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MISS EMMA HARDINGE.

We hardly think that Miss Emma Hardinge does herself full justice. Unlike her sex and her adopted country, she is hiding her candle under a bushel. She is more than she avows herself; or rather, in one phase of her many-colored life, she has been, or is, more than she represented on Saturday last at St. James' Hall. For a Pythoness to come out only as "an Oratress" is a wrong to herself—to say nothing of the insult to the English language as well as a delusion to her hearers. Fluent gabble is one thing; inspired utterances are another. Of course it is possible that Miss Hardinge may have a double personality, but she ought to avow this. Criticism would be thrown away on a mere instrument and organ of inspiration; and if anybody—man, woman, or "oratress"—claims to be divinely prompted in all his, her, or its utterances, it is only for the outer world submissively and reverentially to listen. At St. James' Hall Miss Hardinge only delivered a lecture on America, and she merely described herself as a well-known stump-speaker, who had "delivered thirty-two orations in thirty-eight days in favor of the reelection of the late President Lincoln." We have here an importation of Yankee notions which has a certain amount of interest, like the woolly horse, or General Washington's nurse. An exotic is always a curiosity; we are not in the habit of meeting with "oratresses," and stumping a State is a political experience new to us. But the interest in this sort of thing is limited. As Dr. Johnson said of a female fiddler, so we feel about an "oratress;" the wonder is, not how she does it, but that she does it at all. But when we come to know a little more about Miss Emma Hardinge, a very much higher interest connects itself with her public appearance; and we only regret, for her own sake, that she did not announce to the public the full grandeur of her mission, and all that she is. The cautious brochure which she circulates as her advertisement, only speaks of her political campaign in favor of the Unionists, especially in California. In this pamphlet she details her sensations and motives and sacrifices; she merely describes herself as consumed with zeal for the North. But all this is a very ordinary and commonplace affair. She is only an "extemporaneous speaker" who has been, according

to her own account, very successful with mass and monster meetings. In this there is nothing more than what we have in Mr. Bright, or the paid temperance orators of our own country. But Miss Hardinge is really something much more, if she would but own it. She has gifts which it would be profane to criticize; her utterances are from the unseen world; her voice is the voice of intelligences before which we have only to bow, and which it is ours at once reverently and silently to accept. Over and above her political aspect, she is the chosen depositary of the secrets of the unseen world; and rightly to understand her prophecies, we have only to hear what she is according to the *Spiritual Magazine*—which we observe she does not quote, and does not appeal to, at St. James' Hall. We find, from this funny journal, that Miss Hardinge is, according to the authority of an apostle in spiritualism, "one of the most powerfully-gifted speakers who have as yet appeared as exponents of the spiritual philosophy. She speaks in what may be termed a semi-trance state, and she says she is guided and influenced in her speaking by spirits whom she recognizes. She speaks without preparation." This is what we are told, upon what in this case is the best authority; and we are further assured that the hearers of her inspired utterances "were almost as much entranced by her power as she herself was by the spirit which spoke through her." If all this is true, and if Miss Hardinge accepts this authoritative account of her mission and her inspiration, she is at once taken out of the category of oratresses.

But perhaps this is only the partial and over-favorable estimate of her friends. It may be that she does not claim the superhuman dignity which the *SPIRITUAL MAGAZINE* thrusts upon her. Let us therefore hear herself. Miss Hardinge, it appears, was an actress in England, and ten years ago she went to New York to fulfil an engagement at the Broadway Theatre. This engagement was not a success, and, according to her own printed account, she accidentally discovered, in a spirit circle, that she was a medium. Her friends pronounced her to be "a fine clairvoyant and clairaudiant subject, and offered to take her to a few celebrated public mediums, where she would be 'developed right away.'" And right away she was developed. "The touch of Mrs. Kellogg's hand appeared like a magician's hand, illuminating the latent fires of magnetic power, which, once enkindled, ever after burned in the steady light of mediumistic gifts." These are her own words. We all remember that certain pleasant violence was always necessary to compel the Pythoness of old to seat herself

