

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

MODERN AMERICAN SPIRITUALISM: A TWENTY YEARS' RECORD OF THE COMMUNION BETWEEN EARTH AND THE WORLD OF SPIRITS. By EMMA HARDINGE. New-York: Published by the author, No. 229 East Sixtieth-street. Trade supplied by the American News Company, 1870.

The question of "Spiritualism" is not settled yet. We mean, it should be explained, the question of the origin of the phenomena of Spiritualism, and would not for an instant be understood to suggest as a moot point the independent existence of the soul. A short time ago we published, in a letter from our London Correspondent, an account of some astonishing occurrences that had recently taken place in that city, and which were attested by many persons of high character and social distinction. These witnesses avouched, among other things, that they had seen a human being float about in the air above their heads, pass out of one window of the room in which the *séance* was held, and return by another, the windows being at a great height from the ground. This and other surprising statements were confirmed by evidence such as would, we suppose, be accepted as conclusive in a Court of law. The particular feat thus described is not new, as most readers are aware. It has been repeatedly performed, the world has been assured, not only by many East Indian jugglers, but by several famous mediums—or rather, as we are expected to believe—by the spirits controlling those mediums. The point to which we wish primarily to direct attention is the cumulative testimony that is offered regarding this performance at the same time.

We were permitted to consider the volume before us as the veritable work of Mrs. EMMA HARDINGE, we should say that she was a lady of imperfect education, some cleverness and a fine capacity for self-delusion. The fact of its being, ostensibly at least, the work of the spirits fortunately saves us from the onus of these or other ungallant reflections. We therefore do not hesitate to say that as a mere literary production *Modern American Spiritualism* is quite unworthy of the attention now incidentally bestowed upon it. The work is selected from among many others on similar topics that have lately appeared, simply because it contains accounts of a great number of alleged phenomena, supported by what, in reference to any other subject, would be generally accepted as indisputable evidence. When the floating phenomena were seen or attested in London, Mrs. HARDINGE'S volume now before us, and containing numerous corroborative descriptions, was passing through the press at New-York. The lady states in her dedication, which, by the way, is in honor of the spirits, that it was by their direction her book was undertaken. If we understand her, she professes that its pages have been inspired by these invisible guides. This being the case, we cannot but regret their deficiency in literary skill, and especially in the art of coördination. Her pages would have been more convincing, to say nothing of their being more readable, had the spirits made use of the material at their disposal in a workmanlike manner. The main thing, however, is the nature of the material itself. This we find to be in great part declarations from numbers of people of all grades of intelligence, age and social position, and strongly confirmatory of what are termed spiritual phenomena, the floating in the air achievement being among the most conspicuous and the most strongly attested. In other words, a great many individuals, living, intelligent and accessible, bear public witness to numerous violations of the laws of gravity and other infractions of known physical principles, such as in candor might be pronounced scarcely less amazing than the Christian miracles themselves. The testimony thus simultaneously brought to public attention—coming from Englishmen of title and aristocratic associations in the East, and in many cases from humble American farmers in the West—is frequently almost identical in character. As regards the astounding suspension of human bodies in the air it is precisely so. Accounts that seem to us to bear strong marks of trustworthiness are those coming from Hon. CHARLES CATHCART, of Indiana, who, originally sceptical, became by investigation a firm believer in Spiritualism. A son of his, it appears, has often been carried about in the air by the spirits. The following statement, written by Mr. CATHCART some years ago—indeed, most of the matter relating to him, and published by Mrs. HARDINGE, refers to dates prior to 1860—affords some indication of the views of an educated investigator concerning the "manifestations."

My reading has been quite extensive, and so has my acquaintance with Spiritualists, mediums, &c., but I am quite satisfied that no rational explanation has yet been offered by which we can understand the mode or forces through which the spirits produce the phenomena we witness. I have been a close student of material philosophy, and have acquired readiness and some skill in the experiments necessary to the understanding of the laws governing the action of what scientists call the "natural forces," but I am perfectly at a loss when I attempt to conceive how these "spiritual manifestations" are caused.

I do not, however, for a moment doubt but that they are governed by laws as fixed and permanent as those of gravitation, and only require that the conditions necessary to their manifestation should be observed, when, as in the case of the breaking of the stem of an apple, the inevitable manifestation of its fall occurs.

