

Back From Jerusalem:

The Life and Times of
Emma Hardinge Britten,
Spiritualist Propagandist

Marc Demarest
The Emma Hardinge Britten Archive

Version 2.1
January 2012

Module 5

1856-1865
Opening America

1856-1865: Opening America

- Emma's first role at the Broadway Theatre is as a leading lady -- something she never achieved on the English stage
 - Mrs. Bracegirdle, in The Tragedy Queen, which opened in September of 1855 (Emma claims, in 1858, that she wrote this piece)
- Her last recorded role, as Azurine in King Charming, was in June of 1856
- In between, at least one play Emma claims to have written (and perhaps two, if we count The Tragedy Queen), but none that ran well or long.
- EHB records, and the published primary materials would agree, that there was some kind of dispute between her and the theatre management
- By January of 1856, she wasn't working regularly, she was being paid...something... and she had time on her hands...so she began exploring Spiritualism

1856-1865: Opening America

- “The ship ‘Pacific’ was due on the memorable day when I became developed as a medium, to wit, on Tuesday, February 19, 1856.” (Autobiography)
- Emma claimed to have received a communication, on this day, from a crew member of the Pacific, which had sunk (and which indeed never made port in NY)
- This could date Emma’s “perfection” as a medium accurately, but the ship was due some two weeks prior to this date, and the NY papers were carrying stories of the Pacific’s likely loss a week before this date
- Imponderable....

proper freight.
N.B.—Parcels charged 5s. and upwards, according to size.

UNITED STATES MAIL STEAMERS
BETWEEN
LIVERPOOL AND NEW YORK.
The Steam-ships comprising this Line are the
ATLANTIC.....Captain WEST.
PACIFIC.....Captain ELDRIDGE.
BALTIC.....Captain COMSTOCK.
Those Vessels are appointed to sail as follows:—

| FROM LIVERPOOL. | | 1856. |
|--------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| BALTIC..... | Wednesday, | 20th Feb. |
| PACIFIC..... | Wednesday, | 5th March. |
| ATLANTIC..... | Wednesday, | 19th March. |
| BALTIC..... | Wednesday, | 2nd April. |
| And every alternate Wednesday. | | |
| FROM NEW YORK. | | 1856. |
| PACIFIC..... | Saturday, | 10th Feb. |
| ATLANTIC..... | Saturday, | 1st March. |
| BALTIC..... | Saturday, | 15th March. |
| And every alternate Saturday. | | |

Freight on goods payable in New York is charged at the rate of 6s. per ton.

The Pacific's officers and crew numbered 141, all told.
Their names are as follow:—

Asa Eldridge, captain
Hugh Lyre, 1st mate
Charles P. Lears, 2nd ditto
John Webster, 3rd ditto
Edgar C. Dean, 4th ditto
J. W. Terry, surgeon
John C. Faulkner, purser
William Bowles, carpenter
Peter Leonard, boatswain
J. Wilson, boatswain's mate
S. W. Fairchild, steward
Thomas M'Guire, 2nd steward
E. I. Smollette, saloon cook
Constan Chablotte, 2nd cook
Louis Ogelby, 3rd cook
Charles Peckell, 4th cook
John Brown, 5th cook
Jacob Kebb, pastry cook
John Mills, 2nd cook
John Oakly, ship's cook
E. J. Fletcher, 2nd cook
John Dolan, porter
Philip C. Smith, 2nd porter
James Hayden, 2nd porter
James Dolan, 3rd porter
P. C. Smith, storekeeper
John Brown, messman
John Mitchell, ditto

SEAMEN—continued.

