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A REVELATION  
OF THE  
EXTRAORDINARY VISITATION  
OF  
DEPARTED SPIRITS  
OF  
DISTINGUISHED MEN AND WOMEN OF ALL NATIONS,  
AND  
THEIR MANIFESTATION THROUGH THE LIVING BODIES  
OF THE "SHAKERS."

---

BY A GUEST OF THE "COMMUNITY" NEAR WATERVLIET, N. Y.

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PHILADELPHIA:  
PUBLISHED BY L. G. THOMAS, No. 1127 SANSOM STREET.  
1869.

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“MILLIONS of Spiritual creatures walk the Earth.”—MILTON.

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

“For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom : to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit ;

“To another faith by the same Spirit ; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit ;

“To another the working of miracles ; to another prophecy : to another discerning of Spirits ; to another diverse kinds of tongues ; to another the interpretation of tongues.”—CORINTHIANS, Chap. 12, verses 7, 8, 9, 10.



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# INTRODUCTORY.

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THE advent of what is termed "Modern Spiritualism," its rapid growth and extension, and its present extraordinary magnitude, has induced the writer of these pages to present to the public a detailed account of some wonderful *spiritual manifestations* that took place among the Society called "Shakers," at their village near Watervliet, in the State of New York, in the year 1843, during a temporary sojourn of the writer at that place.

Occurring as they did about five years anterior to the so-called "Rochester knockings," with which the "Fox Sisters" were identified, and which knockings have been generally accepted as the origin of "Modern Spiritualism," these "manifestations" through the "Shakers" possess an interest of no ordinary character; impelling the writer to present a faithful narrative of the various phases of *phenomena* exhibited at the time referred to.

To those who are not familiar with the peculiar Faith and Doctrine of the Society of Shakers, a brief sketch is deemed necessary.

The religious sect called "Shakers," or "United Society of Believers," was first introduced into this country by Anne Lee, who, in 1776, became their leader. She was born at Manchester, England, in 1736, and was the daughter of a blacksmith of that town, where she also at an early age became the wife of a blacksmith.

The first testimony of Salvation and Eternal Life, which was given to her in 1770, was the injunction of celibacy as the



perfection of human nature, and the holding forth of herself as a Divine person.

She was from this time honored with the title of "Mother Anne," and she styled herself "Anne, the Word."

Having been persecuted in England, she came out to America in 1774, with several members of the Society, and formed the first Community at, or near, Watervliet, in the State of New York, where she died in 1784.

Societies were soon formed at New Lebanon, in the same State, at Enfield, in Connecticut, and other places, and have gradually increased to their present number.

The most rigid spirit of self-denial is practiced by the members, and celibacy is strictly enjoined; there being no communion of the sexes, except in matters of business and religious worship. Nothing of a stimulating nature is eaten or drank, and their uniform character is that of strict decorum, sobriety and chastity.

It will probably occur therefore to the believer in the doctrine of "modern Spiritualism," that the physical organizations of the members of the "Shaker" Community are *spiritualized* to a degree highly susceptible and *impressionable*. Consequently, it must be apparent that well-developed "*mediums*" would be found in such society, embracing persons of both sexes and of different ages.

Very early in the Spring of 1843, the writer, while on a visit to the city of Troy, being impelled by a desire he could not repress, resolved to visit the "Shaker" community about five miles distant.

Soon after his arrival there he was introduced to the two "Elders" of the Society, to whom he communicated his desire to become acquainted with the doctrines and habits of the sect, and to be gratified with a view of their religious exercises. The writer was informed that a *marvellous work* was at that time in operation among the brethren and sisters of the Community both at Watervliet and at New Lebanon in the same State, being the *visitation of disembodied Spirits*, who came to the nightly meetings of the Society, taking temporary pos-



session of the bodies of the brethren and sisters engaged in worship.

At this communication the writer's interest became much excited, and he expressed his desire to be present and witness the strange manifestations, to which request the "Elders" acceded.

It is proper to state at this point, that at New Lebanon, where the "Shaker" family was much larger, the strange work was progressing at the same time; but, inasmuch as the writer's observations were limited to the Community at Watervliet, he is obliged to confine his narrative to the scenes that passed before his own senses.

The aim and moral of the writer of these pages being to direct the reader's attention to the resemblance between the "Shaker" manifestations referred to, and "Modern Spiritualism," he deems it unnecessary to pursue the usual course of historians, in giving architectural descriptions of buildings and the domestic habits of the tenants. Suffice it to say, therefore, that the "Shakers" possess buildings for dwelling-houses, workshops, granaries, etc., to the extent or size of an ordinary country village; together with large tracts of land devoted to farming and gardening purposes.

At the time of the writer's visit there, the population of the Watervliet community numbered about one hundred of the brethren and sisters.

With this introduction, the writer will now proceed to describe in regular order the "manifestations" at each meeting as recorded by him at the time, presenting, as near as was possible, the language and ideas uttered by the various *Spirits* that spoke through the brethren and sisters.

To preserve simplicity and conciseness, the writer will devote a chapter to the proceedings of each meeting.



# THE SHAKER MEETINGS.

---

## CHAPTER I.

Religious Exercises—Spiritual Manifestations—Indian Spirits Visit the Meeting—William Penn and others.

THE hour for evening service having arrived, the “family” assembled for worship in the large meeting room. This room was located in the part of the building set apart for domestic purposes.

The brethren range themselves in rows upon one side of the room. The sisters do likewise upon the opposite side, facing the brethren. The two Elders and the two Eldresses take their stand at the head of each row or column. The congregation then commenced singing a lively Shaker hymn. Leading off in a dance, they move forward and backward, preserving excellent time. Then they change, making a revolution around the room. After considerable singing and dancing, and the performance of various evolutions, they ceased, whereupon the leading Elder delivered an extempore exhortation.

As soon as he had terminated his address, one of the brethren became seized with a violent agitation of the body. His contortions were quite distressing to behold, and he was whirled around seemingly by some invisible influence, until he became almost exhausted, and was bathed in a profuse perspiration.

At the same time one of the sisters, a young woman of singular beauty of face and figure, commenced whirling around



with great rapidity. Her gyrations were so rapid that her face for the time became undistinguishable. She continued this for an incredible length of time, and such a performance the writer never witnessed upon the theatrical stage, or anywhere outside of those Shaker assemblages.

