

THE EARLY DAYS OF MORMONISM.

FOR many years both before and after the Revolution the western part of New York was claimed by Massachusetts. The dispute was finally settled in 1786 by the latter State retaining the title to the soil westward of a meridian line extending from Pennsylvania to Lake Ontario. The line was afterward ascertained to be the meridian of Washington. It passed near Elmira, through the county of Seneca, and pierced the town of Lyons in the county of Wayne. The area of the Massachusetts claim was more than seven million acres, or about fifteen counties as they are now arranged. The entire tract was sold in 1787 to Oliver Phelps and Daniel Gorman for one million dollars. Phelps and Gorman immediately proceeded to Canandaigua and obtained the Indian title to one-third of the tract. A land-office was opened in that village, the first of its kind in America. But the sales, although rapid, prevented the ruin neither of the purchasers nor of Robert Morris, the financier of the Revolution, who came forward to help them. The Holland Land Company profited by these misfortunes. The rich valleys of the Genesee and its tributaries more than made good its promises to actual settlers, as is readily proved by the waving fields of grain which greet the traveller through that section to-day.

In the year 1815 there came to the town of Palmyra, in Wayne county, a family by the name of Smith. Their former home was Sharon, Vermont. The father's name was Joseph, the mother's maiden name was Lucy Mack, and they were both of Scotch descent. Their son Joseph, afterward "the Prophet," was born on December 23, 1805. Hyrum, another son, helped his father at the trade of a cooper. Joseph, Jr., grew up with the reputation of being an idle and ignorant youth, given to chicken-thieving, and, like his father, extremely superstitious. Both father and sons believed in witchcraft, and they frequently "di-

vined" the presence of water by a forked stick or hazel rod. Orlando Sanders of Palmyra, a well-preserved gentleman of over eighty, tells us that the Smith family worked for his father and for himself. He gives them the credit of being good workers, but declares that they could save no money. He also states that Joseph, Jr., was "a greeny," both large and strong. By nature he was peaceably disposed, but when he had taken too much liquor he was inclined to fight, with or without provocation.

The profession of a water-witch did not bring enough ducats to the Smith family; so the attempt was made to find hidden treasures. Failing in this, the unfolding flower of Mormonism would have been nipped in the bud had not Joe's father and brother been engaged in digging a well upon the premises of Clark Chase in September, 1819. Joseph, Jr., stood idly by with some of the Chase children when a stone resembling a child's foot was thrown from the well. The Chase children claimed the curiosity, as it was considered, but Joe seized and retained it. Afterward, for a series of years, he claimed that by the use of it he was enabled to discover stolen property and to locate the place where treasure was buried.

After living in Palmyra for about ten years, the Smith family moved southward a few miles and settled in Manchester, the northern town of Ontario county. Their residence was a primitive one, even for those days. William Van Camp, the aged editor of the *Democratic Press* at Lyons, recalls the fact that it was a log house from the following circumstance. Martin Harris, a farmer near Palmyra, visited the Smiths while he was yet in doubt concerning the doctrines of Mormonism. One night, while he was in his room, curtained off from the single large room of the interior, there appeared to him no less a personage than Jesus Christ. Harris was informed that Mormonism was the true faith, and Van

Camp knows that it was a log house, although no vestige now remains, because Harris told him that his celestial visitor was lying on the beam overhead!

One mile from the Smith residence was the farm of Alonzo Sanders, now owned by William T. Sampson, commander in the United States Navy. This farm is four miles south of Palmyra, on the road toward Canandaigua. It includes a barren hill which rises abruptly to the height of one hundred and fifty feet. The ridge runs almost due north and south, and from the summit there are beautiful views of the hills surrounding Canandaigua and Seneca Lakes. It is known to the present generation as "Gold Bible Hill:" to Joe Smith it was known as "the Hill Cumorah," where the angel Moroni announced to him the presence of the "golden plates" giving an account of the fate which attended the early inhabitants of America. With these plates would be found the only means by which they could be read, the wonderful spectacles known as the "Urim and Thummim." Joe was not averse to such a revelation, for his hazel rod and his "peek-stone" had already failed him. There had been various religious awakenings in the neighborhood, and when the various sects began to quarrel over the converts Joe arose and announced that his mission was to restore the true priesthood. He appointed a number of meetings, but no one seemed inclined to follow him as the leader of a new religion. In September, 1823, an angel appeared to him, forgave his many lapses from grace and announced the golden plates.

These plates, however, were not found for several years. In the mean time the scene of Smith's operations shifted along the banks of Seneca Lake and down the tributaries of the Susquehanna to the point where that river sweeps southward into Pennsylvania past a borough of its own name, and then northward into New York, before it finally crosses Pennsylvania on its way to the Chesapeake. The borough of Susquehanna forms an important station on the Erie Railway, one hundred and ninety miles north-west of New York City. All about the localities houses are built in little groups upon

the steep hillsides: even the railroad-shops could not be erected before the ground was levelled for them. When the river first cut a channel through the Appalachian Mountains it was very saving of its strength. Should anything besides the river attempt to enter this valley it must either hang against the sides or swim.