You may judge of the imbecility of scepticism in this country, when I say to you that the two following propositions have long been made public without acceptance: First, that any intelligent person putting up \$100, I will cover it with \$1,000, and that they can have full opportunity by lighting up the room, &c., to prove whether these manifestations are made by fraudulent means. In case of such proof, I pledge myself to give my \$1,000 in charity; on the contrary, after full and fair trial, their \$100 is to go to the poor. Second, I have long ago offered publicly a reward of \$500 for the evidence of fraud on the part of those sitting in my hall, with the advantage of special sessions to be held for the investigation, and though hundreds upon hundreds, from the first men of the country to the least, have been here, the scepticism of none of them has been strong enough to induce them to make the effort to pocket the \$500.

Another offer was made to the citizens of La-porte, namely, that they should put up \$2,000, which I would cover with a like sum; that a drum should be suspended from the ceiling of the Court House, out of reach from the floor; that the Poston Circle would sit in the room, unanointed; and that if the drum was not beaten, the \$2,000 put up by their friends should be dispensed in charity; but that if it was, the other \$2,000 should be disposed of in like manner; every means possible to be taken by locks, guards, &c., to prevent imposition. The scepticism of a town of 8,000 people was not strong enough to risk a donation of \$2,000 to their own poor. Yours truly,

CHARLES W. CATHCART.

It is alike remarkable and unfortunate that most attempts at investigation on the critical or incredulous side should have been so uniformly unsuccessful. If these things are true, why cannot their truth be demonstrated? Is the natural inquiry heard on every side. The need for faith as a preliminary to satisfactory demonstrations is often suggested by believers, but this is surely illogical and absurd. Who can believe in anything what he proposes to test? So far as probable-looking testimony goes, Mrs. HARDINGE has collected an imposing array of it, and the stories from England are certainly staggering. An examination, however, by a body of competent, and, if possible, unprejudiced scientists who should be named by high, perhaps even by governmental authority, seems to us a thing much to be desired. It is plain that the matter cannot be laughed down. There are too many grave, mature and educated believers in it. But if it be true that Spiritualism is a prolific source of

insanity, it surely is important to the public good that something like a judicial investigation should be made by persons in whom the community would have confidence, and the result of whose well-considered deliberations would have something like permanent authority. An attempt at such an investigation was made sixteen years ago. A memorial signed by 15,000 persons was presented to Congress, praying that such a commission of inquiry should sit under legislative auspices. This unique petition was headed by the signatures of a United States Senator and the Governor of a State, and there were included those of a good many distinguished persons. General SHIELDS presented the document in a speech to which the Spiritualists took sharp exception. He said, among other things, "I make it a rule to present any petition to the Senate which is respectful in its terms; but, having discharged this duty, I may be permitted to say that the prevalence of this delusion at this age of the world among any considerable portion of our citizens must originate, in my opinion, in a defective system of education, or in a partial derangement of the mental faculties, produced by a diseased condition of the physical organization. I cannot, therefore, believe that it exists to the extent indicated in this petition." It is not strange that the memorial was laid on the table, but it is perhaps a pity that it was so disposed of. If Spiritualism was, or is, a delusion, a public demonstration of the fact, clear to every comprehension and open as the noonday should do good rather than harm. If, on the other hand, Spiritualism is what its advocates claim, it is difficult to see why that also should not as freely and plainly be made known. BUCKLE'S aphorism, quoted by General SHIELDS, "The credulity of dupes is as inexhaustible as the invention of knaves," is forcible and no doubt true; but that it disposes of the whole subject of Spiritualism is open to serious doubt. General SHIELDS and many others predicted that this new science, or religion, or superstition would soon disappear. The violence with which the disease raged was typical of its short life, and it would vanish as suddenly as it had arisen. Being a delusion it could not possibly stand the tests to which it would be universally subjected. Its prophets might have honor for a time but would quickly sink into oblivion.

Now what is the actual state of the case? Sixteen years have rolled away, and we hear to-day far more of Spiritualism and its phenomena than we heard in April, 1854, when the *National Intelligencer* reported that at the idea of referring such a thing to a commission of inquiry the Senate was convulsed with laughter, in which General SHIELDS—who appears to have taken up the project in all seriousness, but to have been moved as men are apt to be from his purpose by surrounding ridicule—heartily joined. To-day one can scarcely go into any society in town or country, in the thickly populated and educated East or the more scattered and nomadic West, in the drawing rooms of London, Paris or New-York or the homely farm-houses of the prairie, without hearing of "manifestations" and "tests" and "séances" and conversions. Hardly a newspaper but contains some narrative of wonders which may be laughed at—but are not explained.

