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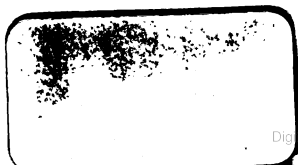
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PHILOSOPHICAL HISTORY
OF
FREE-MASONRY
AND
OTHER SECRET SOCIETIES;

OR,

THE SECRET SOCIETIES OF ALL AGES CONSIDERED IN THEIR
RELATIONS WITH, AND INFLUENCE ON, THE MORAL,
SOCIAL, AND INTELLECTUAL PROGRESS OF MAN,

BY

REV. AUGUSTUS C. L. ARNOLD,
AUTHOR OF "MODERN ELEUSINIA," "THE MYSTERY," "CHARLES LUDLOW," ETC.

"Bees will not work except in darkness. Thought will not work except in
silence; neither will virtue work except in secrecy."—SANTOR RESARTUS.

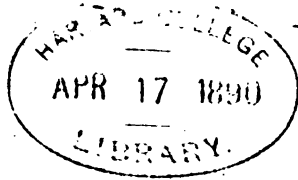
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THE LODGE.

The Mason's ways are
A type of existence,
And his persistence
Is, as the days are
Of men in this world.

The future hides in it
Good hap or sorrow;
We press still through it,
Naught, that abides in it,
Daunting us, onward.

And silent before us,
Veiled the dark portal,
Goal of all mortal;
Stars silent rest over us,
Graves, under us, silent.

But heard are the voices,
Voice of the sages,
Of the worlds and the ages,
"Choose well, your choice is
Brief, but yet endless."

"Here eyes do regard you,
In eternity's stillness,
Here is all fullness,
Ye brave, to reward you,
Work and despair not."

GOETHE.

THE MAN OF CHARITY.

Know'st thou, what's said, when from thy door
The sons of sorrow see thee pass ?
"Behold his brow ! how full of grace !
He smiles upon the suppliant poor !
He marks their sorrow and affliction ;
And, with celestial condescension
He watches by the fevered bed,
And charms to peace the throbbing head,
With words of undying affection."

VICTOR HUGO.

'Speed on, ye faithful brothers! speed!
And blessings with you go;
Still aid the widow in her need,
And sooth the orphan's wo!
Still by the heart-sick stranger's side,
With words of kindness stay,
And bid the deep and troubled tide
Of sorrow pass away!
Ye generous band! long may you stand,
The graybeard and the youth!
Shoulder to shoulder, hand to hand,
In Honor, Virtue, Truth!

PREFACE.

THE object of the Author, in the following pages, has not been to present to the public a complete history of secret societies in all their details—such a history, indeed, would far transcend the limits of this work, besides possessing little interest for the general reader—but rather to reveal the Ideal, which the most prominent of these remarkable institutions have exhibited to the world, and labored to realize in the life of man and society. He has desired to show not only the utility of those societies, but also that they belong to the great category of divine instrumentalities, which Providence has employed in various ages, for the education and advancement of the human race. The Secret Societies of Antiquity were evidently of this character. They were the prolific fountain of ancient Art, Literature, Science, Philosophy, and Civilization.

Through them came the new revelations of life, which contributed to the progress of Humanity.

Among the secret fraternities which exist at this time, the Masonic order stands pre-eminent, not only because it is, in a degree, the successor of the ancient Egyptian and Grecian mysteries, and legitimately, and entirely so, of the *collegia fabrorum* of the ancient Romans; but also, because it is the source whence all these fraternities have proceeded. As the Masonic brotherhood is the parent of all existing societies which are based on the secret principle, the Author has not thought it necessary to mention them in this work; for an exposition of the principles and philosophy of the Masonic society, is in fact a philosophical analysis of all the others, which are fashioned after the same idea.

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PHILOSOPHICAL HISTORY

OF

SECRET SOCIETIES.

CHAPTER I.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS HISTORY.

It is singular that the philosophical historian, in tracing the progress of various peoples, and in noticing the institutions which served to develop their intellectual and moral capabilities, should have passed by, nearly without note or comment, those remarkable associations, which, although working in silence and secrecy, achieved no mean or unimportant task, in the great work of human education, and social regeneration and advancement.

The universal prevalence of the **SECRET PRINCIPLE**, in both ancient and modern times, is of itself a most significant fact, and of sufficient magnitude to arrest the attention of all earnest and intelligent minds. The secret institution could not have existed, as it has done, through all time, or at least since the dawn of civiliza-

tion, enlisting the warmest sympathies of the purest and best of men—the fathers of civilization, the chiefs of philosophy, and science, and art—unless it had responded, in a degree at least, to some of the most urgent and vital needs of Humanity.

In Egypt, we find these secret associations celebrating their mysterious rites in the sacred precincts of the Temple of Isis, and in the heart of the Pyramids, around the sarcophagus of the murdered Osiris. In ancient Greece we find the mysteries* of Orpheus, the Eleusinia, the Cabiri, and the mysteries of Samothrace and Phrygia, all of which had a wide and powerful influence. In the north of Europe, there were also the Druidical and Odinic mysteries. Growing out of these, and in some measure connected with them, we have the great Masonic Brotherhood, which, reaching down through all ages, is as vigorous and active to-day as in the beginning.

To say nothing here of the secret societies of the middle ages, the present age presents a remarkable spectacle in this respect. In England alone, it would seem that two thirds of the middle and laboring classes were enrolled on the lists of some secret Order. The Odd-Fellows, numerous both in England and in this country—the Ancient Order of Foresters, the Loyal United Free Mechanics, the Ancient Sons of Zebedee, the United Catholic Brethren and Sisters, the Independent Order of Rechabites, the Order of Female Dru-

* Secret societies were formerly designated under this name.

ids, and the Grand United Order of Modern Druids, are the most important of them.

