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## IMPROMPTU ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

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(At the Beethoven Rooms, Harley Street, Dec. 19, 1870.)

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### MEDIUMSHIP.

*Question.*—What is the peculiar distinctive quality of mediumship by which in the presence of certain mediums spirits are enabled to bring fruits, flowers, and other material objects into closed rooms, as in the instances mentioned by the speaker and by the chairman at the last meeting? How and whence are these fruits and flowers usually obtained? Is the obtainment and receiving of those objects morally justifiable?

*Answer.*—One of the chief difficulties with which we have to contend in classifying mediumship is this, that such very marked antagonistic conditions present themselves when we attempt such a classification. There is present, frequently, at these meetings, a lady who presents an organism that furnishes the pabulum which spirits use for the purpose described. That lady presents, as most of you know, an organism which seems to predicate strong and vigorous health; if not absolutely rude health, at least such a quality of frame as would suggest the possession of great physical power. Several media for the same form of manifestation exist in America, but present totally opposite characteristics, frail to the very last condition of fragility, almost as it were hovering between the two worlds. Two sisters, public mediums, very remarkable for the production of manifestations of this kind, have for many years been known and pitied for every description of physical infirmity which flesh is heir to. How is it possible that we should classify a force or essence proceeding from two persons of such totally opposite physical characteristics? The best that we can say is this: Spirits

themselves inform us that a large charge of the life-principle is required for the production of these manifestations; that that life-principle must proceed chiefly from the physical organism, especially from the back brain; hence that those organs in which it is popularly supposed that the intellect resides are seldom called into play. This explanation does not imply that there is a deficiency in the region of the intellectual organs, but that the organs of the back brain and the physical system generally are most commonly found to be the means of supplying this pabulum or life-principle, that it must be produced and given off in excess. In the case of a very vigorous constitution, we can readily account for the emanations being large and sufficiently forcible to account for the manifestations; in the case of the fragile persons we have named, we believe that the spirits' explanation will still apply, that the organism broken up by sickness necessarily gives off a very large amount of the vital force debilitating the system but furnishing the necessary supply. Thus much for the force. The method we have touched upon to some extent before, in describing the passage of a book, which was obviously, under the most favourable conditions for observation, brought through the ceiling of an apartment by invisible hands and placed upon the table. We then stated that the spirits attempt to explain to you the fact that their physical organisms, if we may call that physical which consists only of force, for their spiritual body is force,—the real essence, attraction, repulsion, and all the imponderable forces that make up this organism—that that organism of the spirit is not subject to any of the obstacles of matter, nor limited by any form or degree of space that matter occupies; that any object that is brought immediately within the atmosphere of the spirit becomes saturated with that force and partakes of the quality of the spirit itself. It is invisible. All objects thrown, as it is called, by spirits, are never thrown, they are dropped; they are brought to a certain point, and the close observer will remember that they have never been projected, or rarely so, without such careful and obvious attention on the part of the agency that makes the manifestation, that the projectile always lights in just the place required by the spirit, and very seldom produces injury. It is obvious then that the spirit must be enabled to surround the object which it carries or moves by an atmosphere that renders it for the time invisible. But that atmosphere does more. It makes the object positive to all forms of matter, and all forms of matter charged with this spiritual force immediately disintegrate and are no more obstacles to the passage of the object it carries than mere thin ether would be.

