

Back From Jerusalem:

The Life and Times of
Emma Hardinge Britten,
Spiritualist Propagandist

Marc Demarest
The Emma Hardinge Britten Archive

Version 2.1
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Module 4

1838-1858

Emma Floyd & Emma Harding, Performer

1838-1839: Bristol & T. Machin

- By the end of 1838..
- Margaret has, in all probability been shipped off to live with Frances Bromfield Jackson, Ann Sophia's sister, by 1838
- Ann Sophia has taken work to free Emma to pursue her public career, and Thomas is probably working, but...
 - Thomas could not have earned much
 - And Emma is supplementing public performances with music publication, as E(rnest) Reinhold
- She turns to, or is recruited by, T. Machin, a Bristol impresario, who manages her career until (I think) early 1840, when he sends her to London, and a what I think is a three-year articling to Thomas Welsh, London musical career-maker
- What she does, during this three-year articling, is of profound effect on her subsequent career, and life

1840 - Back To London

- Ann Sophia, Thomas and Emma may be living south of the Thames, in St. Mary's, Lambeth
 - We don't know what Thomas is doing, but he'll be in the English Navy in late 1841, and almost immediately thereafter dead of sickness in the South China Sea, in 1842
 - Emma is articed to Thomas Welsh, until at least 1843
 - Ann is not working (almost certainly)
 - Was Emma also an artist's model at this time (age 17)?
 - Money is still the hard god around which Emma's life is organized

PLACE	HOUSES		NAMES of each Person who abode therein the preceding Night.	AGE and SEX		PR IND
	Uninhabited or Building	Inhabited		Male	Female	
Larkhall Lane		1	Mrs. A. Floyd	30		
			Emma D		2	
			John Helman	34		
		1	H. H. Todd	40		
			Oliver D		40	
			John L. L. L.		20	
		1	Mrs. J. Jordan	30		
			Alex. H. H.	35		
			Ann H. H.		30	
			Lucy D.		20	
			Ellen H.		10	

1841 UK Census for Larkhall Lane, Lambeth

Mrs. A Floyd (wrong age) "Independent means"
Emma (wrong age) -- the "D" is for "ditto"

Neighbors are merchants, clerks, builders and artists -- but the majority are recorded as "independent means"

This is not a "working-class" neighborhood.

1840 - Thomas Welsh

- Once an artistic force to be reckoned with -- author, composer, performer, venue builder -- T. Welsh has gone from impresario, to....talent development
- Better performers --> the theatre, the opera, the concert rooms
- Middling --> rented out, for short-term engagements, private functions, and the like
- Low-talent --> placed with wealthy families and provincial schools as music teachers

A YOUNG Protestant LADY, German by birth, but well acquainted with the English, French, and Italian Languages, desires an Engagement as Musical Tutoress in a School or Private Family. She has received a thorough Musical Education under the personal direction of Herr Hiller, at the Conservatoire of Music at Cologne. Highest references will be given. Address Mr. T. Welsh, 6, Pall-mall, London, W.

TWENTY YEARS AGO!

NEW MELO-DRAMATIC ENTERTAINMENT,
IN TWO ACTS,

AS PERFORMED BY THEIR MAJESTIES' SERVANTS OF THE
LATE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE,

AT

THE LYCEUM THEATRE.

BY I. POCOCK, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF "HIT OR MISS"—"YES OR NO," &c.

THE MUSIC COMPOSED BY MR. T. WELSH.

This eminent vocalist was born in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh in the year 1790; and having from a child evinced great inclination for music, no pains were spared to procure him instructions in it; he afterwards went to Aberdeen, where he continued teaching for some time, until having paid a visit to London in 1811, for the purpose of hearing the most celebrated professors there, he was introduced to Mr. T. WELSH, who took him as a pupil for three years, and having presented him to Mr. HARRIS, of Covent Garden Theatre, he was immediately engaged by that gentleman for five years, afterwards lengthened to seven, Mr. T. Welsh sharing his salary, benefits, country engagements, &c. during the three years he remained under his tuition. Mr. S's first appearance at Covent Garden, was in the character of *Don Carlos*, in the *Duenna*."

Nice work, if you can get it...

1840 - What Emma Says

At that time (the time of Ebenezer's death), in my grief and blighted prospects, I died to the lyric stage and tried to commence a new life as a pianiste and composer. Dear good Pierre Erard, the venerable founder of the grand pianoforte magasin in Paris, gave me the loan of a lovely instrument on condition of my coming every day to the warehouse and practising there for the behoof of buyers. Endless were the great and notable personages who came to Erard's to hear the child pianiste, but when it was found that I was also a magnetic subject, and by a wave of the hand above my head, and even an unspoken wish on the part of my audience, that I could play any air desired, my poor mother became astonished and frightened at this new and unusual accomplishment, anxiously consulting a medical man on the subject -- then so rare and ill-understood -- she and others of my best friends were assured that I was under some evil, perhaps Satanic, influence, and that unless I was stopped in this mad career it would either end in permanent lunacy or death. Stopped, of course, my career as a musician was, and thus, I returned to England, adopted the stage as my profession, and became an actress.