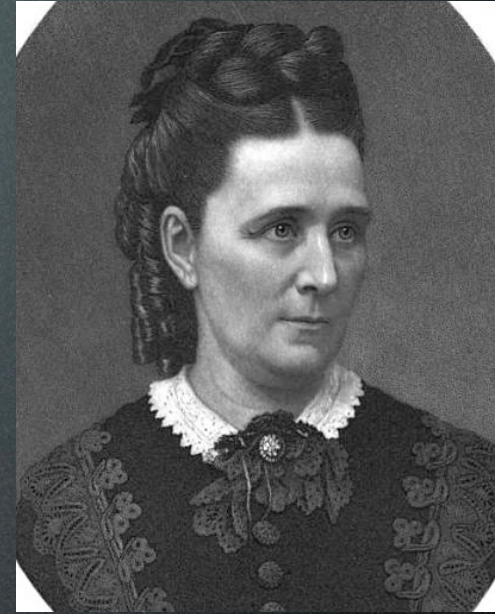
John Molony
Charles Powell
George Marshall
John Washington
James Richards
Michael M'Guen
John Kelly
Joseph Darber
ORDINARY.
Lucius Flannery
Henry Bentour
William Edgonton
Cornelius Kennedy, boy
ENGINEERS.
Samuel Mathews
Wm. C. Russell, 1st assistant
Thomas Jeffries, 1st ditto
Martin Parsons, 2nd ditto
Samuel Havens, 2nd ditto
Stephen Jaffries, 3rd ditto
Dennis Sherman, 3rd ditto
OILERS.
John Ball
Ph. Cornelius
Abm. Warm
FIREMEN.
Owen M'Dermott

1856-1865: Opening America

- From June of 1856 until July of 1857, when Emma gave her first public trance lecture at Troy (NY), the chronology is troubled
 - She visited mediums in the company of Augustus Fenno, a fellow actor, and possibly others
 - The mediums she visited are still unclear -- Conklin, Kellogg, Hoyt, Mansfield are all named in various biographical snippets
 - 1858: "I lived in the house with two mediums"
 - She claims to have experienced revulsion at hearing, in one medium's circle, a caustic critique of the Bible-as-literal-history (mark this!)
 - She claims to be disturbed by the rapping and alphabetic communications she experienced in these circles -- possibly, an odd claim for a former clairvoyante subject of an occult group to make
 - Clairvoyants generally claimed to have no memory of events while under-the-influence; Emma wavered on this point
- It was at this time (late 1856, I believe) that Emma fell in with, and under the influence of, Elizabeth J. French, a woman who would change Emma's life, irrevocably

1856-1865: Opening America

- A pioneer in both Spiritualism, and galvanic medicine
- Already, at this time, the survivor of a significant public fraudulent-medium case
- Living, openly, with her lover (and her children from her abandoned marriage), practicing as a clairvoyant physician, and conducting test seances that included direct voice and the production of drawings -- very much ahead of the mainstream of the movement
- Connected to, but not precisely accepted by, the prosperous and proper NY Spiritualist community
- By 1860, of trans-Atlantic fame....thanks to Benjamin Coleman, whom we shall meet again shortly



Elizabeth J. French (1821-1900), circa 1873

the
ev-
the,
and
by
&
ga-
an-
an-
m
a

No letter will be answered unless it contains money or P. O. stamp.

Mrs. E. J. FRENCH,
Clairvoyant and Healing Physician.

Office 780 Broadway, second floor, front room.—
The morbid conditions of the human organism de-
livered and prescribed for with unparalleled suc-
cess.

Fees.—For examination and prescription \$3,
when the patient is present, if absent \$10. All
subsequent examinations \$2. Terms strictly in ad-
vance. In order to insure prompt attention some
of the leading symptoms must be given when send-
ing a lock of hair.

Hours from 10 to 1 and from 2 to 4, except Sat-
urdays and Sundays.

1856-1865: Opening America

- By March of 1858, EHB and E.J.F. are, in essence, in business together
- Emma has passed through
 - an editorship at the Christian Spiritualist (organ of the SDSK)
 - a (short 10-month) period as a test medium for the Society for Diffusion of Spiritualist Knowledge
 - an attempt to found a music school, and earn by publishing music
 - a period as the chorale director for the NY Spiritualists
- And will be on her way to becoming perhaps the most well-known trance medium in the US (but see Cora Hatch...)

"The Footsteps of Angels" may already have been published in England by "E. Reinhold"

Reinhold did set other Longfellow pieces to music.

THE LECTURE SEASON.