Joe Smith had paid several visits to this region when the first settlers were struggling with the wilderness. It was a much wilder country than that about Palmyra, and the inhabitants were much more credulous. Upon these people Smith practised with his peek-stone. A number of aged persons now living in that vicinity give this description of the prophet: He was six feet or a trifle over in height; of stout build, but wiry; his hair and complexion were light; his eyes were blue and mild; and "he did not look as if he knew enough to fool people so," as one old lady expresses it. When "peeking" he kneeled and buried his face in his white stovepipe hat, within which was the peek-stone. He declared it to be so much like looking into the water that the "deflection of light" sometimes took him out of his course. On a wilderness-hill—now a part of Jacob J. Skinner's farm—his peek-stone discovered a ton of silver bars which had been buried by weary Spaniards as they trudged up the Susquehanna. An expedition for their recovery was undertaken as soon as Smith could muster enough followers to do the work. Unlike St. Paul, Joe did not work with his own hands, and he did not hesitate to be chargeable to any one. Several round excavations were made on the crown of a hill, the largest of which was about thirty-five feet in diameter and of about the same depth. The water was drained toward the south, and a shanty covered the hole from the eyes of the scoffers and the profane. The diggers had proceeded with great labor, and were just ready to grasp the silver, when the charm moved it three hundred feet to the north-east. Joe tracked it with his peek-stone to its hiding-place. It was not so far under the surface this time—only about twenty feet—and the faithful again worked with a will. The dilatory move-

ments of the silver caused anxiety to Mr. Isaac Hale, with whom the diggers had been "boarding round." Hale was a stiff old Methodist whose business judgment told him that he was taking too much stock in this "big bonanza." For all his anxiety, the silver again flitted away, and alighted fifty feet beyond the big hole. They determined to capture it if they ran the hill through a sieve. The third hole had been sunk fifteen out of the necessary twenty feet when the treasure once more jumped to the other side of the big hole. Then the prophet had a vision: the blood of a black sheep must be shed and sprinkled around the diggings. Black sheep were scarce, and while they waited for one the faithful obtained their needed rest. At length, no sheep appearing, Joe said that a black dog might answer. A dog, therefore, was killed, and the blood was sprinkled on the ground. After that the silver never went far away. Still, it waltzed about the big hole in such a lively manner that frequent tunnelling to effect its capture availed nothing. At last the prophet decided that it was of no use to dig unless one of their number was made a sacrifice. None of the faithful responded to his call, and thus the magnificent scheme was abandoned. Oliver Harper, one of the diggers who furnished the money, was soon afterward murdered. The prophet thought this might answer for a sacrifice: he again rallied the diggers, but the charm remained stubborn and would not reveal the silver.*

There was, however, another object for which Smith said the Lord had sent him to Susquehanna; and that was — a wife.

* On a scorching day in July I visited Susquehanna to obtain an authentic narrative from several parties who were eye-witnesses of the events which they related. At the residence of Mrs. Elizabeth Squires I found both herself and Mrs. Sally McKune, the widow of Joseph McKune. Mrs. Squires is considerably over seventy, and Mrs. McKune is about eighty, years of age. Both these ladies lived in the neighborhood at the time of the Smith manifestations. The statement given above with regard to the digging for treasure is that of Mrs. McKune, supplemented by Mrs. Squires. Jacob J. Skinner, the present owner of the farm, was about sixteen years old at the time of the search. For a number of years he has been engaged in filling the holes with stone to protect his cattle, but the boys still use the north-east hole as a swimming-pond in the summer.

Until he obtained one there was no use in trying to get certain buried treasures at Palmyra. A headless Spaniard guarded it with great vigilance, but would, it appeared, be driven away if Smith should shake millinery and dry-goods bills at him. Joseph stopped at the house of Isaac Hale, already noticed as having furnished board to the diggers. Mr. Hale owned a farm on the north side of the river, a mile and a half below the present borough of Susquehanna. He had three daughters, two of them already married. The second daughter, Emma, was easily persuaded to join her fortunes with those of the adventurer. The father, however, made so much opposition that they crossed over into the State of New York, and were married at Windsor, a neighboring town. This was probably early in 1826. Mr. Hale threatened to shoot his son-in-law — the "Pecker," as he called him — if he ever returned.

About these days, every other means of gaining a living without honest work having been exhausted, the prophet thought it was time to find the golden plates. Returning to the vicinity of Palmyra, Smith and his followers began to dig for the plates on the eastern side of the hill. It was announced that each one of the diggers must be pure in deed, and that no evil thought must cross his mind as he worked. One night a spade struck an iron box at the same moment that an evil thought seized one of the diggers. The box sank to lower depths amid thunder and lightning, while Smith announced that nothing could be done that night but to go home and pray. They were more fortunate, however, in leaving their evil thoughts at home on the night of September 22, 1826, for then, according to the faithful, the golden plates were taken from "the Hill Cumorah with a mighty display of celestial machinery." It is recorded that after the prize had been delivered to the prophet by angels his eyes were opened and he saw legions of devils struggling with a celestial host to keep the plates concealed. On his return to Susquehanna with a bandaged head, Smith gave out that he had had

an encounter with the chief devil, and been severely wounded by a blow "struck from the shoulder."

With the golden plates were also found the Urim and Thummim, the magic spectacles or religious peek-stones, "transparent and clear as crystal," which should translate the hieroglyphics on the plates. There were three witnesses who swore by all that was sacred that the angel of the Lord laid these plates before them, and that "they were translated by the gift and power of God." The three witnesses were Oliver Cowdery, who was finally expelled from the brotherhood in Missouri; David Whitner, who abandoned the Mormons and settled in Richmond, Missouri, where he still lives; and Martin Harris, who quarrelled with Smith in the same State and returned to New York to live.

Such a precious treasure as was now in the hands of Smith was not to be "borne in earthly vessels frail." He applied to Willard Chase, a son of that Clark Chase on whose premises the original peek-stone was discovered, to make him a wooden box for the plates. The compensation was to be a share in the prospective profits from the "Gold Book." Chase's lack of faith in both the man and the book caused him to decline the work. Smith thereupon thrust his gold plates and the rings which connected them into a bag of beans and started for Susquehanna. Twenty miles above that borough lies the village of Harpersville. Here lived Benjamin Wasson, who married one of Mrs. Smith's sisters. Wasson was a cabinetmaker, and, although not a Mormon, he made a strong box for the plates. Smith announced that no one could look into the box and live, but when his father-in-law, Hale, wished to try it Smith hid the box in the woods. Hale, in his statement of 1834, declared that Smith translated the plates in his own house, "with the stone in his hat and his hat over his face," while the plates were still hid in the woods.