Autobiography (1900)

- Fiction, based on fact -- four words of fiction, to be precise
- In the main, accurate -- I believe Emma was discovered to be a magnetic subject -- a clairvoyante -- while articled to Thomas Welsh, and while acting as a demo dolly for Pierre Erard, in London
- She was not to become an actress until the 1840s, and did not see Paris until 1855, with the Wallack Company

1840-1843: The Orphic Circle

When quite young, in fact, before I became acquainted with certain parties who sought me out and professed a desire to observe the somnambulistic tendencies for which I was then remarkable. I found my new associates to be ladies and gentlemen, mostly persons of noble rank, and during a period of several years, I, and many other young persons, assisted at their sessions in the quality of somnambulists, or mesmeric subjects... Lord Lytton, the Earl of Stanhope, and Lieut. Morrison (better known as "Zadkiel"), and the author of "Art Magic," belonged to this society.

"By One Who Knows," in "Occultism Defined," The Two Worlds, 18 November 1887

Never understood by those around me, it was only in after years and **when I became called and associated with a secret society of Occultists and attended their sessions in London as one of their clairvoyant and magnetic subjects**, that I myself began to comprehend why a young girl fairly educated, and blessed with many advantages, should be branded with such peculiarities of disposition as must inevitably shut her of from all companionship with children of her own age and standing. The society of Occultists to whom I can now only allude, and who are named in "Ghost-Land" as the "Orphic Circle," obtained knowledge (by means I am not at liberty to mention) of those persons whose associations they desired. None of the members were known as such outside their circles, the existence of the society was undreamed of, and those whom they chose to affiliate with they knew of and called. I having been thus favoured obtained a clue to my own exceptional early experiences, which the subsequent developments of Spiritualism stamped as natural Seership.

Autobiography (1900)

1840-1843: The Orphic Circle

- I believe the 'Orphic Circle' is related to the Gore House circle around Marguerite, Lady Blessington
- Conversationalist, writer, respectably wicked woman, she lived with her lover, the Count D'Orsay, from 1830 or so until he fled to the continent to escape persistent creditors in 1849
- Her "circle" in this period was shot through with the occult -- her friend, the artist John Varley the Elder, was her court occultist, astrologist and crystallo-mancy authority
- D'Orsay was reputed to have employed an alchemist, to make gold, to pay his debts
- Mesmerism was the rage within her circle
- Frequent visitors -- intimates -- include Dickens, Disraeli, Forster, Chauncy Hare Townshend, Edward Bulwer Lytton, and other (now canonical) luminaries with whom Emma claimed acquaintance: all of whom had pronounced occult tastes
- And she well may have rented pianists from T. Welsh



Marguerite, Lady Blessington
(1789-1849)



Alfred, Count D'Orsay
(1801-1852)

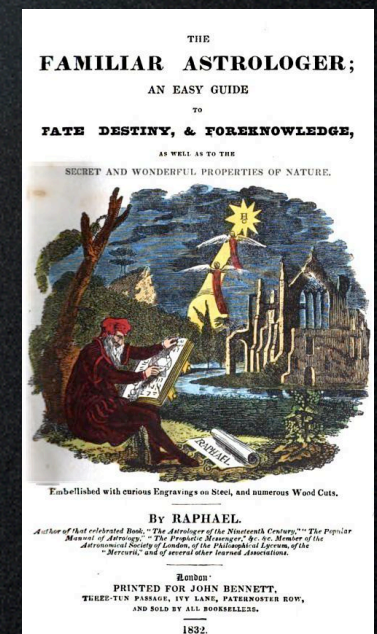
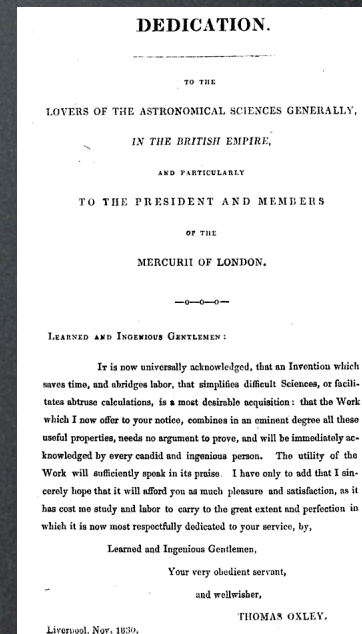
1840-1843: The Orphic Circle

- The 'Orphic Circle' also draws from the Mercurii (aka The London Astrological Society)
- A mutual-aid society for "sidereal artists" literally oppressed by law
- R. C. Smith, John Varley the Elder, Thomas Oxley, R. J. Morrison, George Graham and John Palmer (at least) -- astrologers, skryers and alchemists
- Publicly active from the mid 1820s until the late 1830s
- Varley and Morrison are both 'connective tissue' between this group and other social groups
- Links to the John Denley circle as well (Hockley, Bulwer Lytton)

The Astrologer of the Nineteenth Century, or Compendium of Astrology, Geomancy, and Occult Philosophy. By the Members of the Mercurii, the Editor of the Prophetic Almanack, and other celebrated Astrologers.—8vo. pp. 350. 7s.