Various "manifestations" now became prevalent among the brethren and sisters present. Several were discoursing in what were termed "unknown tongues." Some were whirling, and others gesticulating violently, when, on a sudden, loud, simultaneous yells were given, and several of the brethren and sisters sprang into the centre of the room.

The Elders advanced toward those thus *possessed*, and questioned them. They jabbered away in a curious, monotonous sort of dialect, until one of them said that they were a party of

#### INDIANS

of the Mohawk tribe, who had long ago left their wigwams and hunting grounds upon the earth.

The speaker claimed to be the *Spirit* of a great chief, and he acted as interpreter for his accompanying *Spirits*.

Some of the sisters, representing themselves as squaws and Indian maidens, jabbered away apparently in their native language, as used by them when living in the body.

*Spirit* representatives of several "Indian tribes of North America," were announced as being present.

The spirit of

#### WILLIAM PENN

in the person of a staid-looking Shaker brother, announced himself, and was recognized by the *Spirits* present as their "great father" and "*guide*" in the Spirit World.

The *Spirits* now came thick and fast; and among the company of Shakers present on this occasion, numbering probably about sixty, at least one-half seemed entirely changed, excepting in dress and complexion, and, so far as their language and actions were concerned, appeared in verity to be the *Spirits of the Red Men of the Past*.



The one representing himself as the "Interpreter," and a few others, conversed cheerfully and spiritedly, asserting that they were in a happy condition, and experienced much pleasure in occasionally wandering about their old hunting grounds. They all seemed to cherish and manifest great reverence for their good friend and spiritual guide, William Penn.

The spirit of William Penn now addressed them in forcible words of eloquence, exhorting them to progress in the great work of Spiritual advancement.

He said that he still felt the same interest and concern in the welfare of the Indians living in the body, in the far West, that he had while in "earth life" for the Red Men of Pennsylvania.

After some time thus occupied in conversation, the spirits of William Penn and his Indian followers withdrew from the bodies of the Shaker brethren and sisters. The other "manifestations" ceasing, the Elders closed the exercises of the evening with a few words of pious exhortation and good advice to the "faithful" worshippers.



## CHAPTER II.

Indian Spirits—Negro Slave—Irishman's Spirit—Passengers on the Lost Steamship "President"—Power, Cookman and others—Gen. Harrison—Saint Patrick—Bishops—Priests—Charles the First—Cromwell—The Arabs.

AFTER similar religious exercises as recorded in the preceding chapter, the "manifestations," such as whirling, bodily contortions, speaking in unknown tongues, etc., were continued for some time.

The Indian Spirits, together with that of WILLIAM PENN, again introduced themselves as before.

While they were conversing, one of the Shaker brethren hobbled forward as if with great difficulty. He announced himself to one of the Elders, as the *Spirit* of a

## NEGRO SLAVE,

in something like the following language:

Spirit.—"Massa, I'se a poor old slave."

Elder.—"What is your name, my friend?"

Spirit.—"I'se got no name, Massa, onny 'old Sam.' I belonged to Curnel Hunter down in Georgia. I seed hard times, Massa, and had a long life of hard work, I had. I worked in de cotton field, and had to tote many a heavy load. But I'se got ober dat long ago, and now I'se in good clober."

Elder.—"How old were you when you died, Sam?"

Spirit.—"Died, Massa? I ain't dead. Onny left my old shell; de old shell dat de boss used to beat so much. But I tinks I was a hundered years old when I left my old shell."

Elder.—"What! a hundred years old? Why, how long have you been in the world of Spirits?"

Spirit.—"Don't know. I'se been a good while. I knows I'se an old man when de solgers was a fighten. When de red coats come ober de sea to fight our folks down in Georgy."



Elder.—“Why, you mean the Revolutionary war, when Washington was the great chief?”

Spirit.—“Oh, yes! I used to hear 'em talk 'bout Generel Washington. I seed him, too.”

Elder.—“What, down in Georgia?”

Spirit.—“Oh, no, Massa. Here, where I am now. I never seed the Generel till I come up here. I'se seed him here; Lòrd bress his lubly shiny face.”

Elder.—“Well, Sam, you have seen him in the Spirit world? He was a good man, Sam.”

Spirit.—“Yes, Massa; too good for dis nigger. For you see, Massa, he sometimes cums down to see us. He libs higher up'dan a good many odder folks.”

Elder.—“Well, Sam, I hope you will be able to work your way up to where he is. Good-bye now. Come and see us again.”

Spirit.—“Good-bye, Massa, and all you white folks.”

The Spirit then withdrew, and the brother who had “taken him in” resumed his normal condition.

While the foregoing conversation was transpiring, various *Spirits* made themselves known, among whom was that of a rollicking

#### IRISHMAN,

who danced a jig, sang a lively song, and flourished, or appeared to flourish, a shillelah in true Donnybrook style. His mirthful expressions and rich brogue elicited laughter from the grave Shakers, and being rather a rough and boisterous character, the Elders were obliged to dismiss him, with a promise that he would be privileged to make another visit if he should conduct himself properly.

The interest of the evening was considerably heightened by the advent of the Spirits of some of the passengers of the

#### STEAMSHIP “PRESIDENT,”

lost at sea in 1841.



## The Spirits of

CAPTAIN ROBERTS, TYRONE POWER, REV. GEO.  
COOKMAN,

and others, made their presence known by taking possession of the physical organizations of some of the brethren.

Mr. Power spoke at considerable length. He stated that he had been a representative of Irish characters upon the theatrical stage, while in the flesh, and as such, had secured a high degree of popularity among the theatre-going public, and was correspondingly successful in a pecuniary point of view.

He said he had terminated a very successful professional tour through the United States, and, with the product of his labors, had taken passage in the steamship "President" for England. That, soon after passing Newfoundland, the vessel came in contact with an immense iceberg, causing her to sink in a brief space of time, precipitating the living souls of all on board into the *world of spirits*.

Such was the substance of the statement made by Tyrone Power, corroborated by the Rev. George Cookman, who next spoke through another Shaker brother. Mr. Cookman stated that he was an Englishman, and a clergyman of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and as such had preached in the United States. He was also a passenger on the "President" when she was lost in 1841, as stated by Mr. Power.

