

Back From Jerusalem:

The Life and Times of
Emma Hardinge Britten,
Spiritualist Propagandist

Marc Demarest
The Emma Hardinge Britten Archive

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Module 9

1877-1881

Itinerant Propagandist

1877-1881: Itinerant Propagandist

- In general, Emma is doing her standard missionary work in Australia and New Zealand
- But her work is becoming tinged with politics, and with a strong “anti-churchianity” (as Peebles had it) flavor
- And the Hatch scandal has followed her to Australia, professionally and personally
- The papers -- and many of her comrades, it appears -- are unkind
- And she is followed around by debunkers, from city to city, throughout her sojourn down under

Sydney Morning Herald, February 28, 1878

LECTURES.

TEMPERANCE HALL,
PITT-STREET.

Mrs. **EMMA HARDINGE-BRITTEN**
will speak in the above place, on **FRIDAY EVENING**
next, 1st March.

On this occasion, Mrs. **BRITTEN** will deliver brief
INSPIRATIONAL ADDRESSES on six (6) **SUBJECTS**
CHOSEN BY THE AUDIENCE.
The chair will be taken at 8 o'clock.
Front seats, 2s; second ditto, 1s. Doors open at 7.15

LECTURES.

MADAME LOTTIE WILMOT, Town-hall, New-
town, **THIS (Friday) EVENING**, April 5, under
the patronage and presence of the Mayor and Aldermen.
Admission, 2s and 1s.

THEATRE ROYAL — SUNDAY EVENING
LECTURE, “Science v. Spiritism,” by Professor
HAMILTON. Entire fraud of Spiritism in Sydney exposed.
Complete portraits of Walker, Lady Mediums, Madame
Von Halle, and Mrs. **Britten** given; their impostures ex-
plained, tricks revealed upon scientific principles. 1s, 6d, 3d.

TEMPERANCE Hall.—Monday next, Readings from
Dickens, Mark Twain, The Wasp, &c. 2s, 1s 6d, 1s.

IV P’s “Parliament, Pulpit, Press, and Platform.”

Sydney Morning Herald, April 5, 1878

MORE SPIRITUALISTIC HUMBUG.

The spiritualists of Sydney have another star lecturer on hand. This time a lady—Mrs. Hardinge-Britten, who professes, like Walker, to give her discourses by the aid of spirits, but who puts Walker completely in the shade; and, unlike that remarkable individual, does not lecture with her eyes shut. Still she claims to be inspired by spirits. Mrs. **Britten** is not unknown to fame. Some of her writings are to be seen in the Sydney School of Arts. She is a woman whose classic brow has been furrowed by some fifty or sixty winters, and she seems good for another half a century at least, to judge by her present appearance, which is remarkably masculine and commanding. I should imagine her to be able to eclipse the veritable Mrs. Candler herself at curtain lecturing, with or without the aid of spirits, ardent or otherwise. Mrs. **Britten** stands about 5 feet 10 in her Hessians, and is the reverse of slender. Her manner in delivering her exhortations is intensely tragic, and frequently bombastic. She would, I should judge, play “Lady Macbeth” in a style that would do credit to a Siddons or a Ristori, for she is unquestionably a fine actress. I happened to be present at one of her discourses—“inspirational lectures,” she calls them—and was partly amused, partly pained at the way in which she played upon the feelings of the weaker portion of her audience. It was a death-bed scene she

Brisbane Courier, March 9, 1878

1877-1881: Itinerant Propagandist

- For the majority of 1878, Emma is lecturing either in Sydney or in Melbourne, with brief stops in between, alternating with Thomas Walker, another notable Spiritualist propagandist and controversy magnet (who's not happy she's there)
- She is also conducting (advertised) private lessons in practical occultism
- And she is publishing a raft of material, including The Faiths, Facts & Frauds of Religious History, the third major work in her philosophical trajectory
- But she's tilled the ground perhaps too well by December of 1878...nevertheless, she and William remain in Australia until April of 1879

VICTORIA THEATRE,
Pitt-street.
On **TUESDAY EVENING**, the 24th instant,
Prior to his departure for Melbourne,
Mr. THOMAS WALKER,
By Special Request
has consented either to deliver (in the Trance State) a **SUPPLEMENTARY LECTURE**, or, at the option of the audience, to **ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS** relating to **SPIRITUALISM** that may be put by a committee of twelve then to be chosen.
Subject (if a lecture be required) :
SPIRITUALIST SYMPATHY WITH THE UNCONVINCED.
The Honorable J. BOWIE WILSON will preside.
Dress Circle, 3s; Stalls and Upper Circle, 2s; Pit, 1s.
Doors open at 7.30. Chair taken at 8.