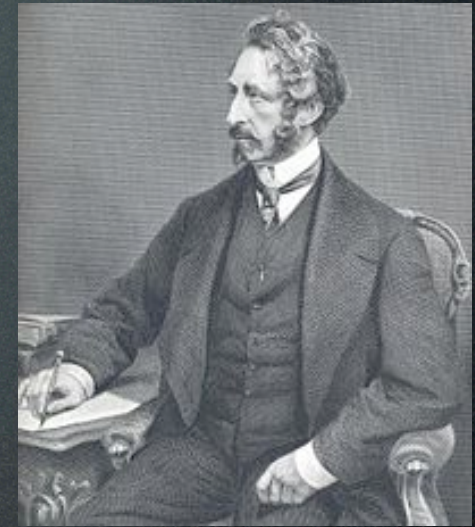
MAN has been somewhere defined to be "a superstitious animal," a definition which has at least one of the essential qualities, since it embraces a condition peculiar to man, and which is to be found among none of the lower animals. Among the various external agents which dreaming mortals have in all ages supposed to influence their fate, and foretell their fortunes, the stars have come in for an ample share; and hence astrology, or the science which treats of those movements among the stars, their conjunctions and oppositions, their sextiles and quartiles, their ascendancies and decadences, their houses and squares, &c. has in all dark ages been a favourite and a profitable knowledge. Not a hundred years have elapsed since one of the greatest mathematicians that this country ever produced was in the habit of earning his bread by the practice of astrology. It is scarcely necessary to add, that we allude to Simpson, who was expelled from his home for raising the devil, and who afterwards filled the distinguished situation of Professor of Mathematics in the Royal Military College, Woolwich.

The Monthly Critical Gazette, February 1825

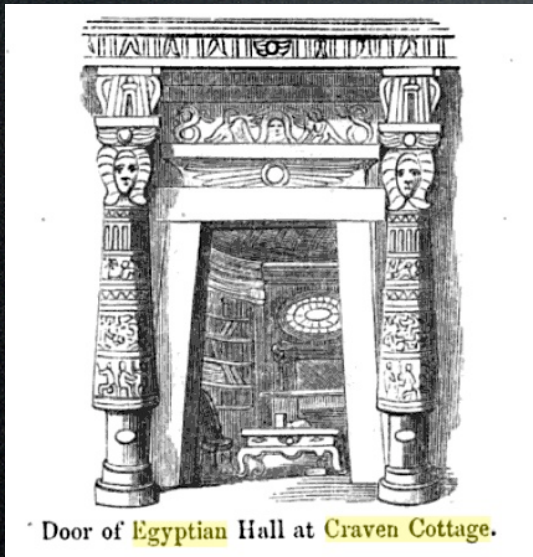


1840-1843: The Orphic Circle

- The “Orphic Circle” formed, I think, around Bulwer-Lytton -- who was living, in the early 1840s, apart from his wife, at least in part at Craven Cottage, on the banks of the Thames, outside London proper - a dark place for dark deeds.
- The interior of the cottage was done up, by a prior owner, as the inside of an “Egyptian tomb”



Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873)



Door of Egyptian Hall at Craven Cottage.

“That Bulwer was a Spiritualist there is no question. He may have done, as so many others do -- shrunk from public avowal of a belief the foundation of which is knowledge; but that he accepted Spiritualism as an infallible truth there can be no doubt. I dined with him when he was living at Craven Cottage, on the banks of the Thames, near Fulham. Some persons, of whom I had the honor to be one, were invited to meet Alexis, then a lad who had obtained renown as a clairvoyant. Lord Brougham was of the party. Dinner was delayed waiting for the “marvelous boy.” When the bell rang, Bulwer, accompanied by two or three of his friends, left the room to receive him. In the hall was the card-tray: Bulwer took from it a dozen or so of cards, and placed them in his coat pocket. After dinner Alexis went into “a trance.” Bulwer placed his hand in his pocket, and before withdrawing it, asked whose card he held; the answer, after a brief pause, was given correctly. The experiment was repeated at least a dozen times -- always correctly. Alexis was a French boy, who had been but a few days in England. The cards were all those of Englishmen. I need not say how great was our astonishment. “Clairvoyance” was a term that probably most of the guests heard there for the first time.”

Samuel Carter Hall, Retrospect of a Long Life (1883)

1840-1843: The Orphic Circle

- Charles Dickens, literary lion and practicing mesmerist, writes in his journal for May 21, 1841 that he's seen the famous 'magnetic boy,' Alexis Didier, at Chauncy Hare Townshend's house, and that he's told Countess Blessington that Didier is "marvelous"
- Dickens had no patience with Spiritualism, but he believed mesmerism was science, and that he was possessed of extraordinary mesmeric gifts
- Emma will claim Dickens as "my old friend," while she is editing The Two Worlds, and they are known to have worked together in the theatre, and to have corresponded...
- And then there's the whole Outcast Women thing....