Now when we consider the wide extension of the secret principle throughout the world, especially at the present time, it will not be thought a loss of labor to inquire into the causes of this tendency, and attempt an exposition of this remarkable fact. There must be some wants, universally felt, to which the present organizations of society do not respond—some elements of our common nature, not represented by our political institutions—which are the cause and groundwork of all these secret associations. When Society and Government are oppressive or imperfect; when they are not in harmony with the moral, spiritual, and physical needs and conditions of men—the earnest, the loving, the hoping, the wise, who invoke the Future, being dissatisfied with the Present; and the weak, who are crushed to the earth by the oppressive laws which govern all modern industrial arrangements, become disgusted with the *outward Life of Society*, and seek consolation and support in secret association. When men fly from the arms of the established Society to the more fraternal and sympathizing embraces of secret institutions, we may always conclude that Society is false to its duty; that it no longer provides for all the various social and spiritual needs of men, and fails to respond to their circumstances, conditions, and wants.

And does not this immense multiplication of secret societies at the present time say as much as this to us?

Look at the laboring classes in England alone—oppressed, ground into the dust, half fed and half clothed, having no rest, not even the expectation of rest, from early childhood to decrepid old age! For them Society has no gifts, no blessings, no smiles, but weighs upon them a perpetual, unmitigated *curse*. It distorts the tiny limbs and forms of suffering childhood, it corrupts the morals of indigent youth, it breaks the hearts of parents, and involves three quarters of England's people in terrible despair. These suffering thousands find no resource, no relief, no protection, from the desolating arrangements of the outward organisms, but in these secret societies. There they meet with sympathizing hearts, and warm hands, and honest and upright spirits. There they worship and *invoke that Ideal of a Society which shall represent more truly the Christian doctrine of Fraternity*, and which shall recognise no distinctions but such as are absolute and everlasting—that is to say, the distinctions of vice and virtue—and confer no honors but on those who merit them by a life of virtue.

Secret Associations, therefore, have their origin in the deepest and most pressing wants of Humanity. They reveal a social arrangement which is unjust, oppressive, and unequal, and point forward to an epoch when Justice and Love shall be objects of supreme and universal reverence; when Society itself, regenerated, shall shower its blessings, with divine impartiality, upon ALL.

CHAPTER II.

THE RATIONALE OF SECRET SOCIETIES, AND THEIR
PROVIDENTIAL CHARACTER.

It has been well observed that every event or movement, in the history of Humanity, is a new *apocalypse* of man, or Nature, or God! This thought is eminently true. There is not a movement in the material world, nor an event in the life of man or society, but is a revelation of eternal Truth—a new step of Humanity in its upward progress. All revelations in society—the great questions which agitate nations—the mighty Ideals which burn in the bosom of Christendom, laboring to realize themselves in the various philanthropic enterprises and benevolent associations of the age, have a deep and solemn significance—are attached to the divinest sentiments of the Soul—are expressive of the Soul's aspirations—responses to the great needs of Humanity. They mark the victories of man over ignorance and selfishness, and are pledges of an ever-growing perfection. For, while man *labors*, he *thrives*; while society struggles, and is in conflict, it advances. All the phenomena of life, all institutions or movements

in society, devised by human genius, have been so many attempts of man to fathom the mystery of his being—so many struggles to reach and embrace an Ideal Beauty or Excellence which glimmered, in the immeasurable heights above him. Hence all these movements are of inmomentous import—are providentially devised; and are worthy of a profound study and investigation, and *will* be studied by those who reverence virtue, and cherish a genial love and large hope for man.

Among the providential institutions which should arrest the attention of thinking men, are the Mysteries, as they were formerly called, or SECRET SOCIETIES, as they are now denominated. In the earliest periods of the world, the wisest and best of men withdrew from the imperfections of the exterior society, and in their secret temples sought to sound the mysterious deeps of God, Nature, and the Soul, and to live out their idea of a true life. The Mysteries of Egypt, of Eleusis, of the Cabiri, and those of India and of the north of Europe, had a widely-extended influence; and so important were they, that an investigation of them is necessary, if we would have an accurate view of the Theology, Philosophy, Science, and Ethics, of the past times. At a later period, we have seen the Order of Freemasons prevailing more or less in all parts of the globe; and still later, the Association of Odd-Fellows has risen into notice.

The singular tendency to secret association in all ages, and the remarkable progress and prevalence of these societies at the present time, in spite of the selfishness and materialism of the age, indicate most clearly a providential origin and a providential design. When the conditions and circumstances attending them, and the position they have occupied and do still occupy—the countless thousands of earnest and intelligent men who have worshipped and do worship even to-day at their altars, are considered—who will say that these institutions, which have, in all periods of the world, commanded the admiration, and reverence, and service, of the wisest and best of our race, have not exercised a powerful influence on the Life of the Past, and are not destined to accomplish mighty results in this present age, and wield a prodigious influence over all its thought and life? What have been those results, and what may we expect them to be in future? What has been, and what is destined to be, their influence on, and their relations with, the progressive development of man?

It is a part of the mission of secret societies in general, to elevate the tone of public and private morals, and to realize, in all the arrangements of life, a diviner sentiment of justice, a truer ideal of charity, and more enlightened notions regarding man's relations with his fellow-man. They are a means of intellectual, moral, and social progress, and belong to the great category

of Divine instrumentalities, ordained by Providence, for the advancement of the human race?

This remark is eminently correct as it regards the ancient mysteries. They were the sources of moral life—the fountains of Theology, Philosophy, Ethics, Science, and Politics—the ministers of Progress—in a word, the mother of Civilization. In the Egyptian, Grecian, and Indian mysteries, and the Druidical institutions of the north of Europe, were nourished and developed those moral principles and sentiments, and those social ideas, which afterward entered into the *life of the people*, and became *actual* in their social forms.

And this is the divine method of human progress. Men, in the mass, do not and can not rise at once to the comprehension of absolute Truth; nor is it possible for them to appreciate it in its fullness—nor, unaided, to apply it to any practical result. Neither do they advance, either individually or socially, by virtue of their own energy, but receive the elements of progress, growth, and expansion, from the spiritual world—that is to say, from God. When new elements of life are to be sent forth from the bosom of the Deity, for the revivification of the nations, or new ideas are to be promulgated to further their advancement toward a more perfect civilization, a few earnest and far-seeing spirits are first agitated by them—to them the revelation is first made. They invoke these new ideals, and

labor to bring them down from heaven to earth, and make them living and actual in the world's life. But a wide sea of ages sometimes rolls between the ideal and the actual—between the discovery of a principle and its full and perfect application to life. Yet cherished by the enlightened few, illustrated in their mystic circle, it grows, expands, gains influence, and at length blends with the people's life, and modifies all the institutions of society.