N.B.—REUNION OF LIBERALS AND CONVERSAZIONE,
COMPLIMENTARY TO MR. WALKER,
MASONIC HALL, WEDNESDAY, 25th instant, 8 p.m.
See also "Amusements."
Mrs. HARDINGE-BRITTEN will be present and deliver a short address.
Tickets can be obtained of Messrs. Turner and Henderson, 16, Hunter-st.; Nicholson and Ascherberg, 317, George-st.; Kirby, 230, Pitt-st.; Summerfield, 283, Pitt-st.; Ward, 337, Pitt-st.; Skinner, 65, Market-st.; Eames, 14, Oxford-st.; and Thomas, 30, Oxford-st. Single, 2s 6d; lady and gentleman's, 4s.

Sydney Morning Herald, September 23, 1878

Price One Penny.
LATEST EUROPEAN TELEGRAMS
Latest Interecolonial Telegrams
Provincial Telegrams.
See THE ECHO, Afternoon Newspaper.
TRUTH; or how **Mrs. HARDINGE BRITTEN**
"Opened her Mouth and put her Foot in it," at the Opera House, Melbourne. By ECHO, 6d. To be had of COLE, MADDOCK, REYNOLDS, READING, and SANDON.
NEW MUSIC ADVANCE AUSTRALIAN

Sydney Morning Herald, December 3, 1878

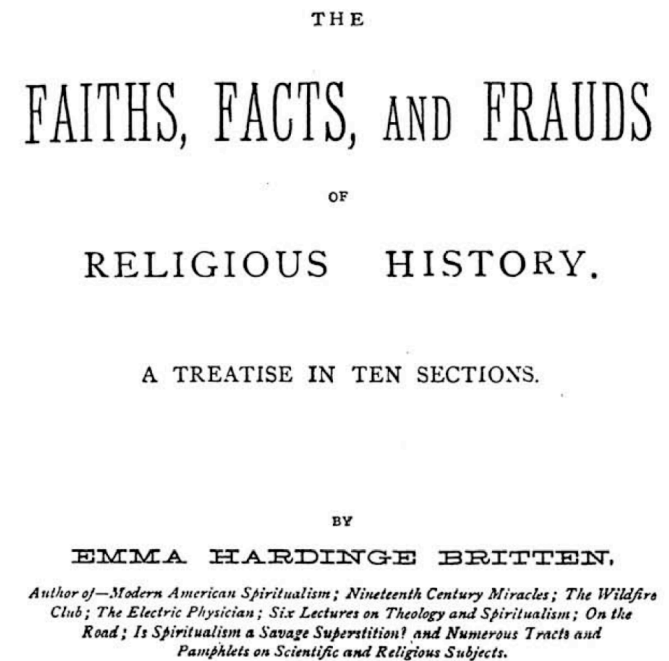
1877-1881: Itinerant Propagandist

- Faiths, Facts & Frauds (Melbourne, 1879) is Art Magic's comparative religions material, rewritten
 - And notably with source attributions, for the first time
- It is the text EHB had republished most during her own life, which means something...

Granted that modern discoveries, by disinterring the tombs of ancient faiths, **entirely strip Christianity of her arrogant claim to divine favour**, through an original and special revelation; the problematical question still remains as to whence arose the primeval ideas upon which all theological systems are founded?

To remove the source from Judea to Egypt, and from thence back to ancient India, or even to trace its threads of ideality to the still more antique conceptions of the wandering Aryan, is only to complicate the difficulty, and shift the ground plan, without explaining the significance of the primal legend. **Why, then, do we fear to advance to the mysterious shrine wherein the veiled "Demiurgus" sits enthroned, and boldly question its nature, personality, and right to rule?**

EHB, Faiths, Facts and Frauds



LIST OF AUTHORITIES QUOTED IN THIS VOLUME.

Mons. Dupuis, Father Kircher, Mr. Bryant, Godfrey Higgins, General Hitchcock, J. F. Stewart, Count Volney, Rev. Robert Taylor, Mons. Baillie, Sir Wm. Jones, Messrs. Vale, Colebrooke, Kersey Graves, Middleton, Revs. W. Maurice and Faber, Bishops Faustus and Fell, Ovid, Berosus, Manetho, Mrs. L. M. Child, Basnage, Grotius, Gibbon, MM. Denon, Daillee, Cassini, Colonel Wilsford, Humboldt, and Forbes.