Charles Dickens (1812-1870)



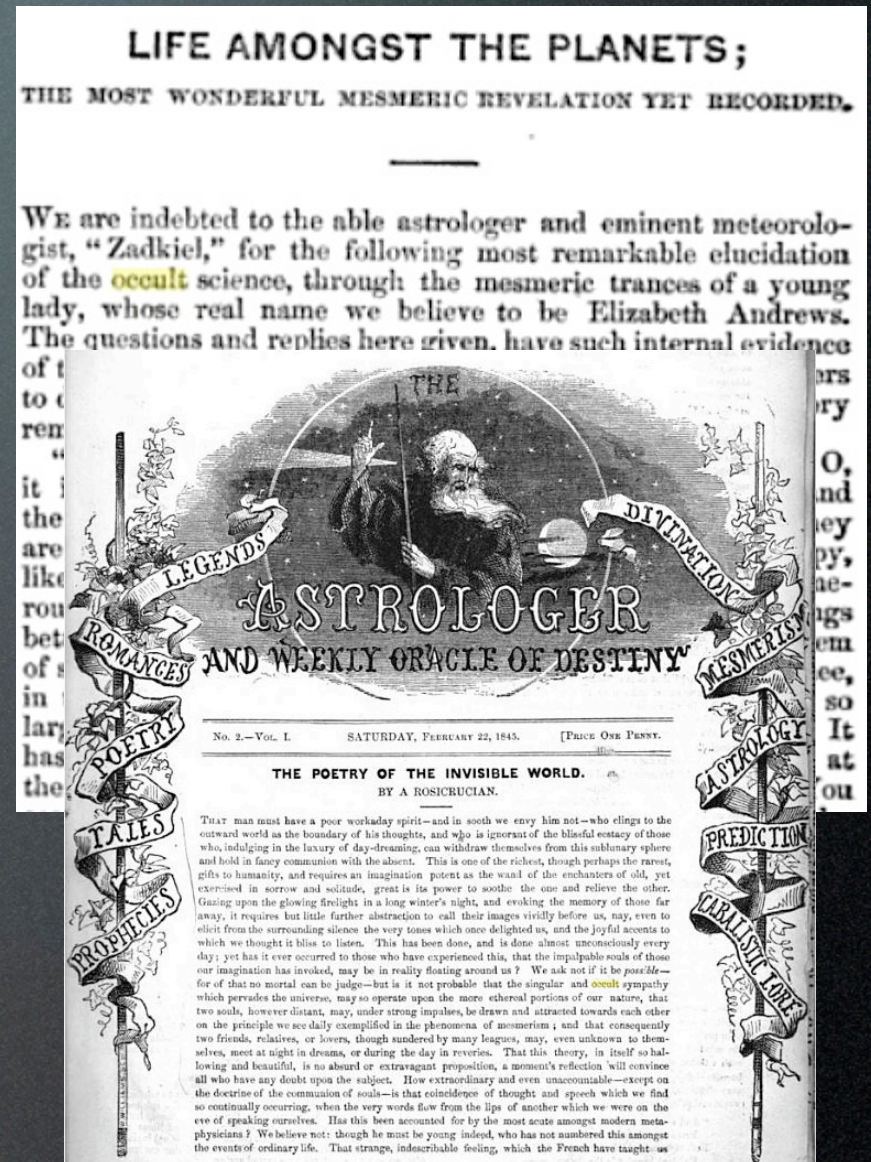
Dr. John Elliotson (1791-1868),
Dickens' mesmeric instructor,
attender of Emma's lectures

1840-1843: The Orphic Circle

- The use of young female clairvoyante subjects by mesmerists and occultists was not only common; it was theoretically sound
- As was skrying, with and without female clairvoyantes

The plaintiff stated that he had heard of the wonderful (crystal) ball as in the possession of Lady Blessington and sold among her effects. He himself bought it in 1849 from a London dealer in curiosities. Here the ball itself was produced and put in evidence. It was a rock crystal, three or four inches in diameter, with several flaws, handled by means of a ribbon, and carefully kept in a cushioned box....The plaintiff then went on to say that his son, a lad of thirteen years of age, was the first who professed to see visions in it; the scenes described to him were laid chiefly in the Arctic seas and appeared to relate to the fate of Sir John Franklin and his crew...(Plaintiff testified that) several persons of distinction had at different times desired to see the crystal, and it seems from the evidence to have been quite the rage at one time to engage Zadkiel and his crystal as an additional entertainment, at evening parties. The plaintiff ran over a long list of persons to whom, at their own request, he had exhibited the crystal. Among these figured Baron (Christian) Bunsen, several countesses, a bishop, an archdeacon and a member of Parliament....

NYT summary of the testimony of R. J. Morrison (Zadkiel) during his prosecution of Sir Edward Belcher, for libel, in 1862



Paper edited by E. L. Blanchard, friend of EBL and colleague of Miss Emma Harding

April 1842: The Covent Garden Company

On Friday, The Secretary, with other Entertainments.
THEATRE ROYAL COVENT-GARDEN.—
THIS EVENING will be performed the Opera of NORMA. Norma,
Madame Ronzi de Begnis (her first appearance on the English stage);
Pollio, Mr. W. Harrison; Plavius, Mr. Binge; Orovoso, Herr Elau-
digt; Adalgisa, Miss Rainforth; Clotilda, Miss Floyd.
After which CHARLES THE SECOND. Charles II., Mr. Cooper;
Lord Rochester, Mr. Vining; Captain Copp, Mr. Bartley; Edward,
Miss Collett; Lady Clara, Miss Cooper; Mary Copp, Mrs. W. Lacy.
To conclude with THE WOODEN LEG; in which Mr. Gilbert and
Miss Hallin will perform.
To-morrow, La Sonnambula, with La Sylphide, and the Miller
and his Men.