So, in modern times, we have seen a certain social idea—the idea of equality, of the worth of man as man, and his right to elect his own superior or chief—pass through several phases, till it attained to a perfect incarnation in our political institutions. This idea, born in one of the monachal orders of the Roman Church—that church of strange contrasts, where democratic and free sentiments flourished under the shadow of the most unmitigated despotism—realized in the internal arrangements of the secret Orders of the middle ages, became fully developed and defined in the fraternity of Freemasons, and, with that association, spread through every country of Christendom. But as yet it had not changed the political aspect of society: it was only an Ideal of a new state, the consolation and hope of those earnest men, who, looking with longing toward the Future, sought refuge from the withering arrangements of the outward life in the fraternal embraces of their secret institution. It was a Type of an Order of

things yet to be created. But as every *thought* finds its appropriate *word*, so, sooner or later, will every idea find an expression, in some of the forms of life. Thus, this social idea which had been laboring for ages in the hearts of the good and wise, which in these secret associations had been worshipped for centuries, and which the Masonic Brotherhood adopted as its leading thought, found an utterance, an embodiment, in the institutions of the American Republic.

From what has been said, it follows that the MYSTERIES are not only useful, but necessary. There is always the need of an institution where a higher ideal of Life shall be worshipped and sought after, than is yet to be found realized in the existing political organizations—an institution which will re-combine the scattered elements of society, arm itself against the selfish tendencies of the race, give men faith in virtue and confidence in each other, and reveal to the world a diviner Ideal to be actualized in its life.

If our theory be correct, these societies are precisely the institutions which the world needs at this particular crisis, and which are demanded by all the wants of man. Society needs an Ideal of a higher and better state, to which it may aspire. These associations reveal that Ideal, and give it an actual being in their own particular forms. They present to the world the picture of a new order of life—a new social arrangement far above, and in advance of, the most perfect

of our political compacts. Men need faith in virtue, and confidence in each other ; for, without these, there can be no stability in business, nor improvement in individual or public morality. They create this faith in virtue, and insure this mutual confidence. They strengthen public morality ; promote peace and good will between man and man ; and seek to apply, always and everywhere, the Christian Idea of Union and Love, as they are revealed in the command, " Bear one another's burdens."

2

CHAPTER III.

THE ISLANIC MYSTERIES OF EGYPT.

IN the foregoing chapter we have ventured to offer the theory, that the mysteries, or secret societies, as they are now termed, are providential institutions, and were employed by the master-spirits of our race as instruments of civilization, and means of social, moral, intellectual, and religious progress. And this theory, we think, will be strongly and curiously confirmed by the investigations we are about to institute.

If we direct our attention to that wonderful people which dwelt on the banks of the Nile, we shall find that the real life of the Egyptians, as a nation—at least so far as history takes any note of it—commences with Osiris and Isis, and with the establishment of the mysteries.

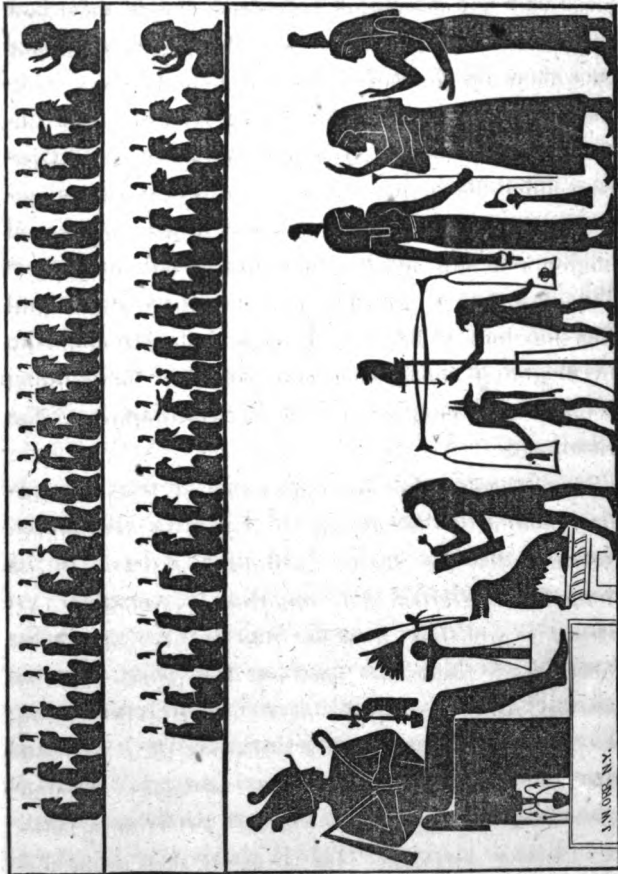
These two grand and imposing figures in the Egyptian Mythology, when stripped of their mythic and poetic investiture, and shorn of their divine attributes, and brought down to a level with Humanity, are seen to be two human beings, who, by the force of their genius, intelligence, and virtue, won the admiration of

those wild and untutored barbarians, taught them how to cultivate and prepare the fruits of the earth, and gave them the industrial arts and a civilization. According to the Egyptian historians, anterior to the advent of Osiris and Isis, darkness, savagery, and barbarism, filled the earth. They appeared, organized society, laid the foundations of social order, established religion and law, and founded the sacred mysteries.* This assertion is probable enough; for it is not until after the time of Isis that Egyptian history attains to any degree of consistency, and speaks of the building of cities and temples, and of the constitution of the priesthood.

Simultaneous with the appearance of Egyptian society, and with the genesis of Egyptian civilization, rises into view the Secret Institution of Isis, with its wonderful mysteries and imposing ceremonies. At first, it is probable, from the little that we can gather from ancient historians touching this point, that the initiatory rite was simply a mystic drama, representing the progress of man from a barbarous to a civilized state, and his advancements and struggles, through gloom and toil, toward the supreme perfection, whether in time or eternity. This is plainly seen in the following hieroglyphical representation of what is usually termed the "Judgment of Amenti."

