

AMERICAN SPIRITUALISM.

We take the following from a review of Hardinge's "Modern American Spiritualism," which appeared in the 15 vol. of 'The Month,' p. 375.

"We shall add another and still wider consideration, for we believe that the true way of arriving at a right conclusion concerning the phenomena on which spiritualism is founded, is to compare them in their most varied developments and class them with all such other manifestations as may fairly be attributed to kindred sources and powers. We believe that many of the adepts of European 'Spiritualism,' far on the road of evil and monstrosity as we fear it has already advanced, will have been shocked by learning the existence of some even of the facts which we have selected in this article, and we assure our readers that we have not selected the most startling. In the same way as American developments seem more fearful by the side of European experiences, so there is a gradation to be observed, unless we are mistaken, in the American developments themselves; the wildest and most terrible meet us as we leave the comparatively civilized and sober East for the half-settled Western States, as we touch on the territories, and cross over to the Pacific seaboard in California; Indeed, the Californian phenomena are singularly terrible, and diabolical. Here, for instance, is an incident which occurred in California in 1856, and was made fully public in 1863 by an eminent lawyer in Nevada, who after the lapse of seven years, could not speak of the occurrence without the most painful emotion. He and a friend, an eminent banker, and man of science, and a sceptic, were visiting the house of a wealthy Californian merchant, where they summoned a murdered friend, Mr King, to the mesmeric circle. He appeared precisely as in life and in his usual attire, and raised his arms in turn, and made other motions as suggested to him. But when his living friend darted forward, as he said, 'to grab him,' every article in the house seemed to be set in motion at once, as if by the shock of an earthquake, and the figure melted out instantly. Another time, after Mr King's presence was made known, a certain new influence was detected by the whole circle, and in the usual manner it was asked 'Who was present?' The answer was 'Capitana.' This name was recognised by some present as that of an old Kanaka woman who had died some years ago. It was then asked if she would materially appear, and, if so, would she give a sign? The spirit answered that she would ring the door-bell.

The following is a quotation from Miss Hardinge's work:—

"It was scarcely twenty seconds after the raps had ended spelling out this message when the bell again rang furiously, and at the same time a bush, growing within a few feet of the window, was shaken so violently as to fix all our attention on it, in the fear that it would be torn up by the roots. Then we (having our attention fixed upon the bush) distinctly and alto ether saw a gigantic human figure apparently rising and emerging from the bush, issue out into the broad moonlight, pass within two feet of the window before our eyes, and glide off towards the kitchen. By a common impulse we all rose and rushed to the window, but only in time to see the figure melt out and another rise up, as it were out of the ground, and immediately seat itself upon a bench before the kitchen door, and fall in the glare of the moonlight.

'And here I would fain pause, for I have no words adequate to describe what then I saw; and though its memory will be for ever engraven upon my brain, I can neither communicate in words the least reality of it, nor yet attempt its description without subjecting myself to the charge of the wildest exaggeration. It certainly bore the human form though in distorted and frightful disproportion. It was of gigantic height and frightfully lean. Its face was hideously long, thin, and distorted, blacker than any idea of blackness I had ever seen before; but its expression I can never pourtray. I can only say it was an appalling mixture of hate, rage, and despair, so shocking that I cannot at any time attempt to recall it without a sickening sensation of horror. It was terrible to look at, horrible to think of, and I hope my mortal eyes will never again be blighted by so hideous a spectre. He wore a large white robe thrown fully round him, and partly covering his immense long lean head; and there he sat, reclining in the bench, full in the moonlight, silent, still, and ghastly in all his appalling ugliness. The face was turned to us somewhat in profile. After looking at the goblin—for human I can never think it—till the night overpowered me, I rushed to the piazza door, feeling the necessity for air. I was followed by the ladies, who were almost fainting; but in attempting to unfasten the door, which Mr J. P. had opened with perfect ease a few moments before we found it barricaded. Mr B., the bravest amongst us, except Mr J. P., remained watching the goblin, as did the family upstairs, till they saw it gradually and slowly melt out. They never lost sight of it till it disappeared. As we retreated the sofas, chairs, tables, cushions, globes, and mathematical instruments were hurled about in every direction with great violence. I was severely struck with a book, and one of the ladies had a cushion dashed in her face, the dust from which blinded her eyes for several minutes. Mr J. P. and his wife now joined me at the door, and after great exertion we succeeded in forcing it partly open, when we found that the heavy iron gate at the entrance to the grounds had been literally torn up out of the socket, and placed boldly against the piazza door. This must have been done in a few minutes, since one of the servants had just passed through and fastened it. It must have been accomplished without noise, though it would have taken several men to achieve such a feat, and we had sat opposite it, with the moon shining full upon it, the whole period of the circle. . . . [As for the disappearance of the spectre.] Mr B. stood within eight feet of it, and just as we approached the kitchen door, he saw, as did those about, the creature rise with slow deliberation, standing a moment still as if to display its enormous height, then, lightly lifting its robe it seemed to float off a little way, and then instantly, in the clear space became invisible. There were five witnesses of this scene, and each gave a precisely similar account when questioned separately. . . . We agreed to bind our minds and aspirations on the attempt to call around us kind, genial, and more human beings, and conjured

some bright and happy spirit to visit us, and aid in dispelling the horrors of the last apparition. We had not taken our places five minutes, before, nervous and distrustful as we still were, we were convinced our petitions were answered. Cool balmy breezes played around us, soft caressing hands stroked our cheeks and heads, more than a dozen small white human hands gleamed around the room, at first shadowy and like thin vapour, at last palpable opaque and seemingly as firm in sight and touch as our own hands.'