CHURCH FOR SPIRITUALISTS, PROGRESS HALL, northwest corner of Twenty ninth street and Eighth avenue, second floor.—Miss **HARDING** will deliver a lecture on Spiritualism at the Hall this evening. Mrs. **E. J. French** will be in attendance as usual. A portion of Bodworth's choir have kindly tendered their aid for the occasion, and it is expected there will also be present a medium, who improvises and sings in the entranced state. In addition, we say to the seer, and the earnest seeker after the truths of Divine revelation, that in witnessing such manifestations will be found a broad field for the exercise of the nicest judgment. The hour, 7½ o'clock—admission but 10 cents—Thursday evening, March 4. N. B.—Progress Hall will be open for the usual services on Sundays, at respectively 3 and 7½ P. M.; Thursday evenings for lectures by Mrs. E. J. French.

SELECT CATALOGUE OF NEW MUSIC

JUST ISSUED FROM THE PRESS, BY

HORACE WATERS

No. 333 Broadway, New York.

Musical Instruments, of all kinds; the best Italian Strings; all kinds of Instruction Books, Wholesale and Retail. MUSIC sent by Mail, postage free, on receipt of Money; all risks taken on Registered Letters. Where One Dollar's worth is ordered, one or two pieces will be presented.

Dealers, Teachers and Schools supplied with all Music published in this country, as low as any other establishment in the United States. On "The Waters Large and Popular Catalogue," he will make an extra discount of ten per cent.

We'll all Meet again in the Morning.

Ballad. Words by H. Clay Frouse. Music by Thomas Baker. Price 25c plate; vignette 40c.

Happy Halloo; or, Dream on Te-Night.

Song and Chorus, by Marshall S. Pike, Esq., author of "Home Again," and "Indian Warrior's Grave."—Arranged for the Piano, by Thomas S. Combs, a originally sung by J. Murphy, of Christy's Minstrels. Price 35 cents.

The Blind Orphan Boy.

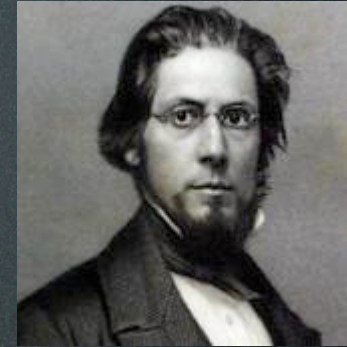
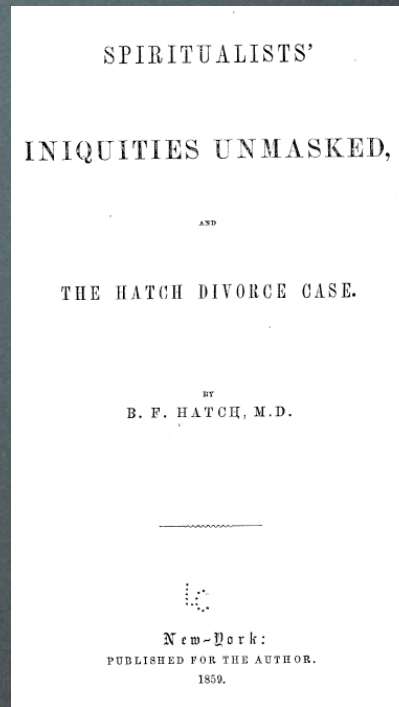
Ballad, by T. Wood. Price 25 cents.

The Footsteps of Angels.

Recitative and Air. Words by Prof. Longfellow.—Music by Emma Hardinge. Price 25 cents.

1856-1865: Opening America

- Emma speaks of 1855-1860 in the US as a difficult time for her and her mother - she claims her introduction to trance speaking was the result of an advertisement in which she offered her services as a music teacher in a private home, in desperation -- which she did
- But there may have been another, different, difficulty for her: one that drove her to trance mediumship, and taught her a significant lesson about.... trace-ability
- And made her, publicly, a life-long opponent of “free love”



“We have seen a medium who was employed, during the day, in giving communications to persons from the other world, on retiring with her widowed mother, use language and expressions which would well befit the Five Points. We have seen spirits giving communications through this medium to a gentleman stating it was his departed wife, desiring that he should marry this medium.”

