

sore vexed. But suspicions of this kind made little impression upon his intoxicated understanding; the fanaticism which he had excited in others was now reacting upon himself. How should it have been otherwise? A Quaker, who was present at one meeting and inveighed against what he called the dissimulation of these creatures, caught the contagious emotion himself, and even while he was biting his lips and knitting his brows, dropped down as if he had been struck by lightning." (*Southey's Wesley.*)

SHAKERS

About the year 1750 there originated in England another peculiar body of sectarians calling themselves the "United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing," but commonly known, for obvious reasons, as Shakers. Their chief prophetess and founder was "Mother" Ann Lee, whom they claim as the actual reincarnation of Christ. They claim also the inspiration of prophecy, the gift of healing, and sometimes even the gift of tongues, and believe in the reality of constant intercourse with the spirit world through visions. In consequence of persecution in England, on account of their public dancing, shouting, and shaking, they removed to this country about 1780 and settled at New Lebanon, New York, where the society still keeps up its organization.

The best idea of the Shakers is given in a small volume by Evans, who was himself a member of the sect. Speaking of the convulsive manifestations among them, he says: "Sometimes, after sitting awhile in silent meditation, they were seized with a mighty trembling, under which they would often express the indignation of God against all sin. At other times they were exercised with singing, shouting, and leaping for joy at the near prospect of salvation. They were often exercised with great agitation of body and limbs, shaking, running, and walking the floor, with a variety of other operations and signs, swiftly passing and repassing each other like clouds agitated with a mighty wind. These exercises, so strange in the eyes of the beholders, brought upon them the appellation of Shakers, which has been their most common name of distinction ever since." With regard to their dancing, he says: "It is pretty generally known that the Shakers serve God by singing and dancing; but why they practice this mode of worship is not so generally understood. . . . When sin is fully removed, by confessing and forsaking it, the cause of heaviness, gloom, and sorrow is gone, and joy and rejoicing, and thanksgiving and praise are then the spontaneous effects of a true spirit of devotion. And whatever manner the spirit may dictate, or whatever the form into which the spirit may lead, it is acceptable to Him from whom the spirit proceeds." On one particular occasion, "previous to our coming we called a meeting and there was [sic] so many gifts (such as prophecies, revelations, visions, and dreams) in confirmation of a former revelation for us to come that some could hardly wait for others to tell their gifts. We had a joyful meeting and danced till morning."