MR FROUDE AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

The following tribute to the grandeur, utility, and beauty of the Roman Catholic Church is from a public address by Mr Froude, one of the most eminent Protestant historians of the age, and the report of which appeared in the Manchester 'Times' and 'Examiner' (England).

"Never in all history, in ancient and modern times, that the world knew of, had mankind known out of themselves anything so grand, so useful, so beautiful, as the Catholic Church once was. In these our times well-regulated selfishness was the recognised rule of action—everyone was expected to look out for himself, and to take care of his own interests. At the time he spoke of, the Church ruled the State with the authority of a conscience, and self-interest as a motive of action was only named to be abhorred. (Cheers). Wisdom, justice, self-denial, nobleness, purity, high-mindedness—those were the qualities before which the freeborn races of Europe had been coerced to bow, and in no order of men were such qualities to be found as they were found 600 years ago, in the clergy of the Catholic Church. They called themselves the successors of the Apostles; they claimed in their Master's name universal spiritual authority; but they made good their pretensions by the holiness of their lives. They were allowed to rule because they deserved to rule, and in the fulness of reverence kings and nobles bent before a power which was nearer to God than their own. (Applause) Over prince and subject—chieftain and serf—a body of unarmed, defenceless men reigned supreme by the influence of sanctity. He did not pretend that the clergy were perfect; they were very far from being perfect at the best of times; and the European nations were never completely submissive to them; it would not have been well if they had been. The business of human creatures in this planet was not summed up in the most excellent of priestly catechisms; the world and its concerns continued to interest men, though priests insisted on their nothingness. They could not prevent kings from quarrelling with each other; they could not hinder disputed successions, and civil feuds, wars, and political conspiracies; what they did was to shelter the weak from the strong. In the eyes of the clergy, the serf and his lord stood on the common level of sinful humanity. Into their ranks high birth was no passport. They were for the most part children of the people, and the son of the artisan and peasant rose to the mitre and triple crown just as now-a-days the rail-splitter and the tailor became presidents of the Republic of the West. . . . After alluding to the extraordinary privileges which the clergy possessed, he glanced at the monasteries as another vast feature of the middle ages, when they were inhabited by fraternities of men who desired to devote themselves to goodness: and who, in order the better to do so, took vows of poverty, that they might not be entangled with the pursuit of money, and of chastity, that they might not be distracted with the cares of a family. Their days were spent in hard bodily labour, in study, or in visiting the sick; at night they were on the stone floors of their chapels, holding up their withered hands to heaven interceding for the poor souls who were suffering in purgatory. The system spread to the farthest limits of Christendom. The religious houses became places of refuge, where men of noble birth, kings and queens, and emperors, and warriors, and statesmen, retired to lay down their splendid cares and end their days in peace. Those with whom the world had dealt hardly, and those whom it had surfeited with its unsatisfying pleasures, those who were disappointed with earth, and those who were filled with passionate aspirations after heaven, alike found a haven of rest in the quiet cloisters. Gradually lands came to them, and wealth, and social dignity—all gratefully extended to men who deserved well of their fellow-men; while no landlord was more popular than they, for the sanctity of the monks sheltered their dependents as well as themselves."

Could the most devoted Catholic have written more enthusiastically in favor of the Roman Catholic Church? Though now shorn of some of her glory and power, she is essentially the same still as she "once was."

THE ORANGEMEN AND LEGISLATIVE INDEPENDENCE.

(London Universe.)

MR O'NEILL DAUNT has been lately addressing the Orangemen, and made a point against Lord Enniskillen, the Grand Master of the Society, by reminding his hearers that, whereas his lordship had declared that the disestablishment of the Church would form a valid ground for the immediate repeal of the Union the noble earl, in the words of the 'Nation,' now "hates Home Rule nearly as much as he hates tenant-right." The sentiments of the Ulster man against Home Rule are evidently modifying. At the late Tyrone election many members of Orange lodges voted for Mr McCartney, whose declarations on the subject of Home Rule were of the most pronounced description, and, fraternizing with the Catholics, wore rosettes in their hats and coats; whilst at the meeting at Enniskillen, the other day, very strong Home Rule utterances were undoubtedly cheered to the echo. The 'Nation' is thereupon hopeful as to the future, and assures us that—

Beyond all doubt, through all their prejudices and bigotries or passions, a spirit of nationality is seething, and fermenting among the mass of the Protestant population of Ulster. There is no reason to despair (it continues) of seeing them taking an Irish part even in the struggle for Irish nationality, or of seeing them, in the regenerated Irish nation, form an element, not of alien repulsiveness, but of true Irish strength.