Captain Roberts, who had command of the ship, likewise made a few remarks.

While these Spirits were bidding adieu to the Elders, the Spirit of

GEN. WILLIAM H. HARRISON

was introduced.

He observed, in the course of his remarks, that the incidental cares attendant upon the Presidential office to which he had been elevated, together with the importunity of office-hunters, had tended in a great measure to bring on a disease which culminated in his death, removing him from the troubles of earth life to the *Spirit world*.



He said that he was now enjoying a happy state of existence, and in blissful association with many congenial Spirits whom he had known while sojourning in the *material world*.

#### SAINT PATRICK

was now introduced to the Elders by some Bishops and Priests of the Christian Church who had taken possession of the bodies of some of the brethren present.

Saint Patrick said that he had been so long in the *Spirit world*, and the sphere in which he moved was so far from the *material world*, the Earth, that he but rarely made a spiritual visit to the abode of the children of men. Yet, he said, it afforded him gratification to sometimes revisit the scenes of his earthly labors. He said that he strongly sympathized with his children, as he had ever been happy to consider as such the natives of Ireland, in the calamities and afflictions with which they had been visited at times, and he trusted that the time was not far off which would see them all regenerated in body and spirit, and be recognized as true followers of Christ.

But he would admonish them that until the sinful and degrading vice of indulgence in strong drink—the fruitful source of most of the crime and evil that afflicted the world, and which was still a fatal weakness of too many of the sons of the Green Island—was overcome, they could not enjoy in its fullness the glorious kingdom of God and his angels.

As the Spirit of Saint Patrick and his friends withdrew, that of

#### KING CHARLES FIRST, OF ENGLAND,

accompanied by CROMWELL, took possession of two of the brethren, and introduced themselves by name.

These spirits of two distinguished men seemed to be upon very friendly terms with each other. They said that reconciliation between them had long since been effected, and that whatever resentment they had felt for each other while in earth life, was now banished from their souls.

While King Charles seemed to admit that he had acted in a despotic manner toward the people he had ruled, Cromwell



excused himself for the part he had taken in effecting the removal of the King, by asserting that he had done so believing at the time that it was the will of God and subserving the interests of the people of England.

These Spirits having departed, they were followed by those of a company of

A R A B S ,

who, acting through the mediumship of some of the brethren, created quite a sensation in the meeting by their noisy demonstrations and singular actions.

### CHAPTER III.

Indian Chiefs—King Philip—Red Jacket—Powhatan—Tecumseh—Cicero—Julius Cæsar—Alexander—Washington—Lafayette—Robespierre—Mirabeau—Dr. Benjamin Franklin and Wife—Stephen Girard—His College—Indians—The Narragansetts and Delawares.

A NUMBER of Spirits of prominent Indian chiefs made themselves manifest through the bodies of some of the brethren.

Among those who gave their names, were

K I N G   P H I L I P ,   R E D   J A C K E T ,   P O W H A T A N ,   A N D  
T E C U M S E H .

Besides these, there came also the Spirits of

C I C E R O ,   J U L I U S   C Æ S A R ,   A L E X A N D E R ,

and other Greek and Roman celebrities of ancient times, who made the occasion interesting by their remarks about the history of their time while in the body.   Generals

W A S H I N G T O N   A N D   L A F A Y E T T E

came in Spirit, manifesting themselves through two of the brethren.



They were objects of peculiar attraction, as they were warmly welcomed by the Elders.

They bore themselves with great dignity, and appeared to be cheerful, and fond of each other's society.

Washington said that in the Spirit world he had met with many of his old companions-in-arms, as well as with those against whom he had contended in the War of the Revolution, among the latter of which he mentioned General Howe, Sir Henry Clinton, and Lord Cornwallis.

He said they were all fast friends now, and that the spirit of love abounded in their souls.

Lafayette discoursed principally concerning the French Revolution, giving some interesting reminiscences thereof.

While the General was speaking, he was accosted by two Spirits speaking through brethren. They were recognized as

#### ROBESPIERRE AND MIRABEAU.

In some remarks made by the Spirit of Robespierre, he confessed that he was satisfied that the violent course he had pursued led to the military despotism that ensued in France. He regretted that he had not adopted the wiser counsels of the "Reactionists." Had he done so, the shedding of rivers of human blood might have been averted.

But he said he rejoiced to see France in such a prosperous condition, and able to hold her head as high as any nation in Europe.

The Spirit of Mirabeau made a few remarks, in which he said that if he had been spared to the Earth a little longer, he believed he might have prevented the heavy tribulations which fell upon France, by keeping down the leaders of the violent party, such as Robespierre, St. Just, and Murat.

The Spirits of Dr.

#### BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

and his wife, Deborah, were now introduced, and were cordially greeted by the Spirits of Washington and Lafayette.



The Sage's remarks were principally of a practical nature, and in accordance with his well-known character while upon the earth.

### The Spirit of

STEPHEN GIRARD

next made his presence known, and spoke through the mediumship of one of the brethren. He spoke earnestly, and at some length.

He gave an interesting account of his life. He stated that several years had elapsed since his spirit had left its earthly body, and that he had, when revisiting the scenes of his active earth life, often desired to make his presence known to living friends, in the body, but hitherto he had been unable to do so. He expressed great satisfaction at having been enabled at last to accomplish the desire so strong within him to converse with the people of earth, so that he could be heard.

He spoke of his arduous labors during his whole life in the acquisition of wealth, and asserted that the primary motive which actuated him was to benefit his fellow-men in after times. He had left a large estate, a great portion of which, according to the letter and spirit of his will, was to be devoted to the establishing of an educational institution in the city of Philadelphia.

He said he had ever been a man of simple tastes and unostentatious habits, and that his intention in the founding of the "College for Orphans" was to have a plain and substantial building erected for the purpose. Instead of conforming to his wishes in that respect, his executors had expended a large sum of money in the erection of an "ornamental palace," and by doing so they had retarded the enterprise, by consuming years in the erection of the "College."