Fortunately for Smith, he did not have to depend upon Hale for a place in which to carry on his operations. His wife had a six-acre place in a corner of her father's

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farm, adjoining the farm of Joseph McKune. Upon this little strip of land Smith moved a partly-finished house, twenty-six feet broad, eighteen feet deep and fourteen feet in the posts. It is evident, from the stovepipe through the roof, that the edifice was never finished. After Smith left this region Martin Harris came from Palmyra and sold the house to McKune, whose widow lived in it for about forty years. It is now the farm-residence of her son, Benjamin McKune, high sheriff of Susquehanna county, and lies close to the track of the Erie Railway, a mile and a half west of Susquehanna Dépôt. The elder McKune strongly suspected that Smith and his gang were counterfeiters.

The prophet's original plan was that the plates should be translated by an infant son, who should perform other miracles and become his successor. But his expectations were doomed to disappointment, for in a little fern-grown cemetery near at hand is a tottering slab of black sandstone with the simple inscription, "In memory of an infant son of Joseph and Emma Smith, June 15, 1828." Hence the magic spectacles were very opportunely found with the plates. The little low chamber in Smith's house was used as a translating-room. The prophet and his plates were screened even from the sight of his scribes, Martin Harris, Oliver Cowdery and Reuben Hale, by blankets secured with nails. While the translation was going on the neighbors frequently called to discuss the forthcoming book, which, it was alleged, would make the Hale family very rich. Occasionally a visitor was allowed to feel the thickness of the Golden Book as it reposed within a pillow-case, but no one was permitted to see it.*

The "celestial machinery" for the

* Among the callers was Samuel Brush, now a vigorous man of seventy-five, who carries on a large farm and a lumber-mill three miles south-west of Susquehanna. At the time of the translation he often called Reuben Hale away from his work, and the pair went for a walk. Reuben also explained the phenomenon of the peek-stone on the theory of "deflected light." Mr. Brush declares that Martin Harris was a believer in "second sight," and that "Smith was a good and kind neighbor"—testimony which is also given by Mrs. McKune, Mrs. Squires and Mr. Skinner.

translating process was very simple. A copy of the hieroglyphics was taken, and then Smith either wrote his translation on a slate or dictated for others to write on paper. Martin Harris having taken a scroll containing some of the hieroglyphics to Professor Anthon, the characters were pronounced to be partly Greek, partly Hebrew and partly Roman inverted, with a rude copy of Humboldt's Mexican calendar at the end. That the prophet was not well advanced either in Greek or English appears from a story related by the Rev. Henry Caswall, who visited Nauvoo, Illinois, in 1842. He had with him a copy of the Psalter in Greek, which he handed to the prophet and asked him to explain its contents. Smith looked at it a few moments, and then replied, "No, it ain't Greek at all, except perhaps a few words. What ain't Greek is Egyptian, and what ain't Egyptian is Greek. This book is very valuable: *it is a dictionary of Egyptian hieroglyphics.*" Pointing to the capital letters at the beginning of each verse, he said, "Them figures is Egyptian hieroglyphics, and them which follows is the interpretation of the hieroglyphics, written in the reformed Egyptian. Them characters is like the letters that was engraved on the golden plates." Upon this the Mormons began to congratulate Mr. Caswall on the information he was receiving. "There!" they said, "we told you so: we told you that our prophet would give you satisfaction. None but our prophet can explain these mysteries." The prophet then attempted to buy the book, on the ground that it could be of no use to Caswall, because he did not understand it! Refusing to sell, Caswall inquired the meaning of certain of the hieroglyphics on the papyrus of the prophet. When cornered the prophet slipped out of the room, and Caswall saw him no more.

Mrs. McKune relates the particulars of an incident which took place early in 1828. Martin Harris had advanced so much money to Smith that his wife came from Palmyra in great alarm to arrest the destruction of property and to reclaim her husband if possible. Harris showed her the sacred writings, already nearly com-

pleted, as an inducement for her to hold her peace. She found where the manuscript was concealed, and at once secured it. When asked to return it she replied, "Joe Smith may peek for it." This he attempted to do, but accused her of unfairly removing the manuscript whenever the attendants had almost reached it. After waiting a little time, she produced a portion of the roll and declared Smith to be a fraud. The remainder of the manuscript she retained, and finally burned it, with the remark, "If it cannot be found there will be an end to the partnership between Joe Smith and my husband." Joe never undertook to use his wonderful spectacles for a second translation of the matter in the missing manuscript: he feared that Mrs. Harris might produce a totally different Bible consisting of his first translation.

Mrs. Squires and Mrs. McKune agree in saying that no converts were made by Smith and Harris in the vicinity of Susquehanna. The scene of the Mormon endeavors was suddenly moved along the beautiful valley of the Susquehanna to a point north of the Appalachian Mountains and just within the borders of New York. In the locality of Harpersville and Nineveh a broad plain had been settled by a colony of emigrants called "the Vermont Sufferers," from their having formerly occupied land which was claimed by both Massachusetts and New York. Three miles above Nineveh lies Afton, just on the edge of Chenango county, and a short distance above are Sidney, in Delaware county, and Otego, in Otsego county. Smith and his followers operated with the peek-stone in this part of the valley, where he was a comparative stranger. George Collington, one of the most substantial farmers in Broome county, was then a lad of sixteen. One evening, at twilight, he discovered Smith, Joseph Knight, William Hale (uncle of Smith's wife) and two men named Culver and Blowers in the act of dodging through the woods with shovels and picks upon their shoulders, their object being to discover a salt-spring by the agency of the peek-stone. He followed them, under cover of the brush, to a point where they

stopped for consultation and finally decided to dig the next day. Noticing that Bostwick Badger, who then owned the farm now occupied by Collington, had felled an oak near the place, and that he had drawn out the timber, Collington obtained permission to cut the top for wood. Collington's axe and the prophet's diggers began operations about the same time on the following morning. Out from the treetop came Collington and asked what they were doing. They told him to mind his business, which he did by thoroughly publishing them about the neighborhood — a proceeding that brought them a number of unwelcome visitors in the place of one. Frederick Davenport furnished young Collington with a half bushel of salt to be deposited in the hole at night. By morning the water had dissolved the salt and retained its briny flavor. Bottles were filled for exhibition, and the stock of the converts in the peek-stone ran high until the trick was discovered. It was claimed that the peek-stone also pointed out an extensive silver-mine on the farm of Abram Cornell at Bettsburg, nearly opposite Nineveh. No silver was found except that furnished by Josiah Stowell, a not over-bright man whose little all went into the pocket of Smith.