John F. Whitney, one of the driving forces behind the SDSK, writing in 1856, and quoted in B. F. Hatch's Spiritualists' Iniquities Unmasked (1859)

S. Young? or E. Harding?

1856-1865: Opening America

- By early 1858, she has embraced her calling as a medium and is making a name for herself -- in a more-or-less friendly rivalry with Cora Hatch -- on the Eastern seaboard between Boston and Baltimore
- She is publishing the stories that will become The Wildfire Club (1860), serially, in The Spiritual Age, as "Ezra" (probably written in 1853/4, and offered to Dickens)
- In July of 1858, A. B. Child publishes a biographical sketch of her in The Banner of Light
- By the end of 1858, she is covering the country east of the Mississippi, booked months in advance, and getting coverage in European spiritualist papers
- "Miss H. lived in the house with two Spiritualists; but to this time had never heard or known anything of Spiritualism, and did not know what it meant. When she learned that it implied communication with the dead she was so horrified that she half resolved to leave the house."
- "I find, upon reviewing the circumstances of my early history, that I was a medium from a child. I was a most incorrigible sleep-walker, and I do not question that what were deemed the brain-sick fantasies of a delicate child, with a very morbid, unhappy temperament, were, in reality, spirit manifestations, and the fancied voices, forms and imaginings, with which my childhood were marked, were the realities, not the visions, of my surroundings."

1856-1865: Opening America

- The Home for Outcast Women: a project on which Emma worked, in Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Portland, Maine, from late 1858 or early 1859, until at least the middle of 1862
- The premise of this philanthropy was very much like that of Burdett-Coutts' and Dickens' Urania Cottage (1846-1857): a transitional home for fallen women, at which they would learn new economic skills and be re-introduced into productive society
- Emma understood herself as just-barely-escaped-being-fallen
- She circularized organizations for support, submitted petitions to the NY state legislature, and (in Boston at least), raised significant amounts of money to purchase a suitable property for the institution

Caroline Wells Healy Dall
(1822-1912), recording
secretary for Emma's
outcast women mission
in Boston



Soliciting Committee:

Geo. Higginson Esq. Chairman.
Mrs Caroline W. Dall. Secretary.

Boston.

