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Tuttle, Hudson (1836-1910)

American seer of the early days of Spiritualism. Tuttle was born October 4, 1836, in Berlin Heights, Ohio, and spent his early years in a wilderness on the southern shores of Lake Erie. His father's house was the headquarters for itinerant Unitarian preachers and the atmosphere was burdened with dogmatic disputations. As a result young Tuttle became at an early age skeptical of organized religion.

Tuttle attended his first Spiritualist séance at the home of a retired Congregational minister who had heard of the Rochester rappings and called in a few friends for an experiment. Tuttle fell into trance and wrote spirit messages automatically. Simultaneously with his automatic writing, raps developed and the table moved. The séances were free. The communicators, in hours of seclusion, were his teachers. "It was my only source of knowledge," he wrote in the preface to his book *Arcana of Spiritualism* (1871), "for I had access to few books. I had attended school eleven months in all, six of which were at a district school, and five at a small academy."

In 1857, he married Emma Rood, writer, lecturer on education, composer of songs, and a frequent contributor to the Spiritualist press.

The first article Tuttle published was on prayer in *The Spiritual Telegraph*. He often wrote and rewrote a script several times before the communicator would declare the result satisfactory. He began writing a story founded on spirit life. It was entitled *Scenes in the Spirit World* (1855). In England it was published under the title *Life in Two Spheres* (1895). After completing it, he began a scientific work, *Arcana of Nature*.

His impression was that the French naturalist Lamarck and Alexander von Humboldt, along with other intelligences, were associated in the production of the book. But he knew nothing of these great minds. He was only entering his eighteenth year. When the book was completed, his spirit guides declared it to be unsatisfactory and demanded the destruction of the script. Reluctantly he burned the large bulk of the manuscript and started again.

For two years, the remaining manuscript lay on his table and he made some correction or addition to it nearly every day. The engravings in both volumes were made by the same influences that wrote the book. He claimed no merit for himself and said: "Mine has been the task of an amanuensis, writing that which has been given to me. I claim no honour, except honestly and faithfully attempting to perform my part of the task."

Arcana of Nature, two volumes, published 1860-63, was certainly a remarkable book for the time. It was quoted by F. C.L. Büchner in his own book Force and Matter (1864) to strengthen his materialistic position, while Charles Darwin in the Descent of Man quoted statements from Tuttle's later Origin and Antiquity of Physical Man. Both Büchner and Darwin were unaware that the book was produced by an uneducated farm boy.

The spirit controls were good educators. But Tuttle never gave up his modest life as a farmer and breeder of horses in Berlin Heights, Ohio. The spirit influences did not come to Tuttle at all times. He said:

"Sometimes I have prolific periods, and again, I go over a deserted country. For days, weeks, even months, I feel forsaken and alone. The very fountains of thought seem dried up. No incitement can compel me to write, or if I attempt to do so it is worthless, or worse, unreliable. It sometimes seems to me that I have never written anything of value, and I am sure I never can again. At the same time, when I study it, this experience is one of the most convincing tests that some superior intelligence comes into my life."

He died December 15, 1910, in Berlin Heights, Ohio.

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