The sources for Faiths, Facts and Frauds (and Art Magic, as well)

1877-1881: Itinerant Propagandist

- In April, Emma and William arrive in Dunedin, on the South Island of New Zealand -- which is at the time quite cosmopolitan and free-thinking....and adversarial
- Emma is guarded, on stage, by William, during some of her lectures on free-thought topics
- She is also involved in the lives of the communities she visits (schools, funerals, openings)
- Dunedin --> Invercargill (June) --> Dunedin (July, August) --> Nelson (September) --> Wellington (October) --> Nelson (October) --> Auckland (November): following the money
- Emma and William leave for San Francisco, from Auckland, on December 11, 1879

LADY LECTURER.—Mrs Hardinge Britten, the spiritualistic lecturer made her *debut* in Dunedin at the Princess Theatre on Sunday night last, selecting for her subject "foot prints of angels."—The Theatre was crowded. The Dunedin Times says:—Her oratory is of a most pleasing and effective description, and there have been few public speakers before Dunedin audiences possessing so polished and cultivated an elocutionary style. She has an earnest manner, without being impassioned, and a clear, strong, well-toned voice. She uses her arms and outspread hands to a considerable extent in enforcing and bringing out the points of her subject, and moves occasionally from one part of the platform to another. Once during the lecture there was a hiss, when Mrs Britten stopped and said: 'The addresses are only delivered on condition of perfect order. This is our church, and we expect you to show the same respect in it as in your own church.' These remarks were received with applause, and the lecture proceeded without any further interruption of a like kind."

Southland Times, April 23, 1879

MRS. HARDINGE BRITTEN,
The Celebrated Inspirational Speaker and
Authoress, will
**LECTURE AT THE ATHENÆUM HALL,
ON WEDNESDAY EVENING NEXT,
THE 17TH INSTANT.
Doors open at 7.30. Commence at 8.**
Subject to be chosen by the audience. Provided
no acceptable subject is submitted,
the subject will be—
**POPULAR ASTRONOMY; OR, THE
WONDERS OF THE SIDERAL
HEAVENS.**
Questions relative to the subject answered at
close of Lecture.
Admission—Front Seats, 2s; Back Seats, 1s.
Tickets to be had at Mr. Bonnington's
Music Store, and at N. Jacob's, Athenæum
Bazaar.

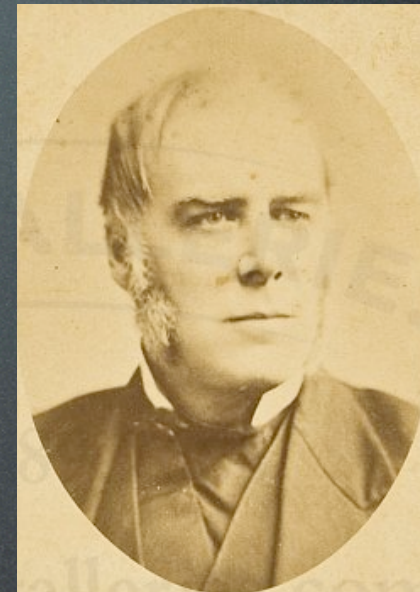
Nelson Evening Post, October 17, 1879

1877-1881: Itinerant Propagandist

- From January through May of 1880, Emma is deeply involved, it appears, in practical occult experiments, in San Francisco, with Albert van der Naillen and others
- In May, Emma and William set off for New York, stopping only (as far as can be determined) in Salt Lake City and Ohio
- From July 1880 through October 1880, Emma is lecturing in NY
- And then, the Tanner incident, on August 15th
 - Ironically, during a lecture on the core subject matter of her body of work

AT REPUBLICAN HALL, 33D ST. AND BROADWAY.
 A Spiritual meeting: **Emma** Hardinge **Brittain** lectures
 Sunday morning, 11, "Magnetism and Psychology;" even-
 ing, 7:45, "Why Does Not God Kill the Devil?"