However much he might fail in discovering material treasures, Smith's hold upon the religious infatuation of his followers grew more and more strong. John Morse, an aged convert to Mormonism, had recently died, and Smith was sent for to restore him to life. After looking at him Smith declined, because it would be a pity to have him suffer rheumatism and die again so soon! This was something like Brigham Young's refusal to restore a lost leg to one of his Mormons, on the ground that if he did it the man would be obliged to walk on three legs all through eternity!

Mrs. Marsh says that Joseph Knight and his sons were on one occasion in her husband's hay-field, and boldly declared that Smith could perform miracles. On being challenged for an example, Joseph Knight said, "The prophet cast the Devil out of me. He looked like a black cat;

and he ran into a pile of brush." The prophet prayed for a deceased shoemaker in Greene, Chenango county. This man had joined their Church, and the Mormons needed his property to help them in leaving the country. The widow refused to sign the property over until the prayers had been offered for the return of her husband. The prayers having availed nothing, the executor sought to recover the property. Thomas A. Johnson, then a law-student and a brother of Mrs. Marsh, was sent to Harpersville to get possession. Smith's followers were encamped in the barn of Joseph Knight, and they threatened to shoot. By the advice of friends Johnson compromised the matter by taking a valuable horse.

All accounts agree that Smith drank freely, both in the Susquehanna and in the Harpersville neighborhoods. Mrs. McKune relates that one night Smith volunteered to pray the frost away from the corn-field of his brother-in-law, Michael Morse. The field was not saved, probably because it had an exposure toward the north and the west. A number of witnesses in the vicinity of Nineveh remember that the prophet set a day for that village to sink, but that he afterward repented and withdrew his curse. He did, however, announce that on a certain evening, about twilight, he would walk on the water. The place of his selection was watched by Gentile boys until one of Smith's followers was seen to construct a bridge of planks just under the surface. Watching their opportunity, the boys removed the outer planks. Before the prophet made the attempt to walk he exhorted his followers to have strong faith. When his bridge suddenly gave way he swam ashore and said, "Woe unto you of little faith! Your faith would not hold me up."

There were other boys in the neighborhood who thought it rare sport to annoy the Mormons. The same Joseph Knight who has already figured in this narrative owned a small farm on which he had built a combined grist- and carding-mill. The power was obtained by means of a small stream, the outlet of Perch Pond to the Susquehanna River,

opposite Harpersville. This stream was dammed, so that the Mormon converts might be baptized by immersion. The day for the ceremony was fixed, but the boys so persistently destroyed the dam that the Mormons did not attempt to rebuild it till the night before, and then they were obliged to stand guard until the hour for the baptism had arrived. Knight's barn was a rude structure of about forty by thirty feet, but it served the purpose of a tabernacle in the wilderness for a number of months. The prophet himself was not a very successful preacher, but the versatile Sidney Rigdon more than made up for his defects. Smith Baker gives Rigdon the credit of being "a decent speaker, as preachers averaged in those days."

A semblance of persecution having strengthened the Church, the Gentile inhabitants of the Susquehanna Valley were glad when a "revelation" caused the sixty Mormons to pack their traps and move westward. Some of the followers were moved by a spirit of adventure, while others placed their property in the common lot and determined to accompany the prophet to his earthly as well as to his heavenly kingdom. Smith Baker was one of the teamsters, and reports that the train consisted of three baggage- and eleven passenger-wagons. The exodus was along the old State road, north of Binghamton, to Ithaca, and thence, across Cayuga Lake, to Palmyra.

The Saints in the region about the Gold Bible Hill had not been idle while these things were occurring in Susquehanna. William Van Camp relates that he and all the other boys believed Hen Pack Hill, a mile east of Palmyra, would open to allow a giant to step forth and place his foot upon Palmyra to crush it. This would be the end of all disbelievers in Mormonism, and the Saints would at once be gathered together in that vicinity. "I did not know then," says Mr. Van Camp, "how easy it is for men to lie."

Mr. Van Camp is about seventy years old, and Major John H. Gilbert, who still resides in Palmyra, is about seventy-six. Both of these gentlemen were working

in the office of the *Wayne Sentinel*, E. B. Grandin proprietor, during the months from September, 1829, to March, 1830, the time during which the Book of Mormon was in process of printing. The office was in the third story of a building now known as "Exchange Row," in the principal street of Palmyra. The foreman was Mr. Pomeroy Tucker, who afterward published a work on Mormonism. Major Gilbert was a compositor and also a dancing-master. His duties in the latter calling took him away from his "case" so frequently that Van Camp "distributed" in order to give him a chance to work the next day. The "copy" was on ruled paper—an expensive thing in those days—and the letters were so closely crowded together that words like *and* or *the* were divided at the end of the line. The copy was in Cowdery's handwriting, but it was produced from a tightly-buttoned coat every morning by Hyrum Smith. One day's supply only was given at a time, and even this was carefully taken away at night, there being but one occasion when permission was given to Major Gilbert to take it away from the office. Major Gilbert and others say that David Whitner of Richmond, Missouri, has this manuscript copy; and it has been stated recently that he has been called upon by officials from Salt Lake City to produce it, and refused.*

There were no marks of punctuation in the copy—a sore trial to both Tucker and Gilbert in "reading proof." At such times Cowdery occasionally "held the copy." In the absence of Cowdery the proof-readers often resorted to the orthodox Bible to verify some foggy passage. The "matter" was "paged" so that thirty-two pages could be printed at a time on one of Hoe's "Smith" six-column hand-presses. After the sheets had been run through once and properly dried, they were reversed and printed on the other side. The bookbinder then folded them by hand, and severed them with an ivory paper-cutter. The result was that the

* A note of inquiry has elicited from this sole survivor of the original "three witnesses" the information that he has this manuscript. Perhaps he may yet startle the Mormon world by publishing a *fac-simile* edition of the original "translation."

twenty-five hundred large sheets made five thousand small sheets, with sixteen pages printed upon each side. Major Gilbert has an unbound copy of the book, which he saved, sheet by sheet, as it came from the press.