Almost every day we hear of people who scoffed at such things a short time ago, but have had some experience which leads them to admit "there must be something in it." It is worthy of special note, too, that whereas in the infancy of the movement, belief in the supernatural or non-physical origin of the phenomena was chiefly confined to ignorant or imperfectly educated persons, it is now entertained by some of the most distinguished people of their time in politics, in literature, in art, and even in science. We must remember, likewise, that this growth of Spiritualism, this interest in, or acceptance of it, has gone on in the face of unremitting ridicule, of countless "exposures," of interminable explanations of the way in which the phenomena are produced, and so on. If Spiritualism be really and totally a humbug, it is truly amazing, despite BUCKLE'S smart antithesis, that in this nineteenth century the world is so slow to explode it. Truly, there is something in this more than natural if philosophy could but find it out.

These observations, we again caution the reader, are intended to apply exclusively to the phenomena. We have no idea of considering Spiritualism as a religion. Were all that is claimed of it capable of mathematical demonstration, and so formulated or co-ordinated as to be susceptible of dogmatic expression, it would then, to our mind, be soon enough to survey the matter from this aspect. We seek merely to enforce this proposition: That the time during which the phenomena of what is called Spiritualism have occupied human attention and baffled human scrutiny, and the number of highly intelligent, earnest and truth-loving persons who have been led, by investigating, to accept these phenomena as something not to be accounted for by previously known physical laws, warrant our opening statement that the Spiritual question is not yet settled. Consequently when a book is presented, like the one before us, which embraces in its nearly 600 octavo pages the accumulated testimony of a formidable body of witnesses, many of whom are obviously intelligent and instructed, and most of whom can be called upon at any time to repeat their evidence, we believe it to be worthy of a hearing. Mrs. HARDINGE gives us almost innumerable narratives, and some very particular ones, of the extraordinary manifestations that during the last twenty years have been occasionally heard of through the Press or in society. Rappings and tipplings, the moving of furniture without hands, floating in the air, and even the visible appearance of spirits are recorded in her pages with a minuteness of detail and a profuseness of corroboration not to our knowledge to be found elsewhere. The book is, on the other hand, frequently turgid in style and defective in logic, and attributes to the spirits in some instances opinions and expressions that can hardly fail to excite prejudice against the whole system. A similar objection must be made to the professions of certain individuals whose powers Mrs. HARDINGE appears to have been beguiled into advertising in a manner open to misconception. It is unfavorable to the encouragement of intelligent investigation that the public should be asked to accept as a component of the spiritual system such statements as the following. The writer is a physician, and relates his astounding experience to the author in these words:

Mrs. Emma Hardinge:
DEAR FRIEND: In my former letter I omitted to relate a few facts to demonstrate the truth of the power of healing and influencing persons at a distance.
While healing in Syracuse, N. Y., a stranger who had just been cured asked me if I would go to Fulton, N. Y., and cure his wife, who had been bedridden for over three years, and unable to sit up during that time. I told him that I could cure her without seeing her, as well as to go there; and taking his right hand I said: "Keep your thought upon your wife; I will give her a shock like an electric battery, and with it her disease will instantly leave; she will arise perfectly well, dress herself, call a witness and note the precise time. Then walk out-doors. When

you arrive home she will meet you at the door, and say, 'NATHAN, I am well now.' That is your name?" "Yes," said he, "my name is NATHAN ROWLEY." I had never seen him but a few moments and never heard his name before I called it. This was on Tuesday. I lectured in Oswego the next Sunday, when Mrs. ROWLEY appeared in the audience and came upon the platform and related the wonder of her cure; said she never heard of healing at a distance before; that she received a powerful shock, and felt that she was cured; she arose, noted the day and hour, and called a woman to witness what appeared to her a miracle.

This cure took place precisely at the same time that I eliminated the influence through her husband, and every word that was told him was verified by her. She came eleven miles to make a public statement of the facts, unsolicited.

Another case of interest: Mr. GEORGE VINER, of Gallipolis, Ohio, came with garments of invalids to have them cured, although several hundred miles distant. I eliminated a shock to each separately, willing their disease to depart. He then said, "I have another friend sick; a consumptive, a Dr. ELLIOT, but I have no garment." I told him I could cure just as well without it, and taking his hand said, "He is walking on the street now; he will feel a powerful shock this instant, and be perfectly cured, and further, he will see a man's hand." At the same time I stretched forth my own hand and looked steadily at it.

After a lapse of time sufficient to hear the result I had a letter from Mr. VINER, stating that each one had felt the shock, and that all were benefited or cured; that he had also seen Dr. ELLIOT, who was very grateful for his cure; that he was walking on the street when he felt the shock, and that he distinctly saw the hand, but could not account for the vision.