Girard was vehement in his denunciations of the prodigal manner in which his "Will" had been executed by those to whom the trust was bequeathed. He was aware that much dissatisfaction was felt and expressed by some of his kindred at his apparent indifference to their natural claims upon his bounty, and he admitted that he almost regretted that he had



not made a different disposition of his worldly possessions. Since his pilgrimage through the Spirit world had begun, he had become fully convinced upon one point—that it was wrong for any one to postpone the performance of great charitable works until they were on the verge of dissolution. He felt that *he* had made a mistake in so doing, and he would now counsel those who might have such beneficent desires, to perform their deeds of charity and love while *in* the body, and while they have the ability to control and carry out their own designs. He said he was gratified to observe the progress that had been made throughout the country, especially in Philadelphia, and he was amazed at the changes visible there. He thought that the revenue derivable from his own estates there ought to go a great way toward keeping the Corporation free from debt. He believed that the College, when finished, would produce good fruit, but that much needless expenditure had been lavished upon it. He was emphatic in declaring that he hoped that the clause in his “Will” relative to the exclusion of clergymen from the College would be strictly executed and carried out.

The Spirit of Stephen Girard then shook hands with the Elders, and withdrew.

A number of male and female Spirits of *Indians*, of the

#### NARRAGANSETT AND DELAWARE

tribes, now took possession of bodies present, and had an interesting time, singing and dancing in their peculiar style.

After they had left, the brethren and sisters resumed their natural condition, and the meeting closed with the usual Shaker ceremonies.



## CHAPTER IV.

Funeral Service—The Spirit of a Deceased Sister stands at the side of its own Body, and Discourses through a Living Sister—Impressive Scene.

THIS is Sunday, and the occasion of a scene of remarkable interest to the writer. In one of the rooms of the Shaker dwelling-house, the body of a young sister, who had departed this life, was laid out for interment. All the members of the family, of both sexes, were present, and participated in the funeral service, which consisted of prayer and singing. While the writer was gazing upon the scene, his attention was attracted toward one of the sisters, who was standing by the side of the corpse.

The sister suddenly became as it were *entranced*, and announced herself to be the *Spirit of the departed one*, whose body lay before her.

In a voice sweetly modulated, she said:—

“My dear sisters and brethren, weep not for me. I am not dead. Though my spirit is released from the cold and inanimate clay which lies there, and which it lately inhabited, I am still in your midst. Yes, loved friends, while the change to me is a most happy one, let me counsel you to go forward in the performance of your duties in your present sphere of life, doing all that you are commanded to do; so that when you are summoned by a Higher Power to leave your earthly tabernacle and ascend to realms above, you will appreciate the great measure of love which your Heavenly Father has for you. Heaven is here. Heaven is with you, if you have faith. Bear your cross, therefore, my beloved friends, with meekness, having love for one another in your souls; and when the time comes for you to cast off the perishable clay, your freed spirit will fly to realms of bliss; and you will be permitted to return to earth, as I am, to cheer and encourage those loved ones left



behind. Now, dear friends, join with me in singing, after which I will bid you farewell for a time."

The whole "family" then united in singing a hymn.

After its conclusion, the sister through whom the Spirit of the departed one had spoken, recovered from her trance state.

The leading Elder and Eldress then made some remarks appropriate to the occasion, and the mortal remains of the deceased sister being deposited in a coffin, they were followed to the place of burial by the brethren and sisters.

It is proper to remark here, that the Spirit of the departed sister was recognized by several of the sisters who were present, and who bore testimony to that effect.

## CHAPTER V.

The Esquimaux—The Signers of the Declaration of American Independence—Hancock, Jefferson, Adams, Franklin, and others—King Henry the Eighth—Anne Boleyn—Catherine of Arragon—Cardinal Wolsey—The Chinese—Gladiators—The Druids—Robert Burns—British Soldier.

ANOTHER meeting, and another visitation of spirits from the etherial space.

The first that came were the spirits of some of the

### ESQUIMAUX

natives, who took possession for a short time of the bodies of some of the sisters. They crawled about on the floor not unlike quadrupeds, and by their singular motions presented a ludicrous appearance, the oddity of the spectacle being heightened from the circumstance of the peculiar dress worn by the grave and sober-looking Shakers.

If the reader is not aware of the character of dress worn by the Shaker women, the writer would state, that plain caps made of linen are worn upon the head, while their necks are



enveloped in white kerchiefs coming up to the chin. The gown is composed of a plain stuff fabric, without the addition of hoops, panniers, bustles, or anything either to deform or beautify the human figure. Hence, the aspect of those Shaker sisters while acting under the Spirit control of the Esquimaux, was intensely amusing. On more than one occasion, the writer has there witnessed a spiritual scene where the sisters tore their caps from their heads and capered around quite merrily, more especially while their bodies were possessed by *Indian Spirits*.

A scene next transpired which would have been very interesting to the American patriot. It was the arrival of the Spirits of a number of the members of the American Continental Congress, who were

#### SIGNERS OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

Among those who introduced themselves to the Elders, were *John Hancock, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Robert Morris, Benjamin Rush, John Morton, and Richard Henry Lee*.

They kept up quite an earnest conversation with each other and with the Elders. They said that they usually associated with each other in the world of Spirits, and often revisited the localities of their habitations and scenes of action when they were in the flesh. They stated that they loved to linger about the Hall of Independence at Philadelphia, and that they were greatly rejoiced to behold the progress that had been made respecting liberty and free institutions in the United States.

John Adams stated that there were Spirits of some of their fellow-members of Congress with them, but who had not taken possession of the organizations of the Shaker brethren—who had, at the time of the passage of the Independence Act, entertained grave doubts of the ultimate success of the Americans in their contest with Great Britain. They now, however, acknowledged the superior judgment and wisdom of those patriots who had early faith in the ultimate overcoming of the



formidable obstacles which had obstructed the path to Freedom.

When these Patriots had withdrawn, the Spirit of

#### KING HENRY THE EIGHTH,

of England, accompanied by the Spirits of two of his wives, *Catherine of Arragon* and *Anne Boleyn*, took possession of physical organizations, and gave some interesting reminiscences relative to the time when they were mortal beings.

The unhappy fate of the two queens did not appear to have caused an eternal separation between them and the King, for they said they were all upon amicable terms with each other in the Spirit world.

The Spirit of

#### CARDINAL WOLSEY

was next introduced, and, with his fine conversational powers, he touched upon many events that occurred when he was all-powerful.