- April 1842 dates the earliest advertised performance I can find of Miss Floyd as a member of the company (in “The Plighted Troth”), but she may have done the summer provincial tour before the company’s return to London in August
- She is “Miss Floyd” because she is still, she thinks, marriage-able (I believe) and she is still primarily a singer/musician, not an actress per se
- She almost certainly meets at Covent Garden a man who will profoundly influence her thinking as an occultist: Hargrave Jennings

April 1842: The Covent Garden Company

- (John) Hargrave Jennings (1815-1890)
- Novelist, on-site secretary (manager) of the Covent Garden company, Freemason, friend of Dickens, historian of the occult
- Auto-didact (like Emma), and omnivorous (like Emma), and working in the same fields as Emma
- Life-long bachelor
- Majority of the illustrations for Art Magic are lifted from Jennings' The Rosicrucians without change
- Is he the mysterious betrothed mentioned in the Autobiography?

The Rival Italian Operas.

A very singular book upon the subject of the mystic Rosicrucians, is in the press. It will appear almost immediately. Nothing beyond romance, relative to this mysterious and wondrous body has ever appeared in English. The only books concerning the Hermetic Brethren are in Latin, and were written by Robert Flood, the English Rosicrucian, in the time of James the First. The title of the present work is "Curious Things of the Outside World." It is in two volumes, and is the production of Mr. Hargrave Jennings, Author of the "Indian Religions; or, Results of the Mysterious Buddhism;" a book which earned the praise of members of the Council of India, and is now being translated, by a learned Persian resident in England, for circulation in the languages of Hindostan.

Mr. Hargrave Jennings is known in literary and theatrical circles as having been the literary secretary to Mr. Lumley, of Her Majesty's Theatre, and auditor to that establishment, during the whole period of Mr. Lumley's management, namely, from 1842 to 1852, and again (after the close of the theatre, during the years 1853, 1854, and 1855), in 1856, 1857, and 1858. This period embraces the foundation of the Royal Italian Opera, the unsurpassed Jenny Lind time, the contest with the rival house, the disputes about Joanna Wagner, the return of Sontag to the Opera; and, in fine, all the important events comprised in that long and famous space. From having been in the midst of all this interesting history, there is no man in London, we should say, better fitted to give the public the memoirs of this exciting theatrical time than Mr. Hargrave Jennings. And we believe we are correct in stating, that he has collected materials, and that he designs, in due time, to present to the public a couple of volumes of Operatic and Theatrical history, setting forth the real grounds of the formation of the Italian Opera in 1846 and 1847, with much matter generally unknown and interesting. The title of the contemplated work is the "History of the Rival Operas."

The Era, November 18, 1860

This is not The Rosicrucians (1870).

1842-1845: Finding Work

- From April of 1842, until January of 1844, Emma is a member of the Covent Garden company, as “Miss Floyd”
- In January of 1844, she is advertised as a member of the company of the (ill-fated, short-lived) Princess’s Theatre in Oxford Street, as Miss Floyd (with George Augustus Sala’s mother and Paul Bedford, with whom she seems to migrate)
- But at the end of January of 1844, the performer “Miss Floyd” disappears from the records of the London theatre community entirely, and (as far as can be determined) forever.

MASANIELLO.			
<i>As performed at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane (under the management of Mr. Price), on Monday, May 3rd, 1829.</i>			
Characters.			
	Original.	1842. Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.	
MASANIELLO (<i>a Neapolitan Fisherman</i>)	Mr. BRAHAM.	... Mr. HARRISON.
ALPHONSO (<i>Son of the Viceroy of Naples</i>)	Mr. T. COOKE.	... Mr. TRAVERS.
LORENZO (<i>Alphonso's Friend</i>)	Mr. LEE.	... Mr. WIGAN.
PIETRO { (<i>Friends of Masaniello and Leaders of the Revolt</i>)	Mr. BEDFORD.	... Mr. HORNCastle.
MORENO {	Mr. YARNOLD.	... Mr. BINGE.
SELVA (<i>Officer of the Viceroy</i>)	Mr. C. JONES.	... Mr. COLLETT.
RUFFINO Mr. BLAND.
COMMISSIONER	Mr. MOORE.	... Mr. MOORE.
ELVIRA (<i>Alphonso's Bride</i>)	Miss BETTS.	Miss POOLE.
FENELLA (<i>Masaniello's Sister</i>)	Mdmo. ALEXANDRINE.	Miss GILBERT.
LADY IN WAITING	... Miss WESTON	Miss FLOYD.
1ST WOMAN	Miss SOMERVILLE.
2ND WOMAN	Miss MORGAN.
<i>Soldiers, Fishermen, Lazzaroni, Peasants, Male and Female.</i>			

PRINCESS'S THEATRE, OXFORD-STREET.
THIS EVENING will be performed the Opera entitled
THE MAID OF JUDAH.
 Cedric, Mr. Weiss; Ivanhoe, Mr. Wood; Wamba, Mr. Oxberry;
 Gurth, Mr. Granby; Sir Lucas de Beaumanoir, Mr. Fitzjames;
 Sir Brian de Bois Guilbert, Mr. Higgle; Isaac of York, Mr. M.
 Barnett—Rebecca, Mrs. Wood.
 To conclude with—THE MAGIC MIRROR.
 Characters by Mrs. H. P. Grattan, Mr. P. Bedford, Mr. Granby,
 Mr. Walton, Mr. Higgle, Mr. Oxberry, Madame Sala, Miss Floyd,
 Miss R. Isaacs, and Miss E. Honner.