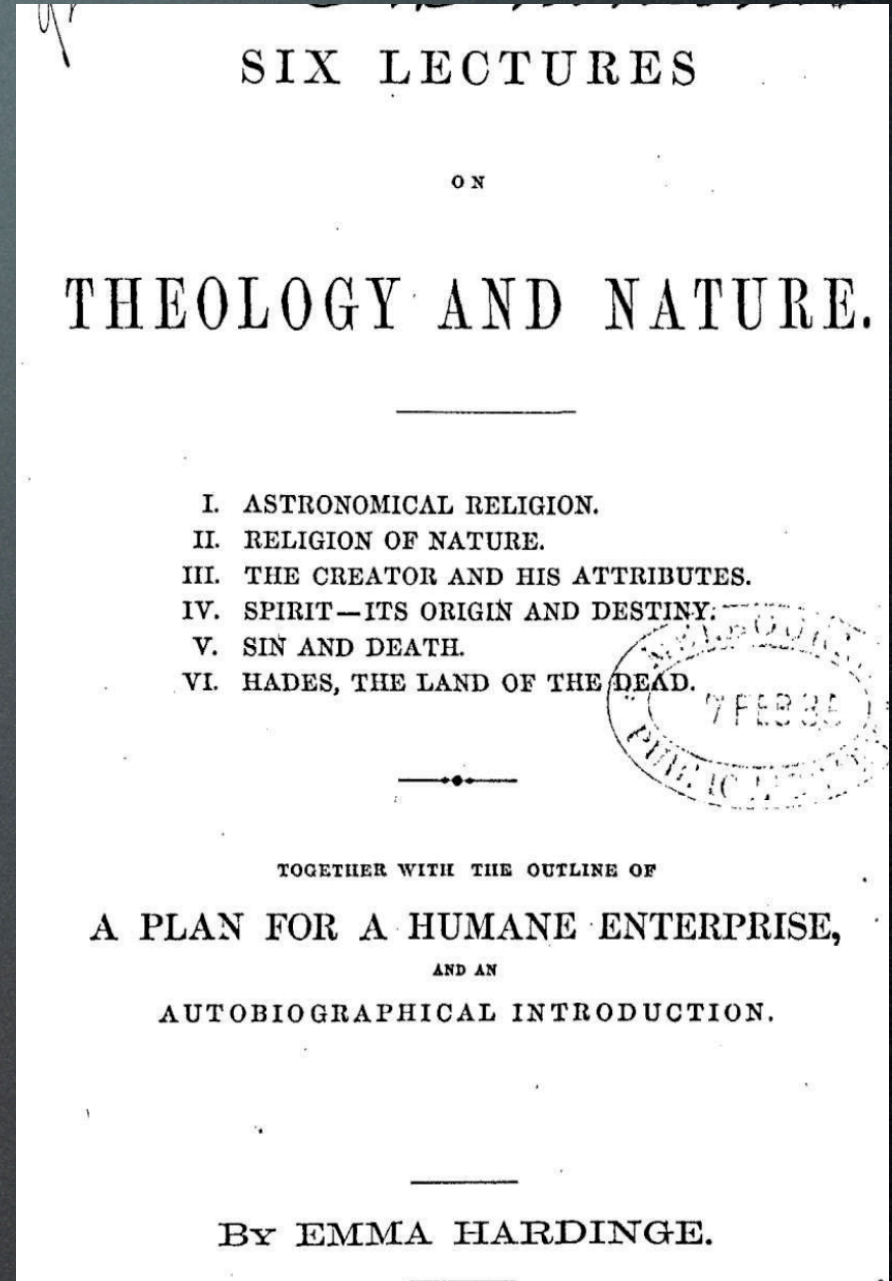
| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Mrs James T. Clarke</i> | <i>245 Washington St.</i> |
| <i>Miss Sarah A. Clarke</i> | <i>11 Baynton Pl.</i> |
| <i>Mrs Jas T. Fields</i> | <i>37 Charles St.</i> |
| <i>Mrs Chs T. Jackson</i> | <i>32 Somerset St.</i> |
| <i>Mrs Abner Kingman</i> | <i>11 Burroughs Pl.</i> |
| <i>Mrs E. B. Lee</i> | <i>2 Temple Pl.</i> |
| <i>Mrs Josiah Quincy jr.</i> | <i>4 Park St.</i> |
| <i>Mrs Wm. B. Rogers</i> | <i>1 Temple Pl.</i> |
| <i>Miss Hannah Robie</i> | <i>98 Chestnut St.</i> |
| <i>Mrs C. Vincent</i> | <i>20 Beaufield St.</i> |
| <i>Miss Boston Channing</i> | <i>Bowdoin St.</i> |

The Boston solicitation committee for the Home for Outcast Women reads like a who's-who of Boston high-culture philanthropy.

Ultimately, more than \$3000 was returned to Emma by her Boston committee, when the plan was ultimately folded.