Another, Mr. CHARLES E. PERRY, who, I believe, is at present United States Minister to New-Granada. Mr. PERRY resided at Albany at the time. His only child was taken with dysentery. He said to his wife, "Our child can be saved if we can reach Newport and see Dr. NEWTON." They started, but on arriving at Worcester the child was so low they gave up nearly all hope, and could go no further with it. But Mr. PERRY started for Newport alone, to get me to go to Worcester. Reaching my house at about 10 o'clock P. M., and making his errand known, I told him I could cure the child better under the circumstances than if present. Taking his hand, I said, "Your child is cured, and will this moment burst into a laugh; and when you get to Worcester you will find your child running about the house as well as ever," which he did, to his surprise, the next day; and on inquiring of Mrs. PERRY as to the cause of this marvelous change, she stated that at a few minutes after 10 o'clock last evening the child suddenly laughed and was entirely well from that moment.

I could relate from memory multitudes of similar results of my daily practice in this way; moreover, be assured, what I do, others can do.

It may be claimed that these stories are no more incredible than others more strictly "spiritual;" but they will so appear to most readers, if only for the, to say the least, equivocal purpose of their insertion. Many who, in the interest of truth and for the sake of humanity, might usefully investigate, are deterred by representations like this, which, to all appearance, bear unmistakably the mark of the charlatan. The same may be said of the connection of Spiritualism with other social movements or freaks of the day, the association with which may be neither necessary nor logical, but which, by the force of accidental circumstances, lowers the phenomena, mediums and the whole cognate machinery in the estimation of numbers of thoughtful, sensitive and rightminded people. In spite of these drawbacks, however, there seems to us enough weight in the whole of the foregoing considerations to justify the most thorough examination on the part of competent inquirers that time and situation will permit. There is nothing like getting at the truth, whatever that truth may be. It is not in the nature of man at this epoch—and especially of the restless, busy, all-inquisitive American—to leave any thing unexplained that is imperfectly understood and that it lies in humanity to penetrate and make clear. The puzzling doubt remains whether what is called Spiritualism is of the number of such things, or whether it's place be among the mysteries which it is not intended by Providence that man shall fathom.

THE FORTIETH CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES. Historical and Biographical. By WILLIAM H. BARNES, author of the "History of the Thirty-ninth Congress." With portraits on steel by GEORGE E. PERINE. 2 vols. GEORGE E. PERINE, New-York, 1869.

"These volumes delineate the men composing the greatest legislative body in the world. No similar assembly is congened from such extended territory, represents so great a constituency, or possesses powers so immense as the Congress of the United States." Entering upon his task in an appreciative frame of mind, clearly betokened by this his prefatory statement, we have no doubt our Congressmen and their friends will find Mr. BARNES' volumes very much to their taste. The biographies are illustrated by portraits, many of which are decidedly good, and there is altogether a look of conscientious labor about the work which should not fail to meet adequate appreciation. Trustworthy accounts of the men who make up the National Congress must be interesting and important to great numbers of their contemporaries, so that this series is pretty certain to be successful, and there is every indication that the author has done everything in his power to make it so.

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH. Lectures delivered in St. Ann's Church, Eighth-street, during the season of Advent, 1869. By REV. THOMAS S. PHISTON. New-York: The Catholic Publication Society.

The author has been led to the publication of these lectures by the hope that Protestants might read what they are unlikely to hear, and become convinced of the authority and truth of the Roman Catholic Church. There is nothing specially new or striking in the presentation of the topics treated, which are: "The Plan of Redemption;" "The Office of Jesus Christ;" "The Office and Nature of the Christian Church;" "The Catholic Church and the Church of Jesus Christ," and "Protestantism a False Gospel." The arguments to prove the Roman Catholic Church to be the true Church are the same as have been urged with varying success in the past history of religious controversy, and the argument against Protestantism has little beside the evident sincerity and earnestness of the author to challenge attention. The author's reasons for characterising "Protestantism a false gospel" may be gathered from his own words: "Protestantism began first by denying the effects of Christ's redemption; thence it ascended to assail the atoning character of his death; thence the step was easy to dethrone the God-man and spoil him of his divinity. * * * All positive faith has crumbled to pieces, until indifferentism and a low materialism are characteristics of modern thought. Philanthropy and natural kindness are the types of that which is greatest and most sublime in the popular creed." The book, although controversial, is without arrogance or bitterness, and in some of its passages exhibits an eloquence born of sincerity and fervor, which reminds the reader of the Fathers of the Church.