The Cardinal strongly protested against the wrongs which many historians have done his memory. He denied having been the cause of the separation of Henry and his wife Catherine.

A party of

#### CHINESE

Spirits now made themselves known as such, and kept up quite a jargon among themselves. They soon left, however, and were followed by the entrance of the Spirits of two

#### GLADIATORS,

who said they were, when living in the body, natives of Thrace, and had been made to fight with each other at the Coliseum in Rome; where, after a most desperate combat, they had both died from the wounds they had received from each other.

They said they had recognized one another in the Spirit world, and now for the first time had made themselves known



through the bodies of the two Shaker brethren, which they had succeeded in taking possession of.

A few representative Spirits of the ancient

#### DRUIDS

were also introduced. About the same time the Spirit of

#### ROBERT BURNS,

the Scottish poet, introduced himself through the body of one of the brethren, and was cordially welcomed.

Burns spoke of his struggles in early life, and strongly regretted having given way to his convivial weakness, which was the cause of all his misery while on earth.

With respect to poetry, he said he was still a child of song, but that his "spiritual" productions were of a purer nature than those which he had produced while in the flesh.

He recited a short poem, embodying beautiful thoughts, but which the writer regrets cannot be recalled to memory for publication here.

The Spirit of a

#### BRITISH SOLDIER,

who said that he was killed at the battle of Bunker Hill, in America, introduced himself, and conversed with one of the Elders for some time, upon the subject of the Revolutionary War.

During this evening there were the usual performances, such as speaking by the sisters in "unknown tongues," whirlings, etc.



## CHAPTER VI.

Napoleon Buonaparte—Louis Sixteenth—Marie Antoinette—Two Lovers—William Shakspeare.

THE meeting for worship and the reception of Spirit visitors this evening was of a very interesting character, principally on account of the visitation of the Spirit of

## N A P O L E O N B U O N A P A R T E .

He came alone, and paced the floor of the meeting-room in the manner in which he is described while a prisoner on the island of St. Helena, with his hands behind him, halting occasionally to administer, as it were, a pinch of snuff to his nose.

Napoleon spoke of his wonderful and checkered career while in the body. He said that he regretted the wholesale slaughter of human bodies which had attended his ambitious career. He had, while in the flesh, looked upon himself as an instrument selected for the purpose of advancing freedom and liberty throughout Europe. There were some acts of his which he would gladly have erased, if it were possible, from historic page, one of which, he felt satisfied, would remain as a stigma upon his character, and that was the execution of an innocent man, the Duke D'Enghien.

But, he said, if history would do him justice, it should balance the good against the evil acts. He pointed out how that when he had attained power, he found Europe cursed with a merciless and avaricious aristocracy. He expressed the hope that future historians would teach the people that he (Buonaparte) had rid the nations of Europe of those worthless drones, and created in their stead hosts of statesmen and heroes. He also regretted the conduct of Wellington towards himself and Ney, and said if Wellington had possessed the least chivalry in his nature he might have saved Ney from an



ignominious death, and rescued him (Buonaparte) from a miserable exile—an exile worse than a thousand deaths.

Here one of the Shaker brethren questioned the Spirit of Napoleon as to whether he had met with Governor Lowe in the Spirit world.

The brother anxiously awaited an answer, but all that was heard in response was a groan such as only a suffering spirit could utter, and then the last of King-makers departed.

The Spirits of

#### KING LOUIS THE SIXTEENTH,

and his Queen, *Marie Antoinette*, now made themselves manifest through the bodies of a Shaker brother and sister, and comported themselves with dignity of bearing and manner. They said that after their execution by order of Robespierre and his assistants in crime, they had found each other in the Spirit world, and had ever since been in close companionship.

Louis spoke of the violent scenes of the Revolution in France, saying that his efforts to please the nobles on one hand, and the populace on the other, had both failed, and, from the counsels of bad advisers he had lost the confidence of the people, which precipitated the country into anarchy, revolution, and massacre. He said he had met in the Spirit world with many of the good and bad men of France. But having sincerely forgiven his enemies before he left the body, he and his Queen were now in the enjoyment of a happy state of existence.

The two Royal Spirit personages having withdrawn, the next that took possession of physical organizations were the Spirits of a young man and woman, who informed the Elders that when they were in the body they lived near the city of Buffalo, New York State. They said they had loved, and were betrothed to each other; but in consequence of the opposition of the parents of the young man to his marriage with the girl, who was in an inferior station to that of her lover, they had mutually agreed to leave home, and die together by seeking a watery grave. With this end in view, and with the belief that



they would be united in the other world, they locked themselves in each other's arms and threw themselves into the Niagara river, and were carried by the current over the Falls. Their union was continued in the Spirit world, and they were happy in each other's society.

The Spirit of

WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE,

the world's poet, introduced himself this evening, and the brethren and sisters gathered around to hear the great Spirit discourse.

He said that, notwithstanding he had made great progress throughout the beautiful Spirit world, and occupied quite an elevated sphere, he rejoiced in being able to revisit the terrestrial world, and to see the progress that was making therein in art and science. It afforded him much gratification to find that his literary effusions, given to the world while he was in the body, were appreciated. And, although it was a source of regret to him that the grosser and more indelicate words and ideas pervading some of his writings had not been expunged from the published editions, his Spirit rejoiced that the nobler and more elevated sentiments had been retained, and were appreciated by exalted and judicious minds.

Shakspeare remarked that, since he had been in the spiritual condition, he had produced many new compositions, which he deemed far superior to those which were familiar to the people of the world below; as they related not to the deeds and actions of earthly men and women, but to the beautiful world of Spirits, freed from the grossness of mortality. He said that, ere long, he would communicate those compositions of his Spirit mind to the people of earth; and he believed that they would exercise a salutary and refining influence, teaching mankind to lift their minds upward to a discernment of God's beautiful Spiritual Philosophy.

He would express his gratitude to mankind at large, and especially to his own countrymen, for the immense interest they had taken in his memory. For himself, while in the flesh,



he had never conceived that he would be the object of such honors and adoration

Bidding adieu to the brethren, and promising to make another early visit, when he hoped to be able to introduce his friends, Bacon and Jonson, the Spirit of Shakspeare withdrew, and the Elders closed the meeting.

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## CHAPTER VII.