1856-1865: Opening America

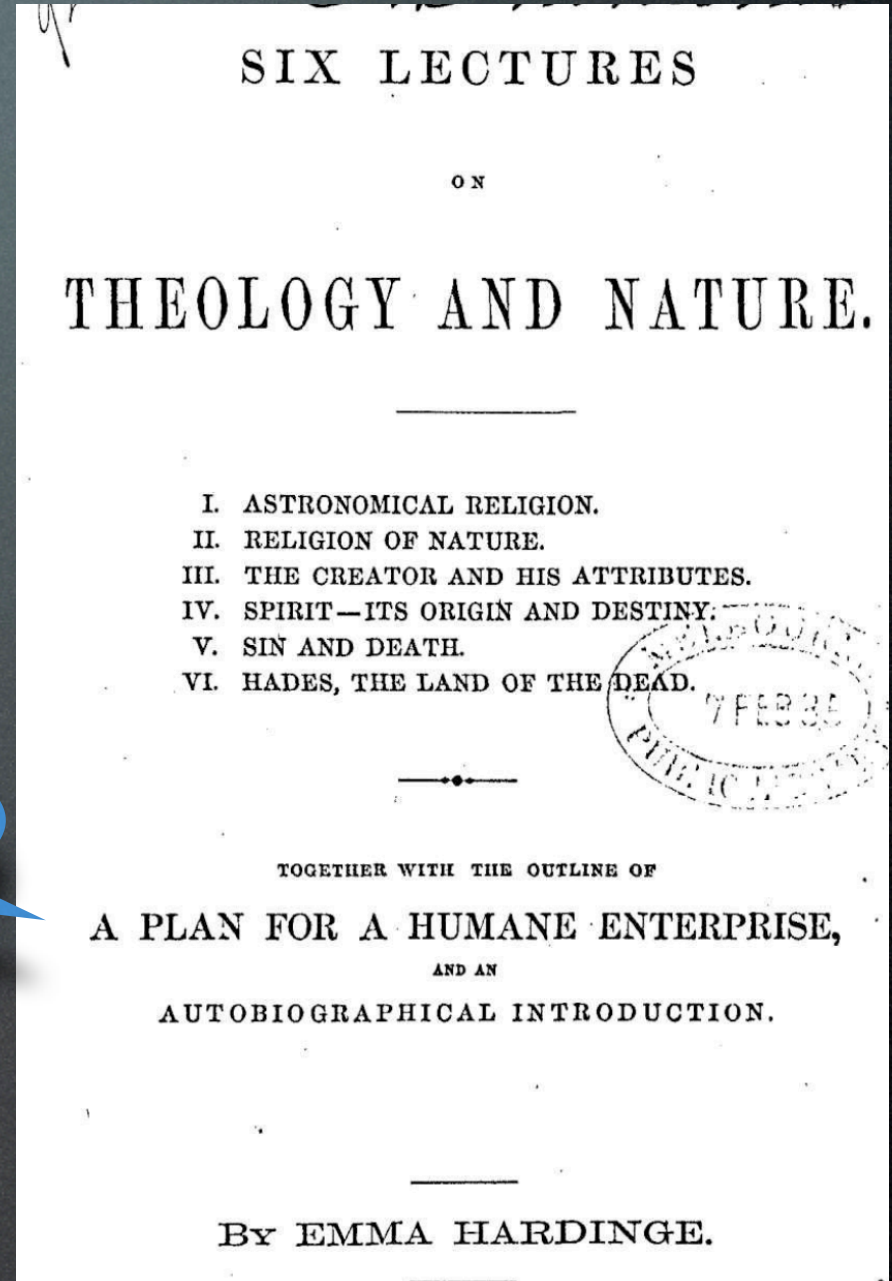
- The Chicago lectures of 1860 mark the first organized appearance of Emma's repertoire: the particular collection of themes that mark her body of work
- Her style as a trance lecturer is still much the same as it was at the outset, in 1857: an inspired address (either on a pre-arranged topic, or a topic suggested by a committee or the audience), followed by questions-and-answers, either pre-arranged or spontaneous
- Mesmerism, psychology, Freemasonry, astrology, comparative religion



1856-1865: Opening America

- The Chicago lectures of 1860 mark the first organized appearance of Emma's repertoire: the particular collection of themes that mark her body of work
- Her style as a trance lecturer is still much the same as it was at the outset, in 1857: an inspired address (either on a pre-arranged topic, or a topic suggested by a committee or the audience) on a question either pre-arranged or spontaneous
- Mesmerism, psychology, Freemasonry, astrology, comparative religion

Still hedging...



1856-1865: Opening America

- By 1860, Emma has been taken to school by someone with a decent, broad knowledge of comparative religion, who is also familiar with Freemasonry, and the broad currents of what will soon become the new science of anthropology -- possibly the freethinker Gilbert Vale
- The Six Lectures are Art Magic, in germinal state, mixed with Spiritualist mainstays
- In 1860, she is focusing on three things:
 - the knowledge of God
 - the immortality of the Soul
 - “a Perfect Standard of Life Practice”

“Whether the religions have been good or bad, is not the question now. The great question is, by what means has the name of religion usurped the sovereignty of the whole earth?”



“If ye know God, ye have your model. If ye comprehend our God, ye at once comprehend his laws, his purposes, and with them your duties.”

