased dancing, I distinctly heard a man's hand clapping in the cabinet. This was Capt. Hodges. Aunt Liza was still outside the cabinet. I have witnessed this phenomenon once before. Mr. L. and Mr. R. went close to Aunt Liza; she bowed extravagantly, and shook hands with both. They told me her hands were rough. A ballet dancer followed Aunt Liza—a slight and very graceful figure. She danced the scarf dance,

and posed very gracefully. I thought she was a stranger to the circle; but I understand Mr. R. knew her as Miss Benson. Next came charming little Rosie Gibson, the pet of the circles. She has a witty reply for every one. She criticized our table severely, and kept the circle laughing for ten minutes. Some one asked her if the baby's nurse was going to die. She replied, without hesitation, "Ask Dr. Dooley." I wish all spirits knew enough to answer that way when they didn't know. When Rosie left us, Capt. Davis materialized again, and asked Mrs. Clary to sing. She sang, "It is well with my soul;" he sang a second to her soprano, in a deep, rich voice, and in perfect harmony. He was invisible while singing. Valentine sang, "Nearer, my God, to Thee," with Mrs. C. The beautiful spirit guide "Silver Star" then materialized, and was followed by another Indian guide—a darker squaw. The latter spoke a few Indian words to me and rubbed a boquet against my face. Then Billy thrust his trumpet through the curtains and shook all the boquets out of it. Jennie Fulton, the daughter of a friend of Mrs. C.'s came, and then the medium came out, still under control. There! I forgot our interesting friend "Blue Flower." She always complains that she cannot materialize enough to show herself; but her remarks are always interesting. This highly interesting seance lasted over two

hours and a half, and the marvelous manifestations will never be forgotten by those present.

I have entirely avoided the realms of fancy and theory in describing this seance and confined myself strictly to facts. Looking at it from an investigator's point of view there are some very noticeable facts. Without going into details there were all the comparisons existing between blooming youth and the wrinkled octogenarian—between a boy and a girl of 13 or 14 years, and a bearded man six feet in height—between white and black—between the Indian and the paleface. Another strong point is the individuality and personality possessed by each of those forms; so that when you have met them two or three times they possess as individual a personality to you as any acquaintance in the ordinary walks of life. You recognize them at the first glance—you know them by the first word, the first familiar movement. As proof of immortality to the sceptic and unbeliever this letter is practically useless, for I claim that the man or woman, knowing little or nothing of this philosophy, who would believe in the occurrence of these wonderful manifestations merely on my word or that of my friends, would be an impediment rather than a help in the spiritual ranks. Spiritualism does not demand unreasoning credulity; it offers the proof. And all my friends and I ask is, that those who do not

understand this philosophy will give us credit for trying to tell the truth. If this letter will only be the means of inducing some earnest, thinking men and women to investigate this subject fairly and earnestly, sifting with careful hand the false from the true, its object, as far as that class of readers is concerned, is attained. But to Spiritualists who, like myself and friends, have been through the fire; who have received error and nonsense, as well as truth and wisdom, from the other side; who have been tortured by doubts and suspicions to emerge at last into the full sunlight of glorious certainty—to such these facts have a great significance. If we only guide our lives aright, seek only the pure, the grand and the true, and laying aside all selfish desires, give the spirit world the conditions they ask and our full co-operation, who can tell what glorious results will reward our labors. When the mortal and the immortal—the divine and the human—the finite and the infinite come into yet closer communication who can tell what undreamed of, what immeasurable blessings will flow out on poor, weak, error-blinded humanity. We are favored beyond all the races of the sons of men who have gone before us; still, as the poet Tennyson truly says:

“We are ancients of the earth,
And in the morning of the times.”

Truth, to the progressive mind, is welcome in any guise. But when she comes personified in such radiant angel forms—the forms of loved ones and friends gone before—she flashes along the gloomy, clouded horizon of our material minds as a divine revelation, dispelling with lightning vividness the mists of doubt and error that have gathered there since our very birth, and making a heaven of this dull earth of ours.

PETER GANNON.

707 Main St., Kansas City, Mo.

We, the undersigned, hereby testify to the correctness of the foregoing facts, in every particular :

J. DOOLEY, M. D.,
 MRS. ANN DOOLEY,
 MISS F. EVA DOOLEY,
 MATT. CLARY,
 MRS. MATT. CLARY,
 LAURA PERRY CLARY,
 J. W. LUCUS,
 JUSTIN ROBINSON.

P. S.—In consequence of the severe illness of the baby's nurse, Katie, Mrs. Bliss gave but one seance besides the guide's seance last week. Katie passed to spirit life about 4 A. M. yesterday (Sunday) morning. Mrs. Bliss has labored under

many difficulties since her arrival here ; but fortunately she has been surrounded by kind and sympathizing friends who have endeavored to lighten her burdens, and make her visit, so far from home, as pleasant as possible. P. G.

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