Here the neophyte is represented — after passing

* Vide Herodotus.



THE JUDGMENT OF AMENTI.

through various ordeals — as a suppliant in the presence of Osiris, the representative of the divinity — who holds

in his hands the *flagellum* and *crook*, the emblems of justice and benevolence. Standing in this position, and surrounded by these appalling circumstances, the terrified neophyte was severely questioned, and all the acts of his life scrutinized with the severest exactitude, to ascertain if he were worthy to be allowed to pass on to higher and more important mysteries.*

After passing the dreaded Osiris, still guided by an initiate, disguised under a mask in the form of a dog's head,† he threaded his way through mysterious labyrinths, arriving at length at a stream of water, which he was directed to pass. At the same time, his progress was arrested by three men, also disguised under grotesque forms, who, taking a cup of water from the rivulet, bade the trembling neophyte to drink, addressing him in these words: "ASPIRANT TO THE HONOR OF A DIVINE COMPANIONSHIP, SEEKER AFTER CELESTIAL TRUTH, THIS IS THE WATER OF FORGETFULNESS! DRINK TO THE OBLIVION OF ALL YOUR VICES, THE FORGETFULNESS OF ALL YOUR IMPERFECTIONS; AND THUS BE PREPARED FOR THE RECEPTION OF THE NEW REVELATIONS OF VIRTUE, AND TRUTH, AND GOODNESS, WITH WHICH YOU ARE SOON TO BE HONORED."

* The myth of the "Judgment of Amenti" forms a part of the "Book of the Dead," and shadows forth the verities and judgments of the unseen world. It also formed a part of the initiatory rite of Isis, which aimed to picture forth the same thought.

† In all the ancient mysteries, the initiates present at the ceremonies were disguised.

It is plain that the *initiation* was considered by the Egyptians as the end of a profane and vicious life—the *palingenesia* (new birth) of corrupted human nature—the death of vice and of all bad passions—and the introduction into a new life of purity and virtue. The first trials which led thereto filled the mind of the candidate with uncertainty, perplexity, and doubt. Painfully and with great labor he advanced through tortuous paths, and over yawning chasms, all the more frightful as he was plunged into the most profound darkness! Arrived at the opening scene of initiation, he saw everything under aspects the most terrible and awful; but soon these spectacles of terror disappeared, with the trembling and fear consequent thereon, and a miraculous and divine light blazed in boundless effulgence around him. Smiling plains, and meadows enamelled with flowers, spread before him, and a bland and fragrant air, loaded with all the perfumes of Arabia Felix, undulated around him. Hymns in honor of the Divinity, and choruses of triumph and joy, agreeably charmed his ears; sublime doctrines of sacred science—including Art, Industry, Philosophy, Ethics, and Religion—were addressed to his understanding; and spectacles of sublime beauty, and holy visions, delighted his wondering eyes. The initiate, rendered perfect, was henceforth free, and no more subject to fear. Baptized into a new life, and instructed in a divine science, he walked, crowned and triumphant,

through the regions of felicity, communing with those pure and elevated spirits to whose companionship he had just been exalted.*

Such was the initiatory rite instituted by Isis. It is highly probable that, in harmony with the theory we have laid down, those parents of Egyptian civilization, Osiris and Isis, employed this secret principle as the first step toward the social regeneration of that people. Associating thus with them the wisest and most elevated spirits of the age, and introducing from time to time those that were supposed worthy, they gained an influence over the whole Egyptian mind—gave to it a distinct character, individuality, and complexion: and thus the Secret Institution came to be a fountain of civilization, a school of virtue, politics, philosophy, and religion.

After the lapse of years, however, the rites of Isis underwent some changes or modifications. Perhaps it would be better to say, they received some additions. The *rites* which were so censured by Philo, the Alexandrian Jew, were not the same as we have described above, although in these modified ceremonies we see nothing particularly worthy of condemnation.

In process of time, the human features of Isis and Osiris were effaced, and a grateful enthusiasm exaggerated them beyond all mortal proportions, and exalted them to the rank of deities. As this work does

* Vide Plutarch, et Dupuis—*Origine des tous les Cultes*.

not profess to treat of ancient mythology in its entirety, but only as it bears on the question of Secret Societies, we will present here only what may be necessary to our present purpose.

Osiris, Isis, and Typhon (the Spirit of Evil), formed the Mythological Triad of the Egyptians. Isis and Osiris, emblems of life, conservation, order, fruitfulness, and truth, were supposed to be in a constant struggle with Typhon, the symbol of disorder and destruction. A fierce war raged between these spiritual forces, of which all the combats and antagonisms in the outward, visible world, were only the distant echoes or feeble reflexions.

Typhon (Evil) made war on Osiris, the beautiful Life-Spirit—the source of beneficence and love—and for a period appeared to triumph. With his wiles and arts, conceived with matchless cunning, he overcame Osiris, enclosed him in a chest, and cast him into the sea, thus plunging all heaven in grief and sadness. Isis, when she learned the melancholy news, refused all consolation, despoiled herself of her ornaments, cut off her tresses, robed herself in the habiliments of mourning, and wandered forth through the world. Disconsolate and sorrowful, she travelled into all countries, seeking the mysterious chest which contained the body of the lost Osiris. In the meanwhile, the chest—the object of so much solicitude—is driven ashore at Byblos, and thrown into the centre of a bush, which,

having grown up into a beautiful tree, had entirely enclosed it. At length, however, the tree was cut down by a king of that country, and used by him in the construction of a new palace. But Isis finally learned the singular fate of the chest, and her persevering love was rewarded with the possession of it. The period of her triumph, however, had not yet come. Truth was yet longer to struggle with Adversity, and be the sport of Error. Typhon (Evil) was destined once more to be victorious. He discovered the body of Osiris, tore it into fourteen pieces, and concealed the dissevered members in the several quarters of the earth. Once more, then, did Isis set forth on her pilgrimage of sorrow to find the mutilated remains of the beloved Osiris. Her efforts were crowned with success. She discovered and obtained possession of all the members but one, of which she formed an image, and instituted religious festivities in its honor. The great day of triumph had now come. Typhon (Evil) was destroyed by Horus; the tomb of Osiris opened, and he (Truth, Goodness) came forth victorious, in the possession of immortal life; and harmony, peace, and order, prevailed throughout the earth.