1856-1865: Opening America

- Emma's broadening exposure in the eastern US is bringing her in contact with Spiritualist groups with far different intellectual pedigrees than that of the NY Spiritualists (from whom she imbibed a good deal, on the mesmerism front)
- In Boston, she is involved with a group of intellectually-engaged people with deep political commitment to social improvement, and a tradition that was European, internationalist, and transcendentalist
- In Philadelphia, St. Louis and Ohio, she is being exposed to novel medical theories involving homeopathic models of cure, light therapy, Jewish mysticism and galvanic medicine...and the occult teachings behind them (not to mention perpetual motion machinery)
- In the deep South, and particularly in New Orleans, she is a witness to other kinds of spiritualism -- the African, filtered through the Caribbean and through slavery
- It would be difficult to prove her range of exposure was unique at the time, but it was certainly rarely rivaled

1856-1865: Opening America

- Emma's reputation, scope of operations and repertoire continue to expand in 1861 and 1862
 - Outcast women project taken up in NYC
 - She is lecturing, in "normal" state, on political topics as well as in trance on ancient faiths and Rosicrucianism
 - She is developing a reputation, at second-hand, in England, through the spiritualist press and the mainstream press
 - She is becoming interested in spirit photography
- She is spending more time, after 1860, in Philadelphia than in any other location; she buys a house in Delanco, NJ, names it "Rose Cross", and installs Ann Sophia there
 - Did she meet Seth Pancoast here, now?
- In April of 1863, she publicly announces her intention to go to California
- Leaves Philadelphia in October of 1863; is lecturing at Platt's Hall in San Francisco by early November



EHB, circa 1863, spirit photograph



ASF, circa 1863, spirit photograph

1856-1865: Opening America

- In California, Emma falls in with the literati set around The Golden Era: Bret Harte, Adah Isaacs Menken and others
- She travels, often **unaccompanied**, into the wilder of the California and Nevada mining towns, and is received with enthusiasm (SL Clemens records her reception in Nevada in a letter home to his family)
- She exhibits (among other things) detailed familiarity with the first three degrees of orthodox Masonry, the history of witchcraft, and practical magic
- She is lecturing weekly out of Platt's Hall and Dashaway Hall



Enlargement of the Golden Era.

THE GOLDEN ERA is now enlarged by the addition of eight columns to its pages,—and presents fifty-six columns, containing the greatest possible variety of Valuable and Entertaining, Original and Selected Matter, all combining to render THE GOLDEN ERA a Literary and Family Journal of surpassing interest and attraction—a Welcome Guest in Cottage and Cabin; the favorite at the fireside in City and Country; the most useful, agreeable and altogether desirable publication for California readers and their kindred and friends in the Atlantic States, Europe and elsewhere. Every Household in the Mountains and Valleys, the Cities, Towns and Mining Camps of California and throughout the Pacific States and Territories, should receive and welcome THE GOLDEN ERA as a regular weekly visitor.

Among the Contributors to THE GOLDEN ERA are all the prominent writers of Literary Repute in California and on the Pacific Coast, also correspondents and contributors of distinguished talent in the Atlantic States and Europe; including "Orpheus C. Kerr," Fitz Hugh Ludlow, "Inigo," Frank Bret Harte, "Mark Twain," Dan De Quille, Florence Fane, Miss Emma Hardinge, Adah Isaacs Menken, Sarah E. Carmichael, Annie E. Fitzgerald, "Orcasia Owen," Alice Mason, William Simpson, Charles F. Stoddart, "Ina," H. C. Williston, Richard Cranshaw, "Fairfax," Bonneval, Mary Kyle Dallas, Margaret Hosmer, and many other accomplished writers of Fiction, Romances, Novels and Stories, Poetry, Essays, Sketches, etc., etc., comprising an array of Talent and Genius unapproached by any Literary Journal in California, the Atlantic States or Europe.

DREAMS OF BEAUTY.

| | |
|---|---------|
| VISIONS of Beauty, of Light, and of Love, | \$4 00 |
| Born in the soul of a Dream, | \$2 00 |
| Lost, like the phantom-bird under the dove, | \$1 00 |
| When she flies over a stream— | ifornia |
| | ah and |
| | Europe, |

Come ye through portals where angel wings droop,
Moved by the heaven of sleep?
Or, are ye mockeries, crazing a soul,
Doomed with its waking to weep?

