

vinced me, that upon earth happiness was too scarce not to be enjoyed when presented to you. Yet in the midst of pleasure I did not forget the duty I owed to my tribe, and I sent letters to Joe Smith, the Mormon leader at Nauvoo, that we might at once enter into an arrangement. Notwithstanding the bad season, we had some few days of sunshine, in which pretty Miss Emma and I would take long rambles in the woods; and sometimes, too, my host would invite the hunters of his neighbourhood, for a general *battue* against bears, deer, and wild cats. Then we would encamp out under good tents, and during the evening, while smoking near our blazing fires, I would hear stories which taught me more of life in the United States than if I had been residing there for years.

"*Dis moi qui frequentes, je te dirai qui tu es,*" is the old French proverb. Mr. Courtenay never chose his companions but among the more intellectual classes of the society around him, and, of course, these stories were not only well told, but interesting in their subjects. Often the conversation would fall upon the Mormons, and perceiving how anxious I was to learn anything about this new sect, my host introduced me to a very talented gentleman, who had every information connected with their history. From him I learned the particulars which gave rise to Mormonism, undoubtedly the most extraordinary imposition of the nineteenth century.

There existed years ago a Connecticut man, named Solomon Spalding, a relation of the one who invented the wooden nutmegs. By following him through his career, the reader will find him a Yankee of the true stock. He appears at first as a law student; then as a preacher, a merchant, and a bankrupt; afterwards he becomes a blacksmith in a small western village; then a land speculator and a county schoolmaster; later still, he becomes the owner of an iron-foundry; once more a bankrupt; at last, a writer and a dreamer.

As might be expected, he died a beggar somewhere in Pennsylvania, little thinking that, by a singular coincidence, one of his productions (the "Manuscript Found"), redeemed from oblivion by a few rogues, would prove in their hands a powerful weapon, and be the basis of one of the most anomalous, yet powerful secessions which has ever been experienced by the Established Church.

We find, under the title of the "Manuscript Found," an historical romance of the first settlers of America, endeavouring to show that the American Indians are the decendants of the Jews, or the lost tribes. It gives a detailed account of their journey from Jerusalem, by land and by sea, till they arrived in America, under the command of Nephi and Lehi. They afterwards had quarrels and contentions, and separated into two distinct nations, one of which is denominated Nephites, and the other Lamanites,

Cruel and bloody wars ensued, in which great multitudes were slain. They buried their dead in large heaps, which caused the mounds now so commonly found on the continent of America.

Their knowledge in the arts and sciences, and their civilization, are dwelt upon, in order to account for all the remarkable ruins of cities and other curious antiquities, found in various parts of North and South America.

Solomon Spalding writes in the bible style, and commences almost every sentence with, "And it came to pass,"—"Now, it came to pass."

Although some powers of imagination and a degree of scientific information are displayed throughout the whole romance, it remained for several years unnoticed, on the shelves of Messrs. Patterson and Lambdin, printers, in Pittsburg.

Many years passed, when Lambdin, the printer, having failed, wished to raise the wind by some book speculation. Looking over the various manuscripts then in his possession, the "Manuscript Found," venerable in its dust, was, upon examination, looked upon as a gold mine, which would restore to affluence the unfortunate publisher. But death summoned Lambdin away, and put an end to the speculation, as far as his interests were concerned.

Lambdin had intrusted the precious manuscript to his bosom friend, Sidney Rigdon, that he might embellish and alter it, as he might think expedient. The publisher now dead, Rigdon allowed this *chef d'œuvre* to remain in his desk, till, reflecting upon his precarious means, and upon his chances of obtaining a future livelihood, a sudden idea struck him. Rigdon well knew his countrymen and their avidity for the marvellous; he resolved to give to the world the "Manuscript Found," not as a mere work of imagination or disquisition, as its writer had intended it to be, but as a new code of religion, sent down to man, as of yore, on awful Sinai, the tables were given unto Moses.

For some time Rigdon worked very hard, studying the Bible, altering his book, and preaching every Sunday. As the reader may easily imagine, our Bible student had been, as well as Spalding, a Jack of all trades, having successively filled the offices of attorney, bar-keeper, clerk, merchant, waiter, newspaper editor, preacher, and, finally, a hanger-on about printing offices, where he could always pick up some little job in the way of proof correcting and so forth.

To us this variety of occupations may appear very strange, but among the unsettled and ambitious population of the United States, men at the age of fifty have been, or at least have tried to be, everything, not in gradation, from the lowest up to the highest, but just as it may happen—doctor yesterday and waiter to-day—the Yankee philosopher will to-morrow run for a seat in legislature; if he fails, he may turn a Methodist preacher, a Mormon, a land-speculator, a member of the "Native American Society," or a mason—that is to say, a journeyman mason.