Martin Harris furnished the funds for printing the book by a mortgage of three thousand dollars on his farm. He celebrated the completion of the work by inviting all the printers to his house. Mrs. Harris (the same who secreted the manuscript at Susquehanna) had not signed the mortgage. Harris brought his guests within the door—as Van Camp relates it—and introduced them to his wife, who bowed coldly and took no pains to welcome them. At length Harris asked for the cider-pitcher, and went to the spot indicated by his wife. Returning with it in his hand, he showed a large hole in the bottom. "Well," said Mrs. Harris, "it has as much bottom as your old Bible has." There was enough bottom to the Bible, however, to give a comfortable sum of money to "Joseph Smith, Jr., Author and Proprietor." Orlando Sanders, son of Alonzo Sanders before mentioned, says that the Smiths made too much money to walk any longer: he sold them a horse, and he now has a Bible which he took in payment for a bridle.

The most reasonable theory of the origin of the Book of Mormon connects the work directly with Solomon Spalding, a soldier of the Revolution from Connecticut and a graduate from Dartmouth in the class of 1785. Failing health induced Spalding to leave the ministry and to join his brother in a mercantile life at Cherry Valley and Richfield, New York. In 1809 he removed thence to Conneaut, in Ashtabula county, the extreme north-eastern corner of Ohio. Next west of Ashtabula is Lake county, wherein is located Kirtland—a place of great historic interest to the Mormons, as will appear before our narrative closes. While Spalding was in Conneaut he wrote a few novels of so unmeritorious a nature that no one would publish them. At length the opening of an Indian mound gave him a basis of facts upon which he built a story relating

to the Indian population of America and its descent from the Lost Tribes of Israel. He announced that the title of his novel would be *The Manuscript Found*, and that he proposed to publish a sensational story of its discovery in a cave in Ohio. Spalding frequently read extracts to his friends, and one of them furnished him with money, so that he could proceed to Pittsburg and have the novel printed. The manuscript remained in the office of Patterson & Lambdin in that city for some time, but it was never published. It is probable that it was taken away by Spalding, who died shortly after (in 1816) at Amity, Washington county, near Pittsburg. While it was in the office it is believed that Sidney Rigdon, a young printer, was so pleased with the novel that he took a copy for future use. Rigdon was born in Alleghany county, Pennsylvania, February 19, 1793. He received a fair English education, and in 1817 became an orthodox Christian preacher. He soon gave forth strange doctrines, which were founded on the manuscript in his possession, and then he abandoned preaching for a number of years "to study the Bible," as he expressed it. Moving into Lake county, Ohio, he prepared the minds of his followers for some new *ism*. It cannot be accurately stated just when, where and how he met Joseph Smith and added his religious enthusiasm to the humbuggery of the Pecker. But that such a union was formed appears from the talk of Smith regarding the gold plates, and from the actual finding of them in the manner proposed by Spalding fourteen years before. The union is still more evident when we listen to witnesses who had heard Spalding's readings, and who afterward recognized them in the Book of Mormon, with additions of a religious nature. These witnesses noted certain inconsistencies in the Book of Mormon which they had formerly discovered in Spalding's novel. History records that the widow of Spalding sent the manuscript to Conneaut, where it was publicly compared with the printed book and the fraud exposed. Soon afterward the manuscript was spirited away from Mrs. Spalding, probably to avoid the certainty of a still more con-

vincing disclosure. Major Gilbert testified that Rigdon dogged Smith's footsteps about Palmyra for nearly two years before the Bible was printed. He is of opinion that Rigdon was among those who listened to Spalding in Conneaut, and took notes on those occasions. The Bible itself is full of the religious questions which stirred the people of Western New York in those days—a most strange thing in a celestial work of such great antiquity.

Immediately after the publication of the Book the Church was duly organized at Manchester. On April 6, 1830, six members were ordained elders—Joseph Smith, Sr., Joseph Smith, Jr., Hyrum Smith, Samuel Smith, Oliver Cowdery and Joseph Knight. The first conference was held at Fayette, Seneca county, in June. A special "revelation" at this time made Smith's wife "the Elect Lady and Daughter of God," with the high-sounding title of "Electa Cyria." In later years this lady became disgusted with her husband's religion, and refused after his death to leave Illinois for Utah. She remained in Nauvoo, and married a Gentile named Bidamon. For a long time she kept the Mansion House in that place, where she died April 30, 1879.

Another revelation was to the effect that Palmyra was not the gathering-place of the Saints, after all, but that they should proceed to Kirtland in Ohio. Consequently, the early part of 1831 saw them colonized in that place, the move being known as "The First Hegira." Still another revelation (on the 6th of June) stated that some point in Missouri was the reliable spot. Smith immediately selected a tract in Jackson county, near Independence. By 1833 the few Mormons who had moved thither were so persecuted that they went into Clay county, and thence, in 1838, into Caldwell county, naming their settlement "Far West." The main body of the Mormons, however, remained in Kirtland from 1831 till they were forced to join their Western brethren in 1838. Brigham Young, another native of Vermont, joined at Kirtland in 1832, and was ordained an elder. The conference of elders on May 3, 1833,

repudiated the name of "Mormons" and adopted that of "Latter-Day Saints." The first presidency consisted of Smith, Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams. In May, 1835, the Twelve Apostles—among them Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball and Orson Hyde—left on a mission for proselytes. During the same year Rigdon's *Book of Doctrine and Covenants* and his *Lectures on Faith* were adopted. A professor of Hebrew also joined them, and all the male adults entered upon the study of that language with a will.