Egyptian Mummy—A Murderer—Queen Elizabeth—Raleigh—Essex—  
Spirit Singing, etc.

THE FIRST Spirit that manifested itself this evening was that of an

### EGYPTIAN MUMMY,

or rather, the Spirit of a man whose body had been embalmed, and whose remains were in the form of a Mummy.

He said that he had lived in the city of Thebes a long time ago. It seemed to him but as yesterday that he was walking its streets, while in the flesh; but, having been a long, long time in the world of Spirits in an unconscious state, from which he had not long been awakened, the time really seemed but short since he lived on earth.

He said that he had been aroused from his dormant condition into active spiritual life by some intelligent Spirits, and he was now beginning his spiritual pilgrimage in his new sphere of action.

At this point some confusion arising on account of the noisy demonstrations of a turbulent Spirit, who insisted, as it were, upon taking possession of the organization of one of the brethren, and making himself heard, the writer lost the remainder of the Mummy's communication.

The new comer asserted that he was a "*lost Spirit*." He said that he had committed several murders in England, and



all for money, and that just after the commission of the last one he had taken passage on a ship for America. Some time after his settlement in New York, he ascertained, to his great horror, upon the perusal of an English newspaper, that his own brother had been arrested for the commission of the deed, and, upon strong circumstantial evidence, had been tried, convicted, and executed. He stated that this awful revelation so affected him that he committed suicide by shooting himself, and that he was instantly ushered into the Spirit world, where, ever since, he had been wandering alone and unfriended, daring to approach none but the Spirits of wicked men and women. Truly, he said, he experienced the tortures of a hell in the condition that he was. He said that he had killed, in cold blood, several men and women, and he feared there would be no peace for his troubled soul.

The Elders endeavored to cheer him up, by exhorting him to repentance, and try by good works to improve his condition in the world of Spirits. He promised to do all in his power to render himself worthy of association with the better class of Spirits whom he sometimes saw, but hitherto he had not dared to approach.

This troubled Spirit then left the body, which was apparently a great relief to the brother whose physical organization had entertained him.

The Spirit of the celebrated

QUEEN ELIZABETH,

of England, now took possession of the fine physical organization of one of the sisters, and discoursed fluently.

She was attended by the Spirits of

SIR WALTER RALEIGH

and the

EARL OF ESSEX,

who entered the bodies of two of the brethren.

The conversation between these three distinguished Spirits was very interesting. Essex remained near to the Queen,



who, by her manner, seemed to regard him with tender affection. She said that she had long since atoned for the errors of her life while Queen of England, and that the unfortunate differences and misunderstandings on her part relative to Essex, were reconciled soon after their re-union in the Spirit world. She had loved him sincerely while on earth, better than any other man; and now they were united for all time, and that both of them were laboring zealously in the beautiful world of Spirits. Elizabeth also paid marked attention to Sir Walter Raleigh, who conversed pleasantly, and preserved a dignified demeanor.

Elizabeth remarked that her unnatural conduct towards her cousin Mary, had caused her much anguish of mind; but that the Queen of Scots, who was now a brilliant Spirit in the highest sphere allotted to those who had been mortals, had long since forgiven her. She also said that many of their earthly friends now enjoyed each other's society in the Spirit world. She mentioned as such, the Earl of Leicester, Bacon, Shakspeare, Jonson, and others; some of whom were now present, but did not desire to manifest themselves at this time.

The Queen and her friends, with a graceful obeisance, now withdrew, and the "family" present were treated to a song of exquisite sweetness, by a young sister while entranced.

At the same time, another sister, apparently under Spirit control, was made to whirl around on the tips of her toes with astonishing rapidity of motion, which was continued for a longer space of time than one would think the human body was capable of sustaining. She came out of the condition, however, with seemingly but little exhaustion. Next, another sister discoursed with great volubility in some "unknown tongue."

And here the writer would remark, that these so-called "discourses in unknown tongues" were very frequent, occurring at nearly every meeting of the brethren and sisters. And the language of the same did not possess the character of sameness, for the listener could detect a different style and accent, and a distinctiveness as regarded the discourses which emanated from different individuals.



## CHAPTER VIII.

King George the Third—Queen Charlotte—Major Andre—Shelley—  
Lord Nelson—Indians—John Wesley—George Whitefield—Pocahontas—King Charles the Second—Rochester.

## THE SPIRIT of

## KING GEORGE THE THIRD

was manifested this evening through one of the brethren, and had a long conversation with the leading Elder of the family present. His remarks were in a great measure devoted to the subject of the American Revolution. He confessed that his natural disposition had been one of great obstinacy. He said that he had held out against granting independence from their mother country to the revolutionary Americans, long after his ministers had endeavored to dissuade him from his persistent efforts to subdue them. But, continued he, his obstinacy would have yielded to the wise counsels of the British statesmen much sooner than it did, had it not been for the perverted influence of the courtiers.

The King frankly acknowledged the uprightness of character and lofty patriotism of Washington, and he was pleased to know that free America was in a prosperous condition.

The Spirit of his Queen, *Charlotte*, now approached in the form of one of the sisters, and was introduced by the King. After a pleasant chat, they withdrew.

## The Spirit of

## MAJOR ANDRE,

of American Revolution notoriety, now introduced himself, and referred in gentle terms to his conduct while acting as a spy in the interest of the British government. He spoke of the circumstances incident to his capture—matters familiar to all readers of American history. He remarked that he had



met his betrothed love in the Spirit world, and they were now almost inseparable.

In answer to a question relative to General Arnold, the traitor, he said that he desired to make no reference to that man, who was held in disrespect even in the Spirit world.

After the Spirit of Andre had retired, that of

#### SHELLEY,

the English poet, manifested himself, and expressed his regret that the public generally, and the teachers of religion especially, still labored under a false impression with respect to himself.

The uninquiring still held him in detestation, upon the false charge of being an atheist; whereas he was always a true spiritual believer, which is the antithesis of atheism.

He said he had met with many of his old friends in the spiritual world, among whom were Byron and Moore. With respect to Thomas Moore, he would say that he was in the Spirit world what he was when in the flesh—the delight of all circles, and the pride of his own; and is now as popular among the Spirits for his exquisite etherial songs as he was on earth, when “George the Third was king.”