Morning Post, January 30, 1844.

1845-1856: Miss Harding, Actress

- 1844: “Miss Emma Harding” at Sadler’s Wells - she has crossed an economic line, into a place from which there is no returning, a place requiring a pseudonym
- “of the Princess’s Theatre”
- Emma Harding a sympathetic character in Camilla Toulmin’s popular novel, Sweet Revenge (1844) -- coincidence?
- Her occupational trajectory thus far: Covent Garden -> Princess’ -> Sadler’s Wells
- She is staying within the broad domain of musical theatre, dragging along her heritage and early promise as a singer....

THEATRE ROYAL, SADLER'S WELLS.

Licensed by the Lord Chamberlain, under the Act 6 & 7 Victoria, cap. 68.
 LESSEE—THOMAS LONGDEN GREENWOOD, Melbourne Cottage,
 White Hart Lane, Tottenham.

Under the management of
MRS. WARNER AND MR. PHELPS,
 Of the Theatres Royal, Drury Lane, Covent Garden, and Haymarket.

Whit-Monday, May 27th, 1844,

THE PERFORMANCES WILL COMMENCE WITH SHAKESPEARE'S PLAY OF
MACBETH.

With New Scenery by MESSRS. F. FENTON, MORELLI, &c.

Duncan (King of Scotland)	Mr. WILLIAMS
Malcolm { Sons to the King	Mr. FIELD
Donalbain {	Miss THORNBURY
Macbeth {	Mr. PHELPS
Banquo { Generals of the King's Army ...	Mr. H. LACY
Macduff {	Mr. H. MARSTON
Lenox {	Mr. RAYMOND
Rosse {	Mr. ALDRIDGE
Menteith { Noblemen of Scotland	Mr. GREGORY
Angus {	Mr. JOHNSON
Caithness {	Mr. STEWART
Fleance (Son to Banquo) ... Miss FRANCIS	Physician ... Mr. FRANKS
Siward (General of the English forces) ...	Mr. GRAHAM
Seyton (an Officer attending on Macbeth) ...	Mr. KNIGHT
Lady Macbeth	Mr. WARNER
Gentlewoman (attending on Lady Macbeth) ...	Mrs. H. MARSTON
Hecate	Mr. CLEMENT WHITE
First Witch	Mr. FORMAN
Second Witch ... Mr. WILSON	Third Witch ... Mr. MORELLI
First Singing Witch	Miss LEBATT
Second Singing Witch	Miss EMMA HARDING
Other Singing Witches	Misses PRACE, GRAHAM, MORELLI, MARTIN, OLIVER, and JAMESON.

In the course of the evening
 AN ADDRESS (written by T. SERLE, Esq.) will be spoken by
 MRS. WARNER.

After which, a New Operetta, entitled
THE HUNTER'S BRIDE.

To conclude with a New Farce, written by Mr. GREENWOOD, illustrative of
A ROW IN THE BUILDINGS.

Stage Manager, Mr. PHELPS. Acting Manager, Mr. T. L. GREENWOOD.
 Scene Painters, MESSRS. F. FENTON, FINLAY, &c. Treasurer, Mr. WARNER.
 Musical Director & Composer, Mr. W. MONTGOMERY.

1845-1856: Miss Harding, Actress

The death of a noble father, and the entire disruption of family ties, sent me out into the world at this early period of my life, first as a teacher of music in a school, and subsequently as a concert player and vocalist. I beg, distinctly, once and for all, to claim, that I never went to school in my life as a student; that the common branches of English education were received only in the family circle of accomplished English ladies, and the life page of good society; and that in no science but the theory of music, and the all-absorbing page of harmony and composition, did I ever receive any instruction, or pursue any study. From the age of twelve, my public life commenced; and any one who has become acquainted with the severe studies which musical artistes are called upon to pursue in Europe, (especially when in addition I had to provide a home for myself and my mother by my teaching, etc.) will scoff at the idea that any leisure could have been afforded me for those metaphysical and scientific studies in which certain of my American friends confidently affirm "my youth was absorbed."

EHB, Preface to Six Lectures on Theology and Nature (1860)

- Another, different, version -- at this point in Emma's career (1860), the actress had to be obscured
- But her point -- that she had no formal higher education, and no time for self-study -- is true enough

1845-1856: Miss Harding, Actress

- The London theaters at mid-century were a heterotopia: a place where many of the normal social strictures were loosened or suspended, where classes mixed freely, where subjects otherwise forbidden were discussed
- Theaters were “deregulated” in 1843 (EBL a prime mover) -- which created no new theaters for 20-odd years, but significant employment opportunities, and an expanded range of materials performed
- Licensed and unlicensed, ‘legitimate’ and transpontine -- a demimonde into which very nearly everyone went (in plain clothes, or in disguise)
- Many mid-Victorian cultural standard-bearers wrote for, and on occasion acted in, the legitimate London theatre: Dickens, Bulwer Lytton, Browning
- Very lucrative for the owners and promoters, who on occasion could “rise” into polite society -- W. C. Macready, for example
- Actresses -- particularly leading ladies -- could find themselves the paramours, or even the wives, of culture heroes (Ellen Terry, GF Watts)
- But “actress” was still a pseudonym for “fallen woman”...