Rigdon was by far the ablest man in the band. His earlier religious affiliations were with the Campbellites, now called Disciples. At the time of the Mormon advent he lived in Mentor, the next town to Kirtland, but he had no farm or any other property to offer them, as has been frequently stated. Those of his followers whom he found in Kirtland frequently remarked that they "had a good time before Joe Smith came." A very clear idea of his religious power may be gained by the following statement of Judge John Barr, ex-sheriff of Cuyahoga county, Ohio, and a most excellent authority on the history of the Western Reserve. The statement has never been made public hitherto: "In 1830 I was deputy sheriff, and, being at Willoughby (now in Lake county) on official business, determined to go to Mayfield, which is seven or eight miles up the Chagrin River, and hear Cowdery and Rigdon on the revelations of Mormonism. Varnem J. Card, the lawyer, and myself started early Sunday morning on horseback. We found the roads crowded with people going in the same direction. Services in the church were opened by Cowdery with prayer and singing, in which he thanked God fervently for the new revelation. He related the manner of finding the golden plates of Nephi. He was followed by Rigdon, a famous Baptist preacher, well known throughout the eastern part of the Western Reserve and also in Western Pennsylvania. His voice and manner were always imposing. He was regarded as an eloquent man at all times, and now he seemed fully aroused. He said he had not been satisfied in his religious

yearnings until now. At night he had often been unable to sleep, walking and praying for more light and comfort in his religion. While in the midst of this agony he heard of the revelation of Joe Smith, which Brother Cowdery had explained: under this his soul suddenly found peace. It filled all his aspirations. At the close of a long harangue in this earnest manner, during which every one present was silent, though very much affected, he inquired whether any one desired to come forward and be immersed. Only one man arose. This was an aged 'dead-beat' by the name of Cahoon, who occasionally joined the Shakers, and lived on the country generally. The place selected for immersion was a clear pool in the river above the bridge, around which was a beautiful rise of ground on the west side for the audience. On the east bank was a sharp bluff and some stumps, where Mr. Card and myself stationed ourselves. The time of baptism was fixed at 2 P. M. Long before this hour the spot was surrounded by as many people as could have a clear view. Rigdon went into the pool—which at the deepest was about four feet—and after a suitable address, with prayer, Cahoon came forward and was immersed. Standing in the water, Rigdon gave one of his most powerful exhortations. The assembly became greatly affected. As he proceeded he called for the converts to step forward. They came through the crowd in rapid succession to the number of thirty, and were immersed, with no intermission of the discourse on the part of Rigdon. Mr. Card was apparently the most stoical of men—of a clear, unexcitable temperament, with unorthodox and vague religious ideas. He afterward became prosecuting attorney for Cuyahoga county. While the exciting scene was transpiring below us in the valley and in the pool, the faces of the crowd expressing the most intense emotion, Mr. Card suddenly seized my arm and said, 'Take me away!' Taking his arm, I saw that his face was so pale that he seemed to be about to faint. His frame trembled as we walked away and mounted our horses. We rode a mile toward Willoughby before a word was

said. Rising the hill out of the valley, he seemed to recover, and said, 'Mr. Barr, if you had not been there I certainly should have gone into the water.' He said the impulse was irresistible."

Kirtland is on the Kirtland branch of the Chagrin River, so named from the disappointment of a party of early surveyors, who thought they were in the valley of the Cuyahoga, the first river to the westward. The village is nine miles west of Painesville, three from Willoughby and twenty-two from Cleveland. Mentor is the nearest station on the Lake Shore Railway. Besides the Temple, the Mormons erected a number of substantial buildings, which show that they expected to remain in Kirtland. The residences of Smith and Rigdon are almost under the eaves of the Temple, and the theological seminary is now occupied by the Methodists for a church. A square mile was laid out in half-acre lots, and a number of farms were bought—the "Church farm" being half a mile down one of the most beautiful valleys which it is possible to conceive in a range of country so uniformly level.

Many an interesting story is told regarding the Mormon methods of carrying on business with the merchants of Cleveland. A bank was started, like other "wild-cat" banks of that period, without a charter from the State of Ohio. The institution was called "The Kirtland Safety Society Bank." A number of its bills of issue may be seen at the rooms of the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland. An examination of these bills shows that early in 1837 Smith was cashier and Rigdon was president, Two or three months later either Rigdon or Williams was secretary, and Smith was treasurer. Thus the process of inflation must have been both easy and rapid. Richard Hilliard, a leading merchant of Cleveland, received their bills for a few days, and then took possession of all their available assets. They were also in debt for their farms and for goods bought in New York. The bubble burst, and many in the vicinity of Kirtland were among the sufferers. Smith and Rigdon fled to Far West, after having been tar-

red and feathered for their peculiar theories of finance.

The Mormons were driven from Missouri by Governor Boggs's "Extraordinary Order," which caused them to gain sympathy as having been persecuted in a slave State. They moved to Hancock county, Illinois, in 1840, and built up Nauvoo by a charter with most unusual privileges. Smith here announced a new revelation, sustaining polygamy, which was supplemented by Young in 1852. His rebellious followers started a paper, which he promptly demolished. He was under arrest by the State authorities when a mob shot him on the 27th of June, 1844. On his death Brigham Young tricked the expectant Rigdon out of the successorship. Rigdon then refused to recognize Young's authority, and for this contumacy he was excommunicated and delivered to the Devil "to be buffeted in the flesh for a thousand years." Returning to Pittsburg, Rigdon led a life of utter obscurity, and finally died in Friendship, Allegany county, New York, July 14, 1876. Cowdery, Whitner and Harris either deserted or were cut off. The Legislature of Illinois repealed the charter of Nauvoo in 1845. Most of the Mormons gathered at Council Bluffs, Iowa, in June, 1846. Those who were left in Nauvoo were driven out at the point of the bayonet. Early in 1847 pioneers crossed the Plains to Salt Lake Valley, whither Young followed them in July. A crop was raised that year. In 1848 the main body of the Mormons were safely lodged within the confines of Utah.