This myth formed the groundwork of the additional rites pertaining to the Isianic Mysteries, and which gradually overshadowed and absorbed the more primitive and less complex ceremonies. In these ceremonies, the neophyte was supposed to be wandering in

search of the mysterious chest or *ark* which contained the body of Osiris (Truth). As the ceremony proceeded, the mutilated remains were found and entombed with honor, and a loud chorus of sorrow resounded around the sarcophagus which contained them, which was at the same time the emblem of so many combats for goodness, and the depository of so many virtues.

The ceremony ended with the return of Osiris to life. All of this was undoubtedly intended to shadow forth the mighty and unceasing struggle of Truth with Error, Light with Darkness, Life with Death, and the final and certain triumph of the former, and destruction of the latter.

The influence of these mysteries on Egyptian thought and life was immense. There, in those secret retreats, were laid the foundations of that strange and to us incomprehensible civilization, whose remembrance is perpetuated by the Pyramids, and whose history is dimly and obscurely preserved by hieroglyphical signs. It was chiefly their influence that gave unity to the Egyptian character, consistency to their religious establishments, stability to their political institutions, and vigor and directness in the pursuits of philosophy, science, and art. It was through them that Egypt first began to live, and through them that ancient people attained to that high intellectual, social, and moral development, which for so many ages raised them so far above the rest of the nations of the earth.

CHAPTER IV.

ORPHEUS AND THE THRACIAN MYSTERIES.

ABOUT fourteen centuries before the Christian era, and long before the states of Greece had attained to any high degree of civilization, a personage appeared who possessed that rare combination of qualities which always distinguish a hero, and reveal the creator of a new epoch. He was a Thracian by birth, the son of *Æger* and *Calliope*; but the mythic tinge discoverable in all the traditions regarding him, and the contradictory accounts given by the ancient Grecian writers who have spoken of him, render it exceedingly difficult to tell precisely what he was, or what he did. Some of the old authors assert that there were several persons who successively bore the name of *ORPHEUS*, and that the poems attributed to the Thracian were the productions of more than one poet; while others deny that any such person ever existed. But these speculations all fall to the ground and disappear when we apply those tests which the philosophy of history supplies. The very existence of the traditions at a very early period of Grecian history, contradictory as they are, and, above

all, the existence of the institutions of which he was the founder, prove clearly enough that such a personage once lived, although his veritable character may have been somewhat embellished by a mythological drapery. What we do see of him, standing out in bold relief from the surrounding darkness, and detached from the mythological shadows which environ it, lead us to believe him to have been a man of no ordinary character. He was a poet of most excellent genius, of ardent imagination, and profound feeling. In all his poems, philosophy and sentiment are equally blended. He recounted in sublime verse the heroic exploits of the Argonauts (of whom he was one), whose expedition in search of the golden fleece was so celebrated in early Grecian history: he sang the mystic qualities of precious stones, and composed hymns sublimely beautiful in honor of the Eternal Master of the seasons.*

Amiable beyond the common run of men, ever governed by the most positive of sentiments, his heart overflowing with tenderness and sympathy, he seemed to be inspired by the Powers above. Although a prince by birth, the son of a king of that country, he commanded more by the force of his character, and the nobility of his soul, than by the external authority with which he was invested: As yet, however, he did not comprehend his destiny, nor clearly see the mission to

* Vide *Orph. de Opera*; and also *Bode, Orpheus Postarum Græcorum Antiquissimus*.

which he had obviously been appointed by Providence. Retired among the Thracian valleys, he gave himself up to poetic meditations, and the enjoyment of the caresses of the beautiful and chaste Eurydice—that glorious figure of female loveliness and purity—whom he loved with all the burning ardor of a poet, and whom he was destined so soon to lose. A mortal disease—produced, as some have said, by the bite of a venomous reptile—removed her from his arms, and consigned her to the abodes of death. And how beautifully and touchingly is the memory of his great love—of his persevering and unwearied devotion—of his enduring fidelity and incurable grief—perpetuated by that most poetic myth which represents Orpheus seeking his lost Eurydice in the realm of shades, charming the powers which rule below with the music of his harp, and compelling them by the mysterious force of his songs to release her from the bondage of death, and restore her to his embrace!

This supreme affliction awakened the slumbering energies of his soul, and led to that sublime regeneration, in which the love of his Eurydice was expanded to the love of his race. He now addressed himself with earnestness and zeal to the great work of reforming society, taming the rude and semi-barbarous men of his nation, and laying the foundations of that glorious fabric of Græcian civilization which became in after-ages the wonder and admiration of the world.

To prepare himself for this divine labor, he travelled into all countries in search of wisdom. Egypt, at that period, took the lead in the march of civilization, and was the favored seat of philosophy, science, and religion. There, by the tomb of Osiris, he listened to the instructions of the Egyptian sages. Mingling with all classes of the people, he studied the structure of that ancient civilization; and, initiated into the secret institution of Isis, he became acquainted with the means of social advancement and of individual enlightenment. He saw, at once, the great value of this institution, and its adaptation, as an aid to human progress; and he comprehended also the power of those sublime moral dramas, which were therein represented, to impress strongly the solemn lessons of virtue and religion on the minds of earnest and imaginative men. In these secret sanctuaries of Science he proved himself a most willing and intelligent scholar. Thus become master of all the wisdom of the Egyptians, he returned to his own country, and planted there with an open and generous hand the seeds of a new and higher civilization. He established the Mysteries, and thus associated with him the most enlightened and earnest spirits of his age and nation. His initiatory rite was a drama, setting forth the progressive development of man, both socially and individually, and illustrating his duties, and the high and glorious destiny to which, by earnest striving, he might attain.