The eye of the clairvoyant has constantly traced the passage of objects carried through space apparently, but there is no space there. All physical obstacles recede before the penetrative power of spiritual force, and the object that is surrounded with spiritual atmosphere partakes of the same quality. Thus fruit and flowers are readily brought, or any other physical object, within closed doors. Those closed doors are pierced by the force of the spirit, and the atmosphere that encloses the spirit, surrounding the physical object, makes it equally positive to all obstacles of matter. But for the last point, how far do we consider that the production of such objects and their presentation at the spirit-circle involves any breach of good morals? We must here remind you that there is a vast array of surplus matter in the world, which might be much better disposed of than in the possession of those who at present hold it. We know that where it is appropriated for the purpose of plunder, the plunderer is held responsible, and why? Because he infracts the good order of society—and though he may be starving, perishing for the very material which he subtracts—that good order requires that we should not permit one human being to prey upon another. But now we are dealing with a totally different world, and one which is acting on a totally different basis, a world whose vast sphere of observation perceives the surplus and the possibility of appropriating vast masses of human possession, without injury to the possessor, and with a vast amount of good to the recipient. That would not for the purpose of plunder, but for the purpose of instruction is enabled to withdraw from various points and places objects whose loss is not felt, but whose use becomes most materially apparent. When we learn the physiology of crime, when we begin to understand the motives that lead to crime, we shall regard it with a very different eye. There is a justice in the Infinite Mind which has disposed upon the surface of this earth all that is necessary for the maintenance of every creature that lives, but these objects have been acquired and accumulated by force in different directions, and hence it is that one portion of society is perpetually preying upon another, and that the very rich and the very poor live as much in antagonism with each other as the Ishmaelites of old. The spirit-world realizes all this, and without proposing to subvert the laws which are at present necessary for the protection of society, spirits know and perceive the possibility of making use of surplus objects for the benefit and instruction of those who receive them: they are physical objects that are brought, and those physical objects you may assure yourselves cannot be brought by one portion of the spirit-world without the supervision of another. We are often

accustomed to say that the manifestations of physical force proceed from low spirits, precisely as we should say that the building of this place was the work of low men; but the carpenter and mason are as necessary in the spirit-world as the architect; and those that work under the order of the master minds of this earth only symbolize the action of those that are working at the spirit-circle. The strong and ponderable bodies of the gross spirits that make these manifestations are under the supervision of higher and brighter and wiser teaching spirits, who find it necessary that the earth should understand the power of spirit to act upon matter. The fact that a physical object can be carried through the air—the fact that it can be transported from some distant place by an invisible and apparently intangible being, and brought in all its integrity, now glittering with the dew and now freshly torn from the bough and placed upon your table, is a magnificent phenomenon in the world of science; it forms an era in the history of the race when such marvels are produced, and when the power of an invisible world is thus able to act upon the visible, so that we stand face to face with a Columbus who has discovered a new continent, and we are beholding the inhabitants of this spiritual world performing such functions as these; we must take no exception to the strangeness of the methods, but rather accept the phenomena produced as evolved by the highest wisdom and for the highest good of the race.

*(After a pause.)*

We would ask permission to add a very few words to the last remarks. There are in the States of America hundreds of poor persons upon whom this mantle of spiritual power has fallen, whose time is their bread-winner, whose hauds have been removed from all other means of earning a livelihood to become the servants of the spirits. The vast multitude of these persons in the United States renders their services of less avail than they would be in this country: hence there are hundreds of poor mediums very capable of producing phenomena that would gratify the beholder, who are frequently left, from the vast range of competition, in very straitened and severe circumstances, and again and yet again, a hundred times told, have the physical necessities of these poor servants of the spirits been strangely relieved by the unlooked-for production of money. We do not ask whence it came; we have never yet heard that any have suffered from its abstraction. The spirits are not coiners, and therefore the productions of these little sums supplying the bitter necessities of a sad hour are evidences to us of the angelic ministry that becomes supreme and triumphant over all the narrow, sordid conditions of this earth.

The eyes of the beneficent watchers have beheld the great need and perceived where the supply could be obtained without wrong to any one. Can we take exception to such scenes as this? We think not. We rather think that the bright and the beloved ones who thus perform good out of the superfluity of man's abundance are far more blest in their work than those who would withhold it.

## THE SPIRIT AND THE BODY.

*Question.*—Can you explain the relation of the future spirit to the present physical body?

*Answer.*—Can we explain what it is that maintains this object in its integrity? or this? or the ground beneath your feet? Can any amongst you perceive by what force these walls are upheld? And yet you know that such a force is there. You vaguely call it attraction, and when you perceive that the atoms are disintegrating or crumbling, you as vaguely call it repulsion. The power of life, or that which we have so frequently called the life essence, is an element whose two modes are attraction and repulsion. The relation which it sustains to this physical body is the same as that which the invisible force of attraction and repulsion sustains in every atom of matter. It is the real essence of the atom, it is the life-principle, and this life-principle grown and moulded within the atoms of the human body, uses that body as the formative principle, uses it as the mould in which it grows, in which it acts and develops character. The spirit is the innermost, permeating the spiritual body as the spiritual body permeates the atoms; the combination of the two forms that which we call soul. The disintegration that is effected by death is simply this, that the attraction that has existed amongst the atoms becomes wasted and gradually loses force, repulsion prevails over attraction until it arrives at an ultimate point. That point is death. When that ensues the attraction and repulsion of the spiritual body inheres wholly to the spirit, and thus combined it passes out of the body and produces a new-born soul. It is the action of this new-born soul clothed with positive life force,—the combination of a human soul still in the body clothed with negative life force which *en rapport*, or chemical affinity, produces the battery by which all spiritual manifestations are made. We enforce this position that the life-principle is an actual element whose two methods are attraction and repulsion; that it clothes the spirit, inheres in the body, passes out of it at death, and returns again to form a chemical affinity with some peculiar spiritual body inhering in some individual whom we call a medium.