By far the most important and enduring monument left by the Mormons in Kirtland is their Temple. The advent of several hundred strangers into the midst of the insignificant hamlet was an event of considerable importance, but when they selected a most commanding site, of easy access to the public highway, and commenced the building of a church, all Northern Ohio looked on in wonder. A structure of such pretensions would be a tax upon a goodly-sized town of this generation, but the several hundred Mormons who built it gave cheerfully each one his tenth in labor, materials or money

for the four years from 1832 to 1836, the entire cost being estimated at forty thousand dollars. The visitor, come from whatever direction he may, has the Temple constantly in view as a reminder of the quaint style of "meeting-houses" in New England. Its architectural superiority over the meeting-houses is probably due to the fact that Smith had a "revelation" which gave him the exact measurements and proportions. The size upon the ground is eighty feet by sixty, and the eastern gable runs up into a square tower, surmounted by a domed belfry, to the height of one hundred and twenty-five feet. Two lofty stories above a low basement are covered by a shingled roof pierced with dormer windows. Large Gothic windows of the Henry VIII. shape are filled with seven-by-nine glass, and afford relief to the solid walls of stone and stucco that have so well survived the ravages of nearly half a century, though the iron rust streaking the exterior, the moss-grown shingles, the wasps' nests under the eaves, and the two immense chimneys already tottering to their fall, give evidence of approaching ruin.

As much as this even the careless passer-by cannot well avoid seeing. The more patient and accurate visitor may readily repeat my own experience as I went in search of the key on a bleak day in December. "The people ought to fix it up," said one informant: "it is a good thing for Kirtland;" the force of which remark I did not realize till I called upon an old Mormon woman who was said to have the keys. Inquiry at her little cabin resulted in my being directed to "go to Electy Stratton's." The latter personage, my cicerone, stated that her parents were Mormons—that her father had spent several hundred dollars in the cause; and so "it was thought best that their family should have the keys for a while now." The small fee for visiting the Temple was the "good thing for Kirtland," and the custody of the keys was not to remain long in one family. Opening a rickety gate, we entered the churchyard. High aloft, just under the pediment, I could read this inscription in golden letters upon a white tablet: "House of the Lord, built

by the Church of Christ, 1834." Instead of the words "of Christ" the original inscription read "of the Latter-Day Saints." The Temple faces the east. Solid green doors, with oval panels, open into a vestibule extending across the entire front, and terminating on either hand in a semi-circular stairway. The ceiling is cut away from the front wall to allow a flood of light to enter from a huge square window above, and the open space is railed off like a steamer's cabin. At the right, under the stairway, is the "Temple Register Room," containing a record of visitors. On the left is the "Library," with a curious collection of whale-oil chandeliers. On the left of the wall, parallel with the front, is the "Gentlemen's Entrance:" on the right is the "Ladies' Entrance." Between these doors are the inscriptions: "Laus Deo," "Crux mihi anchora," "Magna veritas, et prevalebit." The auditorium occupies all the rest of the first story, but one could wish that the wall which divided it from the vestibule need not have spoiled one of the beautiful windows at either end, thus leaving an ungainly half window in the auditorium. A row of wooden pillars on either side gives the effect of galleries as the room is entered, but a closer view shows that the space between the rows is arched toward the centre of the ceiling. One of the pillars contains a windlass, which in former times controlled the heavy canvas curtains from above. The larger curtain fell into grooves between the high-back pews in such a manner as to separate the men from the women: the smaller curtains, at right angles to the other, divided both the men and the women into separate classrooms. Thus the audience was quartered or halved at pleasure, and the whole audience was enabled to face either westward or eastward by simply changing the movable benches from one side of the pews to the other. Clusters of richly-carved pulpits, rising by threes, in three tiers, fill up either end of the room. The eastern cluster is devoted to the Aaronic Priesthood, which also includes the Levitical Priesthood, and administered the temporal affairs of the Church. Each of the three pulpits in the upper tier has upon

the front the letters "B. P. A.," meaning Bishop Presiding over Aaronic Priesthood; the middle tier has the letters "P. A. P.," Presiding Aaronic Priest; the lower tier has the letters "P. A. T.," Presiding Aaronic Teacher; a smaller pulpit below is labelled "P. A. D.," Presiding Aaronic Doorkeeper. The pulpits against the western end are built up against an outer window, with alternate panes of red and white glass in the arched transom. These pulpits were occupied by the spiritual leaders, or the Melchisedec Priesthood, Joe Smith's seat being in the highest tier. This tier of pulpits is marked "M. P. C.," Melchisedec President of Counsellors; the middle tier is marked "P. M. H.," Melchisedec Presiding High Priest; the lower tier is "M. H. P.," Melchisedec High Priest. Curtains from above were arranged to come down between the different tiers of the priesthood, but so arranged that while those of one degree might shut themselves away from the audience "for consultation," they could not hide themselves from their superiors in ecclesiastical rank. Strings and nails in the ceiling are the only remnants of these remarkable partitions. A simple desk below the Melchisedec pulpit bears the title "M. P. E.," Melchisedec Presiding Elder. The letters are in red curtain-cord, and the desk itself, like all the pulpits above, is covered with green calico. In the days of the Temple's glory rich velvet upholstery set off all the carved work of the pulpits, and golden letters shone from spots which are now simply marked by black paint. The gilt mouldings which formerly set off the plain white finish of the woodwork were first despoiled by the vandals, and then entirely removed by the faithful to prevent further destruction. These mottoes still remain upon the walls: "No cross, no crown;" "The Lord reigneth, let His people rejoice;" and "Great is our Lord, and of great power." Over the arched window behind the ten Melchisedec pulpits, and just beneath the vertical modillion which forms the keystone of the ornamental wooden arch, is the text, "Holiness unto the Lord."