The Secret Order of Orpheus was the fountain of Grecian civilization. By its influence he led those untamed nations up from the rudeness and solitude of the primitive state, and gave them cities and towns, the industrial arts, and a civilization. In its hidden recesses, where the profane eye was never permitted to look, commenced the development of those great social ideas which regenerated Greece and placed that celebrated country at the head of the civilization of the world, and made it pre-eminent in science, philosophy, and poetry, and in all the arts which enrich society and embellish life.

Orpheus transported his mysteries into Greece, and they were celebrated there for the first time on a mountain of Bœotia. The Greeks received them with avidity, and they soon grew into that vast and powerful institution known afterward under the name of the "MYSTERIES OF ELEUSIS."

Orpheus was what the Germans call a "many-sided man"—a man of universal genius and knowledge. He studied life in all its aspects, and labored to find a relief for every sorrow, a gratification for every want, a remedy for every ill. As a physician, skilled almost supernaturally, he healed the physical sicknesses of the people: as a philosopher and priest, he taught them science, philosophy, and religion: as a political economist, he taught the arts of government and social organization: and, as a poet, he composed and sung

those marvellous songs—the first voices of a new civilization—which harmonized and softened the fierce tempers of savage men, and charmed them into the obedience of law and order.

All the ancients unite in ascribing to the songs of Orpheus a miraculous force. His seven-chorded harp was celebrated throughout the ancient world, and possessed, it is said, miracle-working powers. Wherever he went, it was his inseparable companion. Moved by its mysterious and thrilling harmonies, the trees danced for very joy; the wild waves and winds were calmed; the most savage of beasts came and crouched lovingly at his feet; and men, ruder than the brutes and wilder than the tempests, were charmed from their forest-hömes and mountain-dens, laid aside their savage ferocity, and yielded to the laws and habitudes of civilized life.

But may not this myth have another and more important sense? May not that seven-stringed lyre, which, under the skilled hand of this great conjurer of the ancient world, exercised such a mighty influence in taming men and moving the nations, have reference to that mystic circle, that secret principle, through the agency of which the elements of a new civilization were communicated to the world, and those glorious types of justice, and equity, and virtue—which were subsequently realized in Grecian thought and life—were brought down from heaven to earth? And the divine

ideas of Unity and Love, and the sentiment of Fraternity—were not these that miracle-working music, the secret of the sublime enchantment?

The death of Orpheus was singularly tragical, and the manner of it is well established, although the causes which led to the catastrophe are involved in some obscurity. But the most authentic accounts lead us to believe that, after the death of Eurydice, whom he loved so deeply, he was seized with a strange antipathy to the whole sex. At all events, he ever after was invulnerable to all the charms and attractions of female beauty. Prompted, unconsciously perhaps, by this feeling, he introduced the rule of celibacy into his Brotherhood, which so excited the anger of the women, that, seizing an occasion when the initiates had assembled, and left (as their custom was) their arms at the gates of the temple, they took possession of them, and, taking the temple by storm, Orpheus and his associates were put to the sword. Orpheus was cut to pieces, and his head and his harp were thrown into the river which bathed the foundations of the sacred temple. But, according to the old fable, they could not entirely kill the prophet and miracle-worker; for it is related that as they floated on the surface of the river downward to the sea, the head continued to chant the celestial hymns, and the harp still resounded with those sublime strains which had oftentimes appeased the storm and calmed the turbulence of the sea!

This myth affords us a beautiful image of the immortality of Truth—of the perpetual efficacy and power of the Life and Word of a wise and good man! Orpheus was murdered, but the influence of his life was everlasting. It continued to throb in the Grecian heart through long centuries! His word and his life were an immortal psalm, which continued to sing in the ear of Greece the lessons of celestial wisdom, and the prophecy of a golden age.

The particular fact to which we desire to direct the reader's attention is, that *Grecian civilization commences with Orpheus and his mysteries*. He stood, as it were, at the portals of Grecian life, and directed the genius of that wonderful people in the way it should take, and led it onward toward that brilliant destiny which it finally achieved. The *secret institution* was the instrument he employed to effect the social regeneration of his country. Through *it* came to the states of Greece that Order of Life which has made them celebrated in all subsequent ages.

CHAPTER V

THE INITIATION AT ELEUSIS.

WHEN Orpheus, the Thracian singer, first introduced his institution into Greece, the rites were celebrated in the forests and on high hills. Afterward, however, a temple of vast extent and magnificent appearance was erected near Eleusis, and consecrated as the depository of the sacred Mysteries. Hence the Institution which was founded by Orpheus came to be known in subsequent ages by the name of "THE ELEUSINIA."

The early history of this Institution, in Greece, is involved in considerable obscurity. But we find that at a very remote period, even before the age of Hercules, it had acquired a wide renown, and exercised a powerful influence over Grecian life, and thought, and manners. By its agency, ideas made immense progress, and Art, Science, Philosophy, Ethics, and Letters, were carried to a high degree of perfection. So important did these Mysteries become, that initiation was regarded as an affair of supreme interest. Even kings and princes were ambitious of the honor of wear-

ing the mystic cincture of the Order. The *illuminated* were considered the favorites of Heaven, worthy of all the honors of this world, and the highest awards of the next.

Although we can not tell precisely how extensive the circle of truths might have been, to elucidate which, was the aim of the Institution, we have reason to believe that it neglected no important facts of either profane or sacred science. The rites of initiation were sacred or philosophical dramas, extremely fascinating to the imaginative mind, and intended to shadow forth the profoundest mysteries of the Universe, of God, the Soul, and human destiny.

Among the persons who officiated at the ceremonies, and governed the initiates, were the Hierophant, the Torch-Bearer, the Sacred Herald, the Priest, and Archon. The Hierophant, at initiation, appeared in a robe of more than regal splendor, and sat on a throne, brilliant with gold, over which arched a rainbow, in the circle of which were seen the moon and seven stars. He was regarded as the representative of the Creator, and bore, suspended from his neck, a golden globe, the symbol of absolute power and universal dominion. Before him were twenty-four attendants clothed in white, and wearing crowns of gold; while around him burned with a dazzling radiance seven huge flambeaux, whose light, reflected by a thousand burnished mirrors, seemed to bathe the whole in floods

of golden splendor. His office was to instruct the neophytes, after they had passed their various trials, in the secrets of divine science. •

The Torch-Bearer represented the sun. His duty was to lead the procession of torch-bearers, when the wanderings of Ceres on Mount Etna were represented, and to purify the neophytes and prepare them for initiation. The Sacred Herald imposed silence on the assembly, and commanded the profane to withdraw. The Priest officiated at the altar, and bore the symbol of the moon. The Archon, or king, preserved order, offered prayers and sacrifices, compelled the vicious and uninitiated to retire, and adjudged all, who disturbed the solemnities, to the appointed punishments.