I could believe ye were shadows of earth,
Echoes of hopes that are vain,
But for the music ye bring to my heart,
Waking its sunshine again.

And ye are fleeting. All vainly I strive
Beauties like thine to portray;
Forth from my pencil the bright picture starts,
And—ye have faded away.

Adah Isaacs Menken (1835-1868), written for EHB in California in 1864

1856-1865: Opening America

- In September of 1864, Emma is invited to tour the state, on behalf of the Republican Party, advocating for Lincoln, and she accepts
- Her speech “The Coming Man,” is well received everywhere; she delivers it more than 100 times across the state
- In the end, she extends her stay in California until the end of 1864, largely in order to “deliver California for Lincoln,” which local politicians give her significant credit for doing
- She is, by the end of 1864, becoming famous in US secular culture...and she likes it.



Frances Fuller Victor
(1826-1902), historian,
essayist, door-to-door
saleswoman

Now, if instead of an odd fancy about Odd-Fellowship, I have been thinking about the "Coming Man," the whole reverie would have been less odd -- indeed would have been in some danger of being even. I am glad Emma Hardinge regards my venerable friend Abraham Lincoln as the Coming Man; it shows good taste as well as a clear insight into the National sympathies....The next time there is a great mass meeting where front seats are reserved for the ladies, I am going. If Miss Hardinge stumps the state I shall offer myself as aid-de-camp. One thing will then be certain, I shall have an opportunity to witness the coming of a great many men to hear her address. Long live Abraham Lincoln! As long live Emma Hardinge!

Frances Fuller Victor (Florence Fane), in The Golden Era for October 2, 1864

1856-1865: Opening America

- In January of 1865, Emma is back in New York, and her lecture titles are decidedly more secular -- “Politics versus Principles”, “Politics in the Pulpit”, “The Reign of Terror”, “The Day of Reconstruction”
- Her eulogy on Lincoln is widely attended and widely circulated
- In July, she issues a “Valedictory -- Farewell to Her American Friends” through the Banner of Light
- On August 5, 1865, Emma and Ann Sophia depart for London on the steamer “City of London” -- but why did she leave the US?

New York Herald, August 7, 1865:
“looking after a legacy”

Personal Intelligence.

Secretary Harlan and family, Washington; Mrs. Commodore Levy, John J. Cisco, Daniel Drew and family, Wm. H. Livingston and family, Mayor Gunther and family, New York; E. S. Sanford and family, Philadelphia; Wm. G. Fargo and family, Buffalo; H. Bartlett and family, Boston, are among the guests of the Union Hotel, Saratoga.

Among the passengers by the steamer City of London, which left for Europe on Saturday of last week, were Miss Emma Hardinge and her mother, the latter of whom goes to England for the purpose of looking after a legacy which has been left her by a relative. Miss Hardinge has been very favorably known in this country and California for the past ten years, having devoted her life and best energies for the benefit of different benevolent and charitable enterprises, chief among which was the establishment of reformatories for fallen women, and latterly she has become prominent as a lecturer and writer upon political subjects. She travelled through California during the last political campaign, ardently espousing the Union cause, and doing much toward the reelection of President Lincoln. She also undoubtedly set the ball in motion on the far Pacific coast which rolled up that \$100,000 for the Sanitary Commission, and her friends claim for her the credit of having by her personal exertions added much to that useful fund. She originated the famous bag of flour sale, which was so remarkably successful in aiding the sick and wounded of the Union army in the hospital and on the field. She is a writer and speaker, who has done and is calculated to do good in the world. For many years she has been devoted to the promulgation of the spiritual doctrine, in which she is undoubtedly a firm believer, and she has put all her strength, mind and soul into what she has said and written upon the subject. In fact, she always does that, whatever her theme; and her theme has generally a worthy object in view. Her reformatory enterprise will yet prove a success. The large fund raised by her in different cities of the Union by her lectures and the sale of her works is in the hands of trustees,



ended beneficent
pected that Miss
and personally
labor—the salva-
and unfortunate
to this country
already attained
ly after her ap-
ave up that pro-
her employers,
the advocate of
omen, whom she
ll our cities, also
should the good
ritual Society of
successful in what