## RE-INCARNATION.

*Question.*—How is it that spirits communicating to people on the Continent, teach the necessity of a series of incarnations, while those who communicate with us in England and America repudiate the theory entirely?

*Answer.*—How is it that, in the land of America, several millions of Spiritualists accept a belief which is in perfect harmony with the facts of scientific discovery—and where scientific discovery with its facts fails, American Spiritualists reject the communication? How is it that in England a totally different standpoint exists—we speak it with all kindness—that the opinions that are propounded must be amongst the great majority of believers in striking harmony with certain forms of religious belief? How is it that in other countries—Italy, for instance, and Spain—where Spiritualists are, the same crucial test is applied to spirit communications of rules of faith? Your speaker had been in correspondence with several distinguished Spiritualists in different parts of the Continent, who have questioned her how they could exorcise such rude and intrusive spirits as did not bow down to the peculiar forms of Roman Catholicism. And again, in the land of France an idea prevails that the spirit is re-incarnated, and the great majority of the French Spiritualists accept this peculiar idea as their standard of faith. Now, without attempting to exalt any form of communion received in any land over another, we ask, is there no standard of truth? Are we to be beaten about upon the waves of opinion, and drifted hither and thither on the ocean of speculation in the spirit-world, as we have been in the natural world? And the answer to this question is furnished by carefully observing certain general features in the communion. We require the most emphatic and carefully observed demonstrations of spiritual presence; we require, in commencing our investigations of Spiritualism, to base our belief upon its facts, and those facts must transcend any possibility of accounting for them by any visible or human agency, and unless we have such an array of facts, we must still question, and ought to question. Next, having obtained demonstrable facts, totally outside the pale of human agency, we must question individuality, and as far as possible endeavour to ascertain the tokens of identity presented by spirits. This, too, is a point that we can arrive at. Thousands have done so before, and may do so again. Having arrived at this point, we next enquire how far the spirit propounds his opinions, or the facts of his existence. If he offer opinion only, that opinion is of no more value propounded by a spirit

than it should be propounded by a mortal. We make this assertion, and make it in the face of those who we know take exception to our position. God has given to each one the lamp of reason, and a certain amount of judgment, which must be called into play, as shown by the fact that our human responsibility is attested by penalty and compensation. You may deny accountability, if you will—deny individual responsibility, if you choose—but every returning spirit proclaims that he is living in compensation or retribution for his own special acts. Therefore, individual responsibility is shouldered upon every living creature, and requires that you should deny all authority that does not commend itself emphatically to your sense of right and your views of reason. Now when the spirits present to us sectarian opinions, they are opinions only. Again, every returning spirit preaches the same stern and stupendous facts. Jew and Gentile, Buddhist and Christian, are all alike standing before the doomsday-book of their own acts. Of what avail, then, these multifarious opinions? Where we find that the intense devotion of sectarian believers enters the spirit-world, we find that it returns, and where there are grouped around the spirit-circle those strong pre-dispositions to accept of a special belief, we find an invariable answer to that belief, like the magnetic attractors, the magnetism of the mind's circle attracts the magnetism of special and peculiar minds out of the circle. The result is a confirmation of the opinions that are so fondly cherished and so determinedly adhered to, and his abnegation of all sects. Whilst we recognise that Baptist and Presbyterian, Jew and Gentile, all classes of thinkers are represented in the cosmopolitan New World, there is above them all a breadth and a determination and an enquiry—a keen, shrewd purpose to find out the truth that has overpowered these sectarian prejudices; and therefore it is that the American Spiritualists, consisting of all classes of Christian thinkers, just as many as yourselves, but less obstinately bound in their belief, have been in a better condition to receive the grand and universal truths of that large liberty which prevails in the heavens and which recognises only God, the God of love, of wisdom and of power. This belief in re-incarnation has, in all probability, proceeded from a single mind and a psychological impress of that mind upon many others. Were we permitted to enter into the doctrine of re-incarnation, we believe it would not be difficult as a matter of opinion, as a string of theories, to strip it from point to point until we did not leave a fragment behind; but this is not the time or place to do so. It is enough to allude to one fact only, the great joy, and gladness, and brightness, and sunlight of the spheres consists in love. That love is not of