1845-1856: Miss Harding, Actress

- Mostly at the Adelphi - a legitimate company
- Never a leading lady; secondary female roles, and minor characters
- Often grueling performance schedule -- she is, without question, a working actress with a 40-week season, year after year
- She moves her mother to Westminster, to Tufton Street, and hires a servant
- Her reviews use the words “creditable,” “serviceable”, “interesting”....
- She is uniformly viewed as a beauty, and cast in roles that put her on display, physically



Miss Emma Harding in “The Phantom Dancers” in 1847

of playing first night.
In the scene where the flowers with Miss Emma Harding at their head, as the rose, revolt against the gardener, who comes to cut them for a bouquet, Mr. Wright, who plays the horticultural individual in question, was irresistibly comic. *A propos de bottles.* If the nursery gardens around the metropolis produced such lovely plants as those which Miss Emma Harding heads, we think that we may venture to give it as our opinion that young men would become remarkably fond of gardening. The rich ones would, of course, have well stocked conservatories, and even the poorest would manage to have his pot or two, to put out of the garret window on a sunny day.

1845-1856: Miss Harding, Actress

The Baffled Sensualist

He was a man whom no description can fully represent to the inhabitants of the western continent, for he was of a class unknown in American experiences -- a peer of the British realm; the elder brother of a wealthy, noble and far-descended house, and marked actor in that peculiar drama which is only played amongst the members of the British aristocracy.

You could not follow me, my American friends, were I to attempt for you a description of the stately earl and his peculiar sphere of action; happy for you you cannot; for the sum of all is told when I translate his life in this: His birth, position, the law of primogeniture, and other specialities, had manufactured a rich nobleman and a capacious mind into a bad man, notorious for his enormous gallantries in public life, and his equally enormous tyrannies in private life. This man had lived for self, and used time, talents, wealth and station, for no other purpose than the gratification of self and selfish passions....

In my youth I had known this man. I had often read Shakespeare to him, sang and played for him; and, despite some awe with which his singularly stately presence inspired me, I returned his regard for me with perhaps more of interest than the young and innocent generally yielded to him. My full understanding of his character was a revelation of after years. *Since I have been in America, the journals of home have brought the intelligence of the great man's transit into "the land of rest".*

EHB, "A Vision", 1872

Of some years of strange and varied experiences at the Adelphi and other London theatres I do not propose to speak in detail; as a curious indication, however, of how the web of human life destiny may be spun out without either the volition or agency of the individuals most concerned, I will come to the closing chapter of my English theatrical experiences, only premising, in justice to others, what more than one living witness could, if they would confirm, and that is that perhaps few young girls in narrow circumstances, leading a busy struggling life, were ever subject to more sore temptations from a vicious aristocracy than myself...*By one cruel and remorseless persecutor, in the person of a baffled sensualist, several of the theatrical entrepreneurs by who I was engaged or in treaty with, were induced by specially prepared golden arguments to cancel any engagements with me, so that I might be driven to the last necessity of placing myself under my millionaire enemy's kind protection....*I endured this terrible taboo for a time, but under my good and beloved mother's counsel I determined at length to baffle it."

EHB, "Autobiography", 1900

1845-1856: Miss Harding, Actress

The Baffled Sensualist?



Philip Henry, 4th Earl Stanhope (1781-1855)



Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Lord Lytton
(1803-1873)



Benjamin Disraeli,
1st Earl of Beaconsfield (1804-1881)

Charles Dickens (1812-1870),
Lord of the People's Universe

To W. H. WILLS, 25 JANUARY 1854*

MS Huntington Library.

Tavistock House | Twenty Fifth January 1854

My Dear Wills

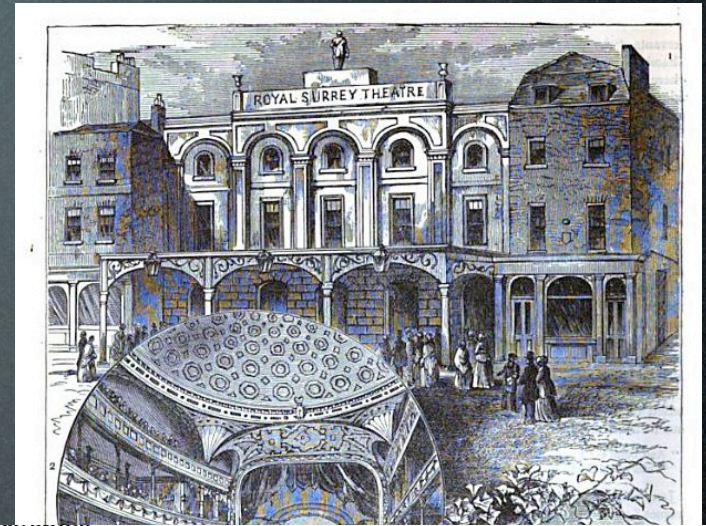
Will you look at the enclosed note from Miss **Emma Harding**, and my reply? I spoke to you about her papers at Boulogne, and thought they had been returned ages ago. Please pack them off, together with my note, to her address at once.

I want (for the story I am trying to hammer out) the Educational Board's series of questions⁵ for the examination of *teachers* in schools.⁶ Will you get it.

Ever Faithfully
CD.