To appreciate the utility of these mysteries, and their value as instruments or means of instruction, it is necessary to consider that the ancients, in all their instructions, whether moral or religious, employed less of words, and more of the language of signs—of solemn shows, and symbols, and dramatic representations—than do the moderns. All great truths were inculcated, enforced, and elucidated, through the medium of the drama. The great mystical drama of initiation at Eleusis was admirably arranged for this purpose, and well adapted to this end. It presented a series of most striking pictures to the eyes of the candidate, all of which were well calculated to arrest his attention and excite an inquiring spirit. This will appear the

more clearly when we come to describe the initiatory rite.

It is worthy of remark, with what jealous vigilance the secret rites of that ancient association were guarded. Any violation of the obligation of secrecy on the part of the initiate was punished with death; and at the time of the celebration of the mysteries, the profane were driven far from the temple, and were not permitted to approach within a certain distance, on pain of instant destruction. At each commencement of the ceremonies, the herald proclaimed, "Hence, hence from these sacred places, all ye profane!"

After having passed through the required probation, and, by abstinence, fasting, prayer, and penitence, prepared himself for the solemn rite, the neophyte was received into the sacred enclosure. He was blindfolded; and conducted on a long and painful pilgrimage through many dark and circuitous passages. Sometimes it seemed to him as if he were ascending steep hills—walking over uneven and flinty surfaces, which tore his feet at every step; and then again he felt that he was walking down into low valleys, or through dense forests, where he found it difficult to proceed. Meanwhile, as he advanced, all possible sounds of terror—the fierce roar of wild beasts, and the hissing of serpents—were multiplied around him. Approaching at length the term of the first portion of his mystic pilgrimage, the bandage was removed from his eyes, and

he found himself in what appeared to be a wild and uncultivated country. The light of day never penetrated that gloomy region, but a pale and spectral glare just served to light up all the horrors of the scene. Lions, tigers, hyenas, and venomous serpents, menaced him from every point; while thunder and lightning, fire and water, tempest and earthquake, threatened the destruction of the entire world. Recovered from his surprise and terror, and his eyes accustomed to the twilight of the place, he discovered before him a huge iron door, on which he read this inscription: "He who would attain to the highest and most perfect state, and rise to the sphere of absolute bliss, must be purified by fire, and air, and water."

He had scarcely read these words, when the door turned on its hinges, and he was suddenly thrust through it into a vast apartment, also wrapped in gloom. Horrible groans and shrieks now assailed his ears, and a loud plaint of sorrow, a mighty voice of pain, as if from the regions of hades, wailed through those shadowy corridors, filling him with unutterable terror. At the same time, two immense gates of iron, at his right hand, were thrown open with a thundering crash, and disclosed to his frightened view a fathomless gulf of flame, from which issued the most appalling sounds. By certain mechanical contrivances, all of the ancient theory of the penalty of God's violated laws—all the pains and sufferings of grim and dread Tartarus—

were made to pass as real verities before his vision. There he saw represented, by these ingenious mechanisms, the spirits of those who had been false to their fraternal obligations and duties on earth, passing and repassing through the flames, pursued by the avenging furies, and suffering the terrible *purification of fire*.

Behind him yawned a dismal and dark abyss, whence issued a strong and burning wind, commingled also with the voices of suffering and wo. Approaching the brink and looking downward, he saw another class of delinquents expiating their offences—some suspended from the jutting points of overhanging precipices, and others from the numerous points of a mighty wheel, which rolled without cessation—and working their way toward heaven's final rest through the *purgatorial air*.

On his left another scene attracted his attention. It was a spectacle representing the *purification by water*—a gloomy lake, half concealed by clouds and shadows, into which souls less guilty than the above-mentioned classes were supposed to be plunged, that their sins might in this manner be purged away.

After wandering for a while among these startling spectacles, which were intended to shadow forth some of the most awful verities of Religion, and especially to declare that great Law of Retribution which reaches through all worlds, and from responsibility to which no one can escape—he was led by his guide to the

third degree of initiation. Another iron gate, which had before been concealed, was now disclosed to view, and the neophyte and his guide paused before it. At this stage of the proceedings, the conductor chanted, in a deep and impressive voice, the following portion of one of the Orphic hymns, addressed to the hierophant, beyond the gate of iron :—

“I am about to declare a secret to the profane! Oh! illustrious descendant of the brilliant Silena, be attentive to my accents. I will announce important truths.”

And addressing the neophyte, he added :—

“Consider the Divine Nature—the supreme ONE. Contemplate him without ceasing; rule thy spirit, and purify thy heart, and, walking in the ways of justice, and the safe path of truth, admire him, who is *alone* the master of the world. He is one, he is self-existent. To him all beings are indebted for life.”

This brief exhortation ended, a response was heard within; the gate of iron opened, and the expectant neophyte passed from the regions of gloom, and fear, and error, to the illuminated circle, where Truth was unveiled in all her divine beauty and radiance.

The scene he now beheld was fair and beautiful beyond description. A great variety of spectacles exhibiting virtue triumphant, and enjoying its full reward—the ministry of grief and pain, and even punishment, ending in high perfection and Elysian blisses—and

MAN in the possession of that godlike freedom to which his destiny points, and for which he was created—passed successively before his wondering eyes.