The Spirit of

#### LORD NELSON

the celebrated Admiral of the British navy, was now introduced, and gave some account of the naval actions in which he had been engaged while in the body, particularly that which occurred near Cape Trafalgar, where he received his mortal wound. He said that he very much regretted his follies with Lady Hamilton; yet, in justice to that lady, he would say that she had rendered the British nation inestimable service, and for which the people of that country had not been grateful.

Nelson remarked, also, that he was proud to know that the naval armament of Britain was not receding from its old prestige.



While the Spirit of Nelson was speaking, a party of Spirits of various tribes of

#### AMERICAN INDIANS

took possession of the bodies of a considerable number of the brethren and sisters, and went through their usual performances of dancing, singing, etc., giving to the looker-on a pretty fair view of aboriginal exercises.

Some little time elapsed before these Indian Spirits subsided, when the Spirits of

#### JOHN WESLEY

and

#### GEORGE WHITEFIELD,

the celebrated preachers, took possession of the bodies of two of the brethren, and spoke to those assembled. Each of them, while claiming that their ministrations upon the earth had been productive of a vast deal of good, hesitated not to say that they were in error with respect to many of their theological doctrines. Since they had been in the world of Spirits, they had met with those of good and bad men and women who had left the world of flesh.

Wesley and Whitefield both said that they were still preachers and teachers, and wherever they saw the opportunity for administering consolation to a suffering Spirit who had acted wickedly or sinfully while in the body, they did so, and had counselled perseverance and energy in the high and noble work of Spiritual progress.

All Spirits, they said, upon their entrance into the Spirit world, if they desired to enjoy eternal bliss, had that important work to perform for themselves, and it required energy and a determined will to make their way to the higher conditions of Spiritual life.

The Spirit of Whitefield having withdrawn, that of Wesley, speaking through the Shaker brother, said that he had a few remarks to make which would give him much consolation.

He stated that while in the flesh he had promulgated a certain code of laws for the guidance of the Methodist Church;



and it was generally believed among the masses, that he (Wesley) was the original compiler of these laws. Now, he was very anxious to confess that he had borrowed those laws, word for word, from a work which John Milton had compiled for the English Episcopal Church. He said that he felt constrained to make this confession through a desire to do justice to the memory of Milton.

The Spirit of John Wesley then retired.

The Spirit of

POCAHONTAS,

The Indian princess, in the person of a comely-looking sister, now manifested herself, and held a conversation with one of the Elders, at the same time that the Spirits of King

CHARLES THE SECOND,

of England, and the

EARL OF ROCHESTER,

made themselves known through the brethren.

Charles and his friend Rochester seemed to be in a merry mood, and kept up a lively conversation.

Charles expressed himself to the effect that if he had his earthly career to go over again (with his present Spiritual knowledge,) he would not lead so dissolute a life as he had done. He would also take the present opportunity to say, that he was in no wise answerable for the tribulations which fell upon England during the reign of his brother James. Had that misguided monarch followed his (Charles') advice, in adapting himself to the popular religious desires of the people of that day, the throne of England would still be in possession of the House of Stuart.

After these Spirits had left, the meeting was closed, as usual, by singing, dancing etc., by the brethren and sisters, and exhortation by the Elders.



## CHAPTER IX.

William Penn—The Indians—Robert Emmett—Lord Byron—George Fox—Ben Jonson.

SOON AFTER the opening of the religious exercises of this evening, the Spirits of Indians, together with the Spirit of

WILLIAM PENN,

their spiritual guide, manifested themselves through the organizations of some of the brethren.

William Penn spoke, and said that some of the Red Men present were the Chiefs with whom he made the treaty on the banks of the Delaware river, at Kensington, in the Colony of Pennsylvania.

He stated that a large number of Friends, sailors, and others, were present with them, but did not care to manifest themselves.

They tarried for some time in the meeting, while other Spirits came, among whom was that of

ROBERT EMMETT,

a young Irishman, who was executed for treason to the British Government, for being concerned with some of his countrymen in a rebellion.

Emmett said that although his patriotic feelings were as ardent as ever for his native land, yet his warlike spirit had been modified very materially, and softened down through Spiritual influence.

He said that he could not repress the spirit of prophecy that was strong within him; and that he saw plainly that the day was approaching when events would occur out of which Ire-



land would emerge, free from the yoke which has fastened her down so long. And he could see with prophetic vision the time not far off when his *epitaph* might be *truly* written by his patriotic countrymen.

At this point the Spirit of

#### L O R D B Y R O N ,

the distinguished English poet, introduced himself, and remarked that he was sorry to see that the "avenger, Time," to which he had while in earth-life often appealed, had not done his memory anything like justice. While living, he said, his countrymen had never rightly understood him; and now, when passed away from earth, they estimated him according to the prejudices of his cotemporaries. He had always been, and is still, considered as a misanthropist; whereas, he had ever possessed an ardent love for his species; and he thought that the sacrifices he had made would have convinced them of that fact.

His exertions, bankruptcy, and ultimately his death, in his struggles for the regeneration of Greece, ought to be incontrovertible proof of what he now averred. He said that it might be excusable on the part of the general masses, in forming an erroneous opinion of him, but it afflicted him to think that such a mind as Macaulay's should misunderstand him.

Here one of the Shaker brethren put a question to the Spirit of the noble poet, asking him if it would be agreeable to him to disclose the secret circumstance or reason that caused the separation between him and his wife.

To this, the Spirit of the poet replied, in a hesitating manner, that it was a very delicate subject, inasmuch as his wife, to whom the question related as much as to himself, was absent. But this he was at liberty to state—that public opinion was sadly erroneous upon that subject, and that the many filthy stories told about the matter were totally false. He said that he attributed his domestic calamity to the bad influence of his mother-in-law, who, before he had espoused her daughter, believed him to be rich in worldly wealth; but



after she had become familiar with his real circumstances, the whole tenor of her conduct toward him was changed.

The Spirit of

GEORGE FOX,

the founder of the Society of Friends, now introduced himself in the person of one of the Shaker brethren.

In speaking of his loved Community on earth, he alluded to the unfortunate division that had arisen among them. He said that he sadly lamented its occurrence, among those who should be an example to the world of love, charity, and forbearance. He would admonish them against such unseemly and vicious conduct; for his friends would find upon their entrance into the Spirit world, that all theological crotchets were but the offsprings of the foolish heart.