the mere vague, general character that is expressed by the love of humanity alone, it is the love of friends, the love of kindred, the love of individuals, that dear and tender love that God the Father feels for his children. If you take this love away, you take the sunlight out of heaven—there is no heaven without it. By this wild, vague separation, and tearing up by the very roots of all the precious ties of kindred, of all the blessed affinities that God himself has knit up as the dearest and most precious affections of our hearts, they are annihilated at once. And more, our individuality is annihilated. Our individuality only is maintained by memory; that memory cannot submit to change. If one or two returning spirits, or one or two hundred, proclaimed that they were re-incarnated, the same memory must be a function of all spirits; hundreds, thousands, and millions of spirits return with their loves and affections perpetuated, with their identities preserved, with their individualities marked, and protest against this assumption on the part of a few vague theorists that they have existed in other forms. This is opinion, not the facts of Spiritualism, and until we are in a better condition to weigh and gauge the teachings of the spirits we must content ourselves with the central facts. Thousands and millions of individuals have returned to us, and the presence of one individual maintaining its love and affection, and maintaining that that affection is its heaven, is an answer to the whole affirmation of re-incarnation, denies it *in toto*, and proves that this possibility of returning again and again, and living in the dark and meaningless round of perpetual incarnations is neither in harmony with the story of ages written in the old rocks, with the eternal progress of creation mapped out in the fiery stars, with the sweet kindred and tie of love which is bound up in every human heart, nor yet with the great majority of communications that come from the spirit-world. Therefore it is that we again throw you upon the facts of Spiritualism, the general central facts, those corroborated and testified in every portion of the world; and that we reject opinions whether they come from spirits or from mortals, and only care to pin our faith upon demonstrated facts.

#### ORIGIN OF SPECIES.

*Question.*—Will you explain your views on the origin of species? Is there any reason to suppose that the Darwinian theory is well founded, and is a belief in it inconsistent with spiritual philosophy?

*Answer.*—There are two sources from which a Spiritualist or one influenced by spirits would answer the question, one, the known facts of science, the other, the affirmations of the

spirits. The known facts of science obviously point back to a condition, when this earth in its rudimental state did not bear animated life. We trace up by geology all the various rudimental conditions which preceded animated life. We arrive at a condition, when we find that the first forms were very simple, that the first animated creatures could scarcely be called organic. Mere gelatinous masses floating in the ancient seas are the first evidence that we possess of life. As we turn page after page of the old stone book, we arrive at a conception of animated life, which most admirably conforms to our observations of the present time. Rudimental growth proceeding first from a point, becomes, under the influence of the tropical conditions that once prevailed all over the earth, luxuriant, large, and monstrous. But still these monstrous forms are yet rudimental as compared with man, for we find as we examine the conformation of the lower creatures that each one is more or less a prophecy of man. The formation of heart, brain, spine, and especially the means of locomotion, and the powers of communicating with each other, possessed by the lower creatures, are all on a gradually ascending scale—not of development, for we believe that every species is complete. We realise that the great and marvellous mind that is incarnated in the production of species, has practised, so to speak, with every species in its perfection; that when matter has been fully prepared in one direction from its decay and disintegration, the atoms by isomorphism are progressed; that old rocks, by disintegration and perpetual re-composition become finer, and the atoms become more capable of sustaining a higher form of life; as the atmosphere becomes purer and finer, creatures of a more fine and complex nature are produced. But all our rudimental observations upon the geological strata of the earth (and we are compelled to hasten upon this point rather than pause upon it), point to the fact that man is the last, as he is the apex of creation. We use the word "creation" now simply to signify the production of forms, but from the point where we begin to discover the vestiges of humanity, and they are few and imperfect and the data they furnish us only enable us to speculate vaguely upon what must have been his condition, from the point when we first observe these vestiges it is obvious that man was produced sparsely and in different portions of the globe at the same time. It is said that the earliest vestiges of human habitations are troglodyte, and are to be observed in Central Asia, and that must have been inhabited by a very small, woolly-headed people. This conforms to the universal order which we observe in the production of our species. If man, a portion of all species, a microcosm of all