Two words more upon Rigdon, before we leave him in his compara-

tive insignificance! He is undoubtedly the father of Mormonism, and the author of the "Golden Book" with the exception of a few subsequent alterations made by Joe Smith. It was easy for him, from the first planning of his intended imposture, to publicly discuss, in the pulpit, many strange points of controversy, which were eventually to become the corner-stones of the structure which he wished to raise.

The novelty of the discussions was greedily received by many, and, of course prepared them for that which was coming. Yet it seems that Rigdon soon perceived the evils which his wild imposture would generate, and he recoiled from his task, not because there remained lurking in his breast some few sparks of honesty, but because he wanted courage; he was a scoundrel, but a timorous one, and always in dread of the Penitentiary. With him Mormonism was a mere money speculation, and he resolved to shelter himself behind some fool who might bear the whole odium, while he would reap a golden harvest, and quietly retire before the coming of a storm. But, as is often the case, he reckoned without his host; for it so happened that, in searching for a tool of this description, he found in Joe Smith one not precisely what he had calculated upon. He wanted a compound of roguery and folly as his tool and slave; Smith was a rogue and an unlettered man, but he was what Rigdon was not aware of—a man of bold conception, full of courage and mental energy; one of those unprincipled, yet lofty, aspiring beings who, centuries past, would have succeeded as well as Mahomet, and who has, even in this more enlightened age, accomplished that which is wonderful to contemplate.

When it was too late to retract, Rigdon perceived with dismay that, instead of acquiring a silly bondsman, he had subjected himself to a superior will; he was now himself a slave, bound by fear and interest, his two great guides through life. Smith consequently became, instead of Rigdon, "the elect of God," and is now at the head of thousands, a great religious and political leader.

From the same gentleman I also learned the history of Joseph Smith, and I will lay before the reader what, from various documents, I have succeeded in collecting concerning this remarkable impostor, together with a succinct account of the rise and progress of this new sect, as it is a remarkable feature in the history of nations.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

My readers have already been made acquainted with the history of the "Book," upon which the imposture of Mormonism has been founded, and of the acquaintance which took place between Rigdon and Joe Smith, whose career I shall now introduce.

The father of Joe was one of a numerous class of people who are

termed, in the west, "money diggers," living a sort of vagrant life imposing upon the credulous farmers by pretending that they know of treasure concealed, and occasionally stealing horses and cattle. Joseph Smith was the second son, and a great favourite of his father, who stated everywhere that Joe had that species of second sight, which enabled him to discover where treasure was hidden. Joe did certainly turn out very smart, and it was prophesied by the "old ones" that, provided he was not hung, Joe would certainly become a general, if he did not gain the office of president of the United States. But Joe's smartness was so great, that Palmyra, where his father usually resided, became too small for the exercise of his talents, and our hero set off on his travels.

Some time afterwards Joe was again heard of. In one of his rambles, he had gone to Harmony (Pennsylvania), and there formed an acquaintance with a young woman. In the fall of 1826, being then at Philadelphia, he resolved to go and get married to her, but, being destitute of means, he now set his wits to work to raise some money and get a recommendation, so as to obtain the fair one of his choice. He went to a man named Lawrence, and stated that he had discovered in Pennsylvania, on the bank of the Susquehanna river, a very rich mine of silver, and if he, Lawrence, would go there with him, he might have a share in the profits; that it was near high-water mark, and that they could put the silver into boats, and take it down the river to Philadelphia, and dispose of it. Lawrence asked Joseph if he was not deceiving him?

"No," replied Joe, "for I have been there and seen it with my own eyes; and if you do not find it so when we get there, I will bind myself to be your servant for three years."

By oaths, asseverations, and fair promises, Lawrence was induced to believe in Joe's assertion, and agreed to go with him; and as Joseph was out of money, Lawrence had to defray the whole expenses of the journey. When they arrived at Harmony, Joseph was strongly recommended by Lawrence, who was well known to the parents of the young woman; after which they proceeded on their journey to the silver mine, made a diligent search, and of course found nothing. Thus Lawrence had his trouble for his pains, and returned home with his pockets lighter than when he started, whilst honest Joe had not only his expenses paid, but a good recommendation to the father of his fair one.

Joe now proposed to marry the girl, but the parents were opposed to the match. One day, when they happened to be from home, he took advantage of the opportunity, went off with her, and the knot was tied.