Such is the auditorium to-day—a room

which will comfortably hold six hundred people, but which was often packed so full that relays of worshippers came and went during a single service. The high pews in the corners were for the best singers in Israel; and in one of these pews, the natives assert, an insane woman was in the habit of rising and tooting on a horn whenever the sentiments of the officiating minister did not meet with her approval. Smith was in the habit of announcing from his lofty pulpit, "The truth is good enough without dressing up, but Brother Rigdon will now proceed to dress it up."

Over the auditorium is a similar room with lower ceilings and plainer pulpits, each marked with initials which it would be tiresome to explain. This hall was used as a school of the prophets where Latin and Hebrew were taught. Marks of the desks remain, but the desks themselves have long since been carried away, and the hall has been used for an Odd Fellows' lodge and for various social purposes. On one of the pillars is this remarkable announcement: "THE SALT LAKE MORMONS.—When Joseph Smith was killed on June 27, 1844, Brigham Young *assumed the leadership* of the Church, telling the people in the winter of 1846 that all the *God* they wanted *was him*, and all the *Bible* they wanted was in *his* heart. He led or drove about two thousand people to Utah in 1847, starting for Upper California and landing at *Salt Lake*, where, in 1852, Brigham Young presented the *Polygamic Revelation* (?) to the people. The *True Church* remained disorganized till 1860, when Joseph Smith took the leadership or Presidency of the Church at Amboy, Illinois. *We* (thirty thousand) have no affiliation with the *Mormons* whatever. They are to us an *apostate* people, *working all manner of abomination* before God and man. We are no part or parcel of them in *any sense whatever*. Let this be *distinctly* understood: *we are not Mormons*. Truth is truth, wherever it is found."

In the vestibule of the Temple there is a photograph of Joseph Smith, Jr., and over it is the inscription, "Joseph Smith, Jr., M. P. C. President of the *Re-organized*

Church of J. C. of L. D. S. He resides at Plano, Kendall county, Illinois." Mr. Smith, who is a son of the prophet, was born in Kirtland November 6, 1832. He removed with his parents to Missouri and Illinois, and was in his twelfth year when his father was killed at Nauvoo. He was a farmer, a school-director and justice of the peace. Removing to Canton, Illinois, he studied law, and has held various city offices. In 1860 he began to preach Mormonism according to the notice nailed on the pillar of the Temple. In 1866 he removed to Plano to take charge of *The Latter-Day Saints' Herald*, a position which he still retains, in connection with the presidency of the Church. Under date of December 23, 1879, Mr. Smith writes: "I am now pretty widely recognized as the leader of that wing of the Mormon Church declaring primitive Mormonism, but denying and opposing polygamy and Utah Mormonism. . . . We hope they [the Utah Mormons] are waning in power. We are maintaining an active ministry in Utah, striving to show the people there their errors. . . . It is not my province to state whether the Church will return to Kirtland or not."

From Mr. Smith's further statements it seems that the various sects—such as Rigdonites, Strangites, etc.—into which the Mormons were broken after leaving Kirtland are very few in numbers and very widely scattered. His reformed Church believes in the Trinity, future punishment, the laying on of hands, an organization like the primitive Church, continued revelations, single marriages, and the creed of most orthodox churches relating to the atonement and the ordinances of the gospel. The title to the Church property at Kirtland is now in Mr. Smith and a Mr. Forscutt, who derived their title through a Mr. Huntley, the purchaser under a mortgage sale against the prophet. Proceedings to remove the cloud from the title are now in the Ohio courts. "It is believed," writes Mr. Smith, "that the real title is in the Church, and not in Joseph Smith as an individual nor in his legal heirs or assignees."

The space under the roof is utilized by a series of school-rooms, each with falling plastering and "ratty" floors. Here the young Mormons were taught to ascend the Hill of Science by trudging up some scores of steps several times a day. Strange and dark cubbyholes stare at the visitor from all sides. In one of these was kept the body of Joseph, the son of Jacob, known by a roll of papyrus which was found in his hand. Joe Smith translated the characters on the roll, being favored with a "special revelation" whenever any of the characters were missing by reason of the mutilation of the roll.

Still up the stairway within a small square tower, now without a bell, I thrust my way until a little trap-door allowed an egress. But the railing had gone, and I clung to the belfry-blinds while I surveyed the cold waters of Lake Erie on the north, the rise of Little Mountain on the south, and, between them the broad tract of rolling country divided by the Chagrin River. I descended through labyrinthine passages, and came again to the ground and to the outer air with a sense of relief after my two hours' sojourn within the Mormon Temple.

FREDERIC G. MATHER.

A VENGEANCE.

FROM savage pass and rugged shore
 The noise of angry hosts had fled,
 The bitter battle raged no more
 Where fiery bolts had wrought their scars,
 And where the dying and the dead
 In many a woeful heap were flung,
 While night above the Ægean hung
 Its melancholy maze of stars.

One boyish Greek, of princely line,
 Lay splashed with blood and wounded sore:
 His wan face in its anguish bore
 The delicate symmetry divine
 Carved by the old sculptors of his land;
 A broken blade was in his hand,
 Half slipping from the forceless hold
 That once had swayed it long and well;
 And round his form in tatters fell
 The velvet raiment flowered with gold.

But while the calm night later grew
 He heard the stealthy, rustling sound
 Of one who trailed on laggard knees
 A shattered shape along the ground;
 And soon with sharp surprise he knew
 That in the encircling gloom profound
 A fierce Turk crawled by slow degrees
 To where in helpless pain he lay.
 Then, too, he witnessed with dismay