that is, conforms to the universal order of the production of beings below him, he comes in the natural development of time just when the earth is ready for him, just when the atoms are progressed enough to produce him, and he comes like the flora and fauna that have covered the globe, first on the lowest plane of human life. Gradually ascending from this condition of primeval savageism, as he spreads abroad over the earth and multiplies, we find that his vocal organs improve. Where we perceive the aboriginal savage now, we always perceive a deficiency in the vocal organs by which speech is produced, and when we question what is the line of demarcation between man and the animal, we find it is his capacity to walk erect and his power of communicating by speech. This is the chief line of demarcation that separates him from the lower creatures. The aboriginal savage is most commonly imperfect in the methods of communicating by speech, and from the point where he begins to improve in this direction by the inevitable growth and perfection of the species, which seems to be the order of creation generally, from that point we find that by intercommunion of man and man ideas are interchanged, the friction of mind upon mind produces the sparks of intellect, and these lay the foundations of civilization. You will perceive, therefore, that our views of the production of species are to some extent in harmony with the Darwinian theory. To enter fully into this to-night would occupy too much time, therefore, having given you our views of the production of species we shall turn very briefly to the opinions propounded by spirits upon this point. Every spirit as it passes from this earth carries with it just the amount of intelligence which it has gleaned in this rudimental sphere. If that intelligence be of an expansive character, all intelligence gains force and momentum in the spirit-world as in the natural world, and the spirit progresses rapidly beyond his old theories. If perchance he enters the spirit-world very much as too many of us upon this earth do, with his theories bound about him more closely than his winding sheet, cramping his spirit with a pre-determination only to admit just such views as conform to his theories, he returns again and yet again to the spirit-circle, repeating the old tale of theory and reindorsing all the narrow and peculiar views with which he left the earth. Now, the corrective to this is the fact that all spirits who appeal to the reason rather than to the demonstration of their presence, point to the observations of science upon such questions as belong to the scientist to explain. Every spirit who does not usurp authority over the human mind and come with a "Thus, saith the Spirit" to dogmatise to you, desires you to prove all things before you hold fast by any; and to do this they point back, as

we would have you do this night, to the observations which science can furnish, assured that the great facts of the universe will never be disturbed by the communications of spirits, in fact they come to restore to you the Scriptures that the All-Father has written; they come to point you back to this original standard, to the works of the Mighty and the Masterful rather than to the assertions which men have made in His name. The old stone book, although we may frequently mistake it in the reading, nevertheless tells a tale which only requires observation and experience to read correctly. Its hieroglyphics never change, its writings never fail. The history of the race is inscribed by the finger of the Infinite himself in the starry Scriptures of the skies, and in every stratum of rock beneath our feet. Those who best learn to explain these—those who will gauge the heights of air, measure the stars, sound the eternal depths of creation, and fear not to tread upon the pathways which our God has himself marked out for us, observation and experience guided by the lamp of reason—those who thus read will perceive that species,—animate species, like the flora and fauna of our earth have grown and manifested themselves when the conditions for life and that class of life were afforded; that to afford this the progress of every atom has been absolutely necessary; that not for thousands but for millions of years the great God has worked in the laboratory of creation, and in the crucible of central fires, and in the depths of ancient seas, and in the manufacture of the crust of our earth has prepared atom by atom, until first the rudiments of animated life appear, and then upon the gradually ascending scale every creature has come forth until the coronal glory of man appears, first in the paradisaical state of that rude ignorance which he indeed calls child-like innocence, then in the gradual unfolding of his intellect, until he stands in the glory of civilization.

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LEVITATION OF THE BODY IN INDIA.—“Everybody who has been long in India, has seen the same thing done by a poor juggler, without apparatus of any kind. The Indian juggler walks into your garden, and suddenly appears six feet from the ground, sitting cross-legged, with nobody and nothing nearer to him than the grass. How does he do it? We cannot explain, any more than we can explain Mr. Home’s achievements.”—*Daily News*.