As the neophyte was led forward to receive the benediction and the instructions of the hierophant, the twenty-four attendants clothed in white prostrated themselves to the earth, and in strains of solemn and sublime music sang the following beautiful hymn, composed by Orpheus, the great founder of these mysteries, in honor of “the Supreme ONE, who is above all:”—

“Thou God of heaven and hell, of land and sea!
 Whose thunders dread the high Olympus shake,
 And whom the Genii fear, and Demons serve!
 The Fates, stern and unbending, for all else,
 Obey thy sovereign will! Of all that lives,
 Immortal One! thou art the awful Sire!
 When wrathful thou dost speak, the entire world
 Doth quake! the unchained winds in fury sweep
 The sea, and fearful darkness gathers round
 The earth, and fiery storms do plough the vast
 Expanse above! Yet art thou wise and kind:
 That holy law, which rules the stars, comes forth
 From Thee; and aye before thy golden throne
 Unwearied stand those holy ones, who do
 Thy will, and bear thy gifts to man! The bright
 And glorious Spring, adorned with brilliant hues,
 And crowned with new-born flowers, and Winter swathed
 In shining bands of ice, are by thy will
 Created. All do come from Thee: Spring’s flowers,
 Summer’s joys, and Autumn’s golden fruits,
 To Thee, and Thee alone, we owe them all!”

The Eleusinian Mysteries were distinguished into the *greater* and *less*. The origin of this distinction is

•thus accounted for:• Hercules, being at Athens, desired to be initiated; but, by the laws, no stranger could be admitted. That they might not offend the hero, whom they respected and feared, nor yet violate the ancient laws, the Athenians instituted the lesser mysteries, to the celebration of which he was admitted. These were afterward preparatory to the greater; for which the candidate was obliged to fit himself by religious ceremonies, symbolical rites, and various acts of devotion—the design of which was to withdraw his attention, at least for a time, from business and pleasure, to keep him pure, chaste, and unpolled, and to excite his curiosity in relation to the expected revelations. The period of purification continued a year, and no one could be admitted without this preparation, on pain of death.

The celebration of the mysteries commenced on the 15th day of the month Boedromion, and continued nine days. The ceremony of admission, already described, was performed in the night, and could not but leave a lasting and deep impression on the mind of the initiate.

In these rites we perceive most clearly a profound religious and philosophical significance. They were both retrospective and prospective—looking backward to the Past of Humanity, and forward to its Future;

* Creuzer, *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker, besonders der Griechen*. Leipsic, 1819. Vide *Potter's Antiquities*, vol. ii., p. 20.

and presenting, under an allegorical veil, the whole moral history of man — his natural ignorance, helplessness, and blindness — the gradual dawning of Truth on his mind, and the high and glorious perfection to which he may attain.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CABIRIA OF SAMOTHRACE.

THE origin of these mysteries, which are often mentioned by ancient writers, is not well known. The Cabiri were probably priests or deified heroes, venerated by the ancients as the authors or interpreters of religion, and the founders of human society and civilization. The multiplicity of names applied to the same character; the interchange of the names of the deities themselves with those of their priests; oracular law, which enjoined the preservation of ancient barbaric names, and thus led to a double nomenclature, sacred and profane; together with the profound secrecy of the rites—have rendered the subject one of extremely difficult elucidation. Some say that the worship of the Cabiri was brought to Samothrace by the Pelasgi,* and others that they are the same as the Corybantes.† In Egypt, their temple was never entered by any but the priests. In Phœnicia and in Rome (where they had an altar in the *Circus Maximus*), and in other countries of Europe and Asia, traces of their worship are to be found.

* Vide Herodotus, Lib. ii., 51.

† Strabo, Lib. x., 472.

Thus it appears that the secret rites (*Cabiria*) prevailed very extensively, at an early period, in every quarter of the world. Indeed, the mysteries of Isis, Ceres, Mithras, Trophonius, Bacchus, Rhea, Adonis, Osiris, and all the similar customs of Egypt, Greece, and Hindostan, seem to be merely varieties of the Samothracian rites, which were celebrated in the obscurity of night, and with the most profound secrecy.*

After a previous probation of abstinence, chastity, and silence, the candidate for initiation was purified by water and blood. He then offered a sacrifice of a bull or a ram, and, as in the Isianic rite, was made to drink of two fountains, called *Lethe* (oblivion), and *Mnemrosyne* (memory), to enable him to wash away the memory of former guilt, and to remember the new instructions. He was then conducted to a dark tower or cavern, and made to accomplish the mystic journey through gloom and terror, during which he met with the most frightful adventures. The most appalling sounds assailed his ears—the rushing of waters, the roar of thunder, and dreadful yells—while occasional gleams of light flashing through the darkness, revealed to his view the most horrible phantoms. At length he found himself in a vast hall, in solitude, silence, and darkness. Presently a feeble light diffused a pale and spectral glare through the apartment, affording him a confused and dim view of the objects surrounding him.

* Vide Faber's "Cabiri." Oxford, 1803; 2 vols. 8vo.

The walls were clothed with black drapery, and everywhere appeared the symbols of decay and death—those emblems that point to the grave, and speak eloquently and impressively of the supreme hour of man's worldly life, and of the exceeding vanity and emptiness of all sublunary enjoyments and pursuits. Terrible phantoms, grim and ghostly, passed and repassed before him; a bier rose up at his feet, on which was a coffin, and in the coffin a dead body! At this stage of the proceedings, a funeral-dirge was chanted by an invisible choir: and thus these sounds of terror and spectral visions were multiplied around him with rapid alternations, until the proper effect was supposed to have been produced upon his mind. Sometimes the neophyte was so overcome with fear, that he fell senseless to the ground. The pilgrimage of gloom, however, here ended. A flood of dazzling light now poured in upon the scene, which was changed as by enchantment. The dark drapery, with its startling devices and funeral emblems, had disappeared, and garlands of flowers and foliage adorned the walls and crowned the altars. The dead body upon the bier returned to life, the funeral-psalm gave place to a song of hope and victory, and the ceremonies which had commenced in gloom and darkness, ended in light, and joy, and confidence.

After these ceremonies had been performed, the candidate was led to the presiding priest and instructed in

the mystic science of the institution—theology, morals, philosophy, and politics, being embraced in these instructions.

The candidate was baptized, and, as in the Christian church, received a *new name*. This new or baptismal name was engraved, together with a mystic token or sign, upon a small white stone