on the sacred tripod. This peculiarity of the spirit world survives. Miss Hardinge felt at first a modest reserve to let the world know how really great she was—a reluctance which it seems still clings to her. But if Miss Hardinge declines to be true to herself, she ought to be true to her inspiration and "the sperrits." Queer people these sperrits are, and they have a queer way of going on. But for us it is only to record what they do and say; far be it from the profane to question their method of revelation. Mr. Philip Smith, a dead man, manifests his presence to Miss Hardinge in a remarkably unpleasant way:—"I distinctly felt an icy cold hand laid on my arm. . . . SOMETHING pulled my hair; all the while the coldness of the air increasing painfully. My convulsed hand was moved tremblingly—My dear Emma, I am come to tell you I am dead. The ship Pacific is lost, and all on board have perished." Very unpleasant to be a medium, and iced like a bottle of wine, although the inconvenience may be counterbalanced by possessing "the faculty of seeing spirits, hearing voices of invisible speakers uttering spontaneous prophecies, and beholding visions produced in the air." At length Miss Hardinge and the spirits came to an understanding. She was invited to Troy, to lecture, by the association of Spiritual Philosophy. Without a thorough perception of what she was doing, Miss Hardinge consented; and, not unnaturally, she set about preparing a lecture. But this would never do. After she had got up her talk, "one of my familiar spirits, addressing me as usual in a form of analytical cross examination," asks in unparadiseable familiar terms:—"What is Emma covering so much white paper with black scratches for?" "I am writing the lecture you want me to make for you." "For whom, Emma?" "For Spirits," I answered sulkily. "Spirits will not let Emma read lectures; she will speak, not read, for Spirits." "I cannot speak; I must read." "We shall take away your eyesight." Emma then tries another dodge. "I would study my lecture." But the voice demanded, "Why does Emma wear out her shoes in traversing this apartment?" "I am trying to study this stuff." "We shall take away your memory." And the spirits were as good as their word. Miss Hardinge went on to the platform; a thick mist swam before her; she was only conscious of unconsciousness. While plunged in dreamy ecstasy she "found herself getting off a calm and composed lecture, and between dreaming and counting, and now and then listening to herself, and wondering what she was going to say next, and then forgetting to attend to it, she got through an hour of one

of the best lectures that had ever been delivered on that platform . . . and from that hour to the present, during eight years of incessant labor, averaging about five lectures a week, the same kind of control, with slight variations, has possessed me, dispelling all fear, and carrying me on in the love and tender care of my all-sufficient, powerful, and wise masters, without one single occasion on which the carping critic or my own excessive sensitiveness could write the sound of failure." Far be it from us to perform the extraordinary feat of writing a sound of criticism, or of writing any other sound; equally far be it from us to question the inspired speaker's excessive sensitiveness. But here is quietly announced, as though it were quite a matter of course, that Miss Hardinge has already delivered, or been delivered of, more than 2,080 lectures. And this leads us up to what we own is our difficulty.

"Such," Miss Hardinge concludes, "is a very faint and imperfect sketch of my career." She declares that "she has never failed to receive words of warning, encouragement, sure prophecy, and wise counsel from the faithful and beloved masters whom it has been her joy and fortune to serve." What, then, we have to inquire is whether the oration at which we had the privilege to assist on Saturday was among those words of sure prophecy dictated to Miss Hardinge by her faithful and beloved masters? If not, why not? and if it were, why she did not say so? If she has a double function; if, when merely spreadeagling, she speaks on her own hook, but when engaged with philosophy, metaphysics, the standard of truth, the mysteries relating to the connection of brain with matter, the magnetic force, and such little matters as Christianity, the Miracles, Inspiration, and the great Cause of Causes (all these mere trifles being the subjects of her addresses), she speaks entirely under inspiration; then we ask how she distinguishes her sacred and profane utterances. In other words, we want to know whether she is always sure that she is herself, or whether she is always conscious that she has any self. What, in fact, are her tests as applied to her own consciousness?

For ourselves, we are completely puzzled. The oration of Saturday might be dictated by the spirits, or it might be only the gifted orator's own gabble. No doubt it was, as the New York Times expresses it, characterized by "a rhetorical finish, a perfection of logic, and a keen analytical perspicuity," according to the Transatlantic sense or nonsense of these terms; but then it might be either mundane or supermundane. It was buncum enough for either. Like her great predecessor, Miss Codgers, being out of her depth and unable to swim, she splashed up words in all directions, and floundered about famously. There was just that bloated and flabby mock eloquence in Miss Hardinge's "oration," that sonorous absence of all argument, that substitute of platitude for depth, that affectation of high and holy thought which would be so edifying were it in the slightest degree intelligible, that we would willingly attribute it to the spirits rather than to any rational creature. But, on the other hand, there was so much that smacked of material and mundane experiences, such old familiar tricks of a second-rate professional, such palpable familiarity with stage-