1845-1856: Miss Harding, Actress

- Emma's career as a member of the Adelphi company ends in June of 1854, at the end of the season
- In September of 1854, Emma performs in a benefit staging of Dickens' Hard Times at the Strand
- From October 1854 until May of 1855, Emma is a member of the Royal Surrey Theatre company, on the "wrong" side of the river Thames
- In June of 1855, the Wallacks form a touring company to do Shakespeare in Paris, and Emma joins the company (brought in by an old colleague, George Honey)
- 1838-1855: from age 15 until age 32, a working actress



and Britannia.

ROYAL SURREY THEATRE.—
 Under the Management of Messrs. SHEPHERD and CREWICK
 "The sight of the season—the Surrey Pantomime." "A most
 gorgeous and patriotic Pantomime." For gorgeousness of Scenery,
 nothing at the Surrey has ever excelled the *Satin Boudoir of the Island*
Queen and the *Royal Palace of Beauty*.
 On Monday, and during the week, will be performed **THE**
FARMER'S DAUGHTERS. Vincent Middleton, Mr. W. Morgan;
 Farmer Greenland, Mr. Vollaire; Michael Wright, Mr. Montague
 Smythson; Nat Maybush, Mr. H. Widdicomb; George Redley, Mr.
 Phelps; Jemmy Jenkins, Mr. G. Yarnold; Dark Davy, Mr. Verner;
 Fanny Greenland, Miss Anderton; Sophia Greenland, Miss S. Lewis;
 Betty Wiggles, Miss Emily Sanders; Mabel, Mrs. Charles Melville.
 To be followed by the new Christmas Pantomime of **HARLEQUIN**
LITTLE ONE EYE, LITTLE TWO EYES, LITTLE THREE
EYES; or Beasts and Beauties. The entire Pantomime arranged
 and produced solely by Mr. Shepherd. King Unioneeyernumfustibusti-
 boo, Mr. Butler, afterwards Clown, Mr. Buck; Penbloom, afterwards
 Harlequin, Mr. H. Saunders; Little Dame Three Eyes, Mrs. Charles
 Melville, afterwards Pantaloon, Mr. Bradbury; Little Two Eyes, Miss
 Fanny Douglas, afterwards Columbine, Miss E. Gunniss; Mephis-
 tophiles, Mr. Norman, afterwards Attendant Sprite, Signor C. Longo;
 Lunario, the Young Man in the Moon, Miss Emily Sanders; Pearleye,
 the *Island Queen*, Miss **Emma Harding**; Dew Drop and Golden Hair,
 Miss Gunniss and Miss E. Gunniss.

1845-1856: Miss Harding, Actress

Robertson's first substantial acting engagement since he had struck out on his own in London was ironically due to family connections. William Robertson and J. W. Wallack in 1855 were managing the Marylebone Theatre. Robertson's brother Craven and his sister Madge were playing juveniles. Tom rejoined the family. They played a season. Then, whether it was because the touring instinct was overpowering or the Marylebone vein had been exhausted, the Robertsons were off on another fantastic gamble a visit to Paris to produce Macbeth at the Theatre des Italiens. The company was impressive, including the Wallacks, the William Robertsons, Mrs. Arthur Stirling, and George Honey, but the name of the angel was prophetic: Monsieur Ruin de Fee. The foreign tour **lasted less than three weeks**; the company received one week's salary, and the actors straggled back to London as best they could.


Maynard Savin, Thomas William Robertson: His Plays and Stagecraft (1950)

Once again, between the straits (sic) of Dover and Calais, I died to the London stage and arrived in Paris a new being. We had friends and acquaintances in the gay city, and though the Wallack Company was a total financial failure, and paid nobody, we spent **many pleasant weeks in Paris** when not busy at the theatre amongst my musical associates. I had nothing to regret, but still another new experience to learn, whilst another note of preparation rung out, in anticipation of my approaching future -- magnetism and magnetic experiment were just then the rage in Paris.... The last night of the English Wallack Company's performances had arrived; on that occasion I played in a little character piece of my own writing, and at its close, our most intimate friend in Paris, being, as was his custom, behind the scenes, introduced me to a gentleman whom I found talking with this friend and my mother, and endeavouring to convince her that the best and most attractive spot on earth for the display of my peculiar talents, etc., etc., was the B__ Theatre, of New York, of which he himself was the manager.

EHB, Autobiography (1900)

1845-1856: Miss Harding, Actress

- August 22, 1855 -- The Collins' Line steamship, the Pacific (which will figure prominently in Emma Hardinge's perfection as a medium) docks, from Liverpool, in New York City
- Amongst the passengers are a group of young unmarried women with French surnames...
- ..And a Mrs. and Miss Harding (ages 45, and 25, respectively) -- Ann is on her way to 60, and Emma is 33



Miss M Tatner	25		England	do
Mrs. Clark	50		U States	do
Mr R S Longhead	22		Ireland	do
A Lynch	25	Merchant	U States	do
J B Johnson	26	Broker	do	do
R Kavanagh	21		England	do
Mrs Harding	45		do	do
Miss Harding	25		do	do
Mr J Foster	31	Mechanic	U States	do
W Offender	19		England	do
A J Stewart	48	Merchant	U States	do
Mr A J Stewart	40		do	do
Mastha Smith	37	Servant	do	do
Julius Schuman	46		do	do