Being still destitute of money, he now again set his wits to work, to contrive to get back to Manchester, at that time his place of residence, and he hit upon the following plan, which succeeded. He went to an honest old Dutchman, by the name of Stowel, and

told him that he had discovered on the banks of the Black River, in the village of Watertown (Jefferson County, N. Y.), a cave, in which he found a bar of gold as big as his leg, and about three or four feet long; that he could not get it out alone on account of its great weight; and if Stowel would frank him and his wife to Manchester (N. Y.), they would then go together to the cave, and Stowel should share the prize with him. The good Dutchman consented.

A short time after their arrival at Manchester, Stowel reminded Joseph of his promise, but he coolly replied that he could not go just then, as his wife was among strangers, and would be very lonesome if he quitted her. Mr. Stowel was, like Mr. Lawrence, obliged to return without any remuneration, and with less money than he came. I mention these two freaks of Joe Smith, as they explain the money-digger's system of fraud.

It would hardly be believed that, especially among the cunning Yankees, such "mines and treasures" stories should be credited; but it is a peculiar feature in the U. S. that the inhabitants, so difficult to overreach in other matters, will greedily take the bait when "mines" or "hidden treasure" are spoken of. In Missouri and Wisconsin, immense beds of copper ore and lead have been discovered in every direction. Thousands of poor, ignorant farmers, emigrants from the east, have turned diggers, miners, and smelters. Many have accumulated large fortunes in the space of a few years, and have returned "wealthy gentlemen" to their own native state, much to the astonishment of their neighbours.

Thus has the "mining spirit" been kept alive, and impostors of every variety have reaped their harvest, by speculating upon the well-known avidity of the "people of America!"

It was in the beginning of 1827, that Joe, in a trip to Pittsburg, became acquainted with Rigdon. A great intimacy took place betwixt them, and they paid each other alternate visits—Joe coming to Pittsburg and Rigdon going to the Susquehanna, for pleasure excursions, at a friend's. It was also during the same year that the Smith family assumed a new character. In the month of June, Joseph Smith, sen. went to a wealthy, but credulous farmer, and related the following story:—

"That some years ago, a spirit had appeared to Joe, his son, and, in a vision, informed him that in a certain place there was a record on plates of gold, and that he was the person who must obtain them, and this he must do in the following manner:—On the 22d of September, he must repair to the place where these plates of gold were deposited, dressed in black clothes, and riding on a black horse, with a switch tail, and demand the plates in a certain name; and, after obtaining them, he must immediately go away, and neither lay them down nor look behind him."

The farmer gave credit to old Smith's communication. He accordingly fitted out Joseph with a suit of black clothes, and

borrowed a black horse. Joe (by his own account) repaired to the place of deposit, and demanded the plates, which were in a stone box, unsealed, and so near the surface of the ground that he could see one end of it; raising the lid up, he took out the plates of gold; but fearing some one might discover where he got them, he laid them down, to replace the top stone as he had found it; when, turning round, to his surprise, there were no plates to be seen. He again opened the box, and saw the plates in it; he attempted to take them out, but was not able. He perceived in the box something like a toad, which gradually assumed the appearance of a man, and struck him on the side of his head. Not being discouraged at trifles, Joe again stooped down and attempted to take the plates, when the spirit struck him again, knocked him backwards three or four rods, and hurt him very much; recovering from his fright, he inquired of the spirit, why he could not take the plates; to which the spirit made reply, "Because you have not obeyed your orders." He then inquired when he could have them, and was answered thus:—"Come one year from this day, and bring with you your eldest brother; then you shall have them."

"This spirit," said the elder Joseph Smith, "was the spirit of the prophet who wrote this book, and who was sent to Joe Smith, jun. to make known these things to him. Before the expiration of the year, the eldest brother died; which," the old man said, "was a decree of Providence." He also added—

"Joe went one year from that day to demand the plates, and the spirit inquired for his brother, and Joe replied that he was dead. The spirit then commanded him to come again in one year from that day, and bring a man with him. On asking who might be the man, he was answered that he would know him when he saw him."

Thus, while Rigdon was concocting his Bible, and preaching new doctrines, the Smith family were preparing the minds of the people for the appearance of something wonderful; and although Joe Smith was well known to be a drunken vagabond, he succeeded in inspiring, in hundreds of uneducated farmers, a feeling of awe which they could not account for. I must here stop in my narrative, to make a few observations.

In the great cities of Europe and America, civilization, education, and the active bustle of every-day life, have, to a great degree, destroyed the superstitious feelings so common among the lower classes, and have completely removed the fear of evil geniuses, goblins, and spirits. But such is not the case in the western country of the United States, on the borders of the immense forests, and amidst the wild and broken scenery of glens and mountains, where torrents roll with impetuosity through caves and cataracts; where, deprived of the amusements and novelties which would recreate his imagination, the farmer allows his mind to be oppressed with strange fancies, and though he may never avow