A Spirit now took possession of one of the brethren, and introduced himself to the Elders as the famous

BEN JONSON,

a cotemporary of Shakspeare. He made some remarks in a humorous style, but suddenly changing his tone, he became very grave. He said that for some time he possessed a desire to deliver himself upon a subject which related especially to his brother, William Shakspeare. The want of an opportunity hitherto, he said, had prevented him from making manifest the communication which he was now about to make.

“You know, I suppose,” (continued Jonson,) “that of late there has arisen a disbelief as to William Shakspeare being the author of the plays which bear his name. Many labored arguments have been cunningly put forth to show that the said plays are the creations of some man or men who, for unanswerable causes, never made a true confession as to who did write these marvellous plays. It is said by some of the critics, that they who wrote the plays held high positions of trust under the Sovereign, and that these nameless writers feared that if it were known they had wrote the plays, their good names would be injured thereby in high places. This is truly a poor



invention—a lame conceit ; for, after statesmen and warriors, no subject was more esteemed by the Sovereign than William Shakspeare. And the good and wise all loved his company, forasmuch as he did write these plays.

“ But if William Shakspeare did not write them, neither did he write the Sonnets, nor other marvellous verses which bear his name ; for the same manner of thought and action are embodied in these lesser works that are to be found in his plays—a manner of thought and action which belonged especially to Shakspeare alone. Now, if Shakspeare did not write ‘ Venus and Adonis,’ who did write it, and write it too in that mode of thought and expression which are found in the plays ?

“ The poor wits who have tried to do wrong to the memory of my friend William, say that he could not write the plays, inasmuch as he was not learned in books nor ancient tongues. It is very true that William was not learned, after the fashion of the men of Oxford, nor of Cambridge ; but he was a great reader, and I know, forsooth, that he had a marvellous memory ; with the help of these, and the bounteous nature which God had blessed him with, he was enabled to do what scholars richer in ancient lore could not accomplish. Let me exemplify—and I hope my argument will not lack truth and charity. Addison was a great man of mighty learning. He had vast advantages in books and in the storehouses of knowledge, that William could not have. Well, Addison did write the play of Cato. But are the men and women who are brought to light in the play of Cato, are they Romans ? Or are they merely Britons, trying to put on the gait and manners of Romans ? Are the Romans of Addison like the antique Romans that have their life and being afresh in that goodly play of ‘ Julius Cæsar ?’

“ Why is this ? It cannot be said that Addison did lack the mysteries of learning, or that he did not take delight in writing well. Ah ! friends, truly Heaven was most bountiful to William Shakspeare. When the traducers of Shakspeare first raised their voices against him—lighting their small tapers to guide weakness into folly—they said that no one man could write such plays, but that they must be the pro-



duct of *many* men. Marry! these objectors must be very good men and women, for they are as innocent as sucklings. The works of *several* men, indeed! Do not the plays of the 'Richard's' and the 'Henry's' speak for themselves, that one man alone did write them? Could any two men give thought and action so harmoniously and cunningly as to leave no impressment of the partnership?

"It were easy to multiply examples on this subject, but I will content me by giving one more. Whoever created 'Mercutio' created 'Falconbridge,' 'Petruchio,' 'Benedict,' and 'Biron:' for these characters are but different conditions of one and the same man, under different circumstances and in different company. Good, easy critics have surmised that Walter Raleigh and Francis Bacon wrote the plays. Now, I have had much converse with Bacon and Raleigh in our happy home, and they deny that they had any part in the said compositions, and both feel grieved that so much wrong should be done to the memory of Shakspeare by trying to rob him of the honors of his immortal works."

The Spirit of Ben Jonson now bade adieu to the brethren and sisters, and vacated his temporary possession of the physical organization of the Shaker brother.

The Elders, with a pious exhortation, as usual, closed the exercises of the meeting.

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On the day succeeding the events recorded in the last Chapter, the writer was called away from the Shaker Community in consequence of domestic circumstances. This narrative, therefore, necessarily terminates rather abruptly.

It was the intention of the writer to revisit the Community, but, unhappily, circumstances never permitted his desire to be accomplished. How long after his departure the "Spiritual Manifestations" were continued, he is unable to state.



## CONCLUDING REMARKS.

HAVING presented, as near as possible, a faithful account of the extraordinary scenes witnessed during a short stay at the Shaker village near Watervliet, the writer would invite the reader's attention, for a brief space of time, while he devotes a few words to a consideration of the subject of the *Origin* of "Modern Spiritualism."

The Spiritual scenes which have been described by the writer, were manifested by the Shakers in 1843; and the year 1848 witnessed the commencement of that Spiritual phenomena which at the present time prevails so extensively throughout this and other countries, embracing as its votaries, it is supposed, millions of people.

The writer, after considerable experience among the "Modern Spiritualists," has been deeply impressed with the great similitude which is to be found between many of the manifestations produced at their circles and those exercises of Spiritual life he witnessed among the "Shakers." And it is not improbable that the reader of these pages (believing them to be a truthful record,) may also be struck with the marked Spiritual resemblance between the two sects; and may probably conclude that what is termed "Modern Spiritualism" had its origin with the Society of Shakers; but, upon farther consideration, this would appear to be an illegitimate conclusion, for if all be true that Spiritualists claim, who can positively say where and when Spiritual manifestations had their alpha?

The modern Spiritualists date their organization from the time of the so-called "Rochester knockings" of 1848; yet, in their exhortations, they emphatically aver that "Spiritualism never had a beginning," but that it is "the essence of the Infinite."

Then, again, what are we to say about the various phases of witchcraft, second sight, and all the inexplicable phenomena



which in past ages was held to be the work of Satanic influence, and at the present day is reprobated as Superstition?

Without farther debating this question of priority, which perhaps may never be solved, it is the writer's opinion, that the Shaker Church (if our various sects will admit the term) was the first *organized* body that gave manifestations of what is called "Modern Spiritualism."

In conclusion: should the writer be considered as giving a biased judgment, all he can say is, that from the experience he has had among the modern Spiritualists, he cannot understand any distinction between their Spiritual manifestations and those he has recorded of the "Shakers."