Emma's fateful mis-step, during "Magnetism & Psychology,"
 on August 15, 1880



Henry S. Tanner (1831-1919)

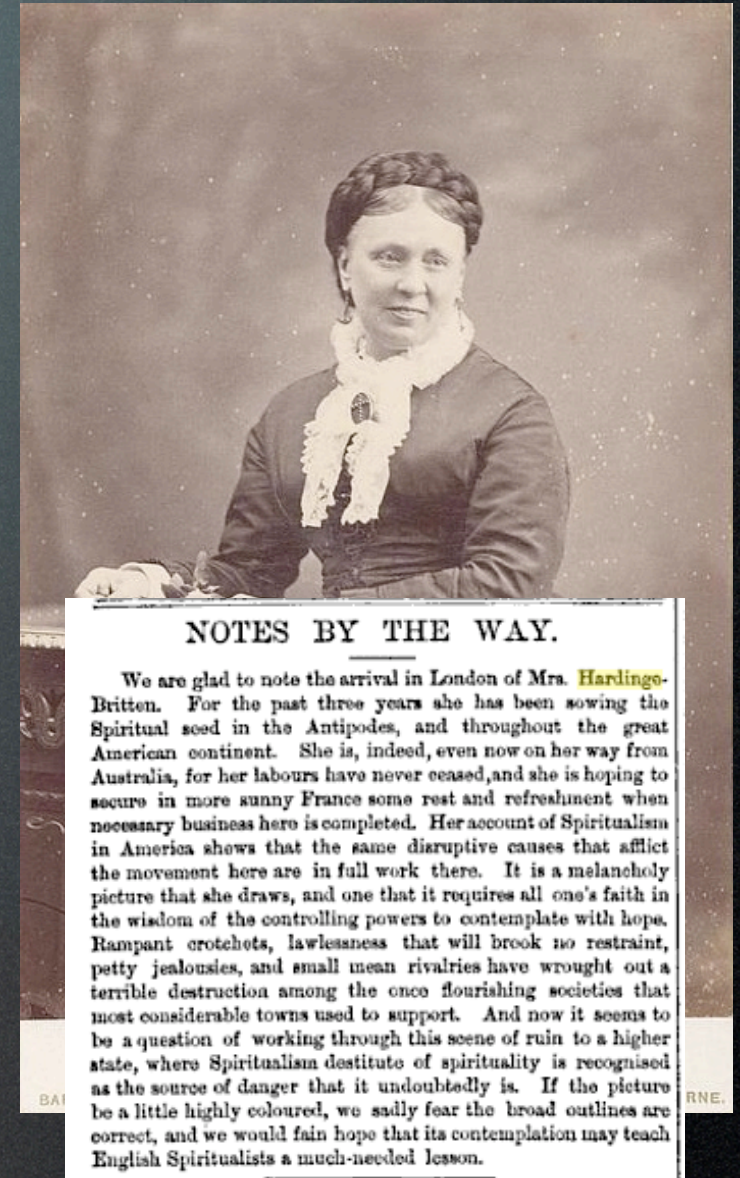
**Dr. Tanner Sits Down on
 Emma Hardinge Brit-
 tain's Magnetic
 Theory.**

New York, 16.—Dr. Tanner attended the lecture of Emma Hardinge Brittain, yesterday morning. It was not known by the audience or the lecturer that he was present in the hall. Mrs. Brittain, in closing her remarks on magnetism, referred to the doctor, and the wonderful example he had given of the ascendancy of will over matter. She asserted that the density of population, the magnetic influence of the multitude, the aroma of food, made his fast possible in this city, while if attempted in the keen air of the country and in solitude, the body would soon be exhausted by the vigorous and consuming oxygen. At the close of her remarks a well-dressed, sharp-eyed man arose and obtained permission to address a question to the speaker, who introduced himself as the subject of the lady's remarks. All eyes were turned in surprise upon Dr. Tanner, who said: "If I had continued my fast in Clarendon Hall without the aid of the air in the park, I could not have continued twenty days. Indeed, the bracing air of the Minnesota prairie made it possible for me to continue forty-two days once without food. My experiment in this city was attended with far greater difficulty; therefore, my experience is not in accordance with your theory of magnetic forces." Mrs. Brittain did not attempt to sustain her theory. The doctor looked fresh and vigorous, and talked to many who surrounded him before he left the hall.

Salt Lake City Herald, August 17, 1870
 (telegraphically received)

1877-1881: Itinerant Propagandist

- Emma and William arrive in London in January of 1881, at a time when Anglo-American Spiritualism is the early days of a significant institutional crisis
- By June of 1881, she will be resident in Manchester, where she will be based for the rest of her life
- Having devoted nearly a quarter-century to the international Spiritualist cause, she is about to go local, and become the Spiritualist Queen of the Midlands...



Light, February 26, 1881