business, and such unmistakable reminiscences of the 2,080 previous performances, that we are, on the whole, convinced that the spirits had little or nothing to do with it. And Miss Hardinge, to do her justice, does not say that they had. Or if the spirits were in the background, we are certain that one of them was named Elijah Pogram, and that we were at last in the sacred presence of Jefferson Brick, and the Bird-o'-Freedom hero of Mr. Biglow. As to the manner of the orator, it is really worth a visit to St. James' Hall to witness the phenomenon. Two hours of it was, as they would say in America, a caution; but ten minutes of Miss Hardinge is a treat—of a sort. Such studied attitudinizing, such melodramatic starts and bounces, and solemn stalking about the stage; such a flux of talk—not a cataract, but a solid sustained, never-pausing rush of words; such a pleonasm of emphasis; such a ranting of statistics, and spouting a page of Custom House returns with the air and accent and deportment of Constance or Lindamira at the least; such impassioned appeals on behalf of the grandeur and magnificence of two hundred and fifty-seven thousand dollars' worth of dry goods—all this was never before, in England at least, witnessed even on a platform. Miss Hardinge's "brilliant elocutionary abilities," as her New York admirers in their peculiar dialect phrase it, are certainly worth studying, and her ease and fluency are undoubtedly first-rate. As to her matter, why, there is not much to be said. A panegyric on America is by no means a novelty, even though it is announced that "it is God's America"—a mode of expression which leads up to speculations, which may possibly become profane, on the divine purposes and the mysterious designs of Providence. If, as Miss Hardinge repeatedly assured us, America has a divine mission, and is supernaturally directed to a fore-ordained purpose as an unconscious but paramount influence in the Almighty scheme, the thought suggests itself that in these latter days God selects very mysterious instruments indeed. *A priori*, we should hardly have thought that General Butler and Parson Brownlow and the New York Herald and Mr. Seward's correspondence and miscegenation had anything very divine about them. But Miss Hardinge knows more about the counsels and will of Heaven than we claim to do. With our own confessedly limited knowledge on this head, all that Miss Hardinge had to say about the glories and splendors and successes and size and destiny of America, sounded pretty much as a clever, but rather tiresome set of variations on a very familiar *thema*:—

Boston is a fine town,
So is Philadelphia.

We had heard all this before, but never had to swallow so much of it at a single gulp.

We may perhaps solve the difficulty to which we have just adverted. Perhaps this oration was of a tessellated and mixed character. The human element in it was the statistics, Mr. Horace Greeley, and American progress. But the peroration must have been to use her own language, Inspirational. We should be sorry to attribute to anything so merely respectable as the human mind that grand and concluding burst of bombast in which, in the spirit, and on the Pilgrim's Rock, Miss Hardinge pictured the sun, or, as she called him, the Sun-God, marching in his

strength and splendor from his first home in Central Asia, and writing with fiery finger on the luminous ether the solemn words, "Follow thou me"—which, being interpreted, means the Monroe doctrine, and that all nations of the earth are to listen to this great appeal of the solar system; while from everything in general, and nothing in particular, swells up the 'solemn chorus of Universal Nature calling in sounds of thunder, and the whispered breeze, "Westward Ho!" across the broad Atlantic, through the Empire State, over the boundless prairie, up the eternal Rocky Mountains, till, at the Golden Gate of San Francisco, and in the purple depths of the Sacramento, the eternal diapason sinks to a universal hymn—of Yankee Doodle. In all this Miss Hardinge must have recognized the present God. Mere human nature is too low (or too high?) for such "elocutionary grandeur" as this. The only drawback from it is that it slightly suggests the celebrated Pogram defiance "which defied the world in general to compete with our country upon any hook; and devellopp'd our internal resources for making war upon the universal airth." And the political ecliptick which Miss Hardinge traced by way of tag, and which brought the Hall down, has certainly been anticipated in the rather well-worn "Child of Natur and Child of Freedom, whose boastful answer to the Despot and the Tyrant is that his bright home is in the Settin Sun." Anyhow, for ourselves we will humbly admit that on Saturday last we left St. James' Hall very much in the familiar attitude of the British Lion; "we put our tail between our legs, and howied with anguish," and we "guessed that we had now seen something of the eloquential aspect of the free hemisphere, and were chawed up pretty small."

MR. GAYLOR'S "CHILD STEALER."

[The following synopsis of Mr. Gayler's last drama, to be brought out on Monday next at Wood's Theatre in this city, is from one of the Philadelphia papers.]

The prologue and five acts into which "The Child-Stealer" is broken up are as full of incidents as an egg is of meat. An enterprising and strong-bodied woman, named Madge the Cadger earns an honest and respectable living by the stealing and disposing of other people's children. She does this because she gets well paid for furnishing children at the shortest notice, and because she has a beautiful little daughter whom she dearly loves and wants to make rich. One evening a man with a mask, no other than Lord Lansdale asks her to procure a child for him, and promises two thousand guineas for the job. Madge the Cadger agrees to do it, and leaves the room apparently for no other reason than to allow her husband Jack Rookley who has been at sea, to enter. By some mysterious prestidigitation of the plot, Jack has in his arms, rolled up in green drugget, his baby, which is fifteen months old, and which, the audience has previously been informed, had been living away from its mother. Jack deposits the little Julia in the cradle, and goes off somewhere to get a drink. Madge the Cadger re-enters, perceives the child wrapped up in the cradle, and imagines that it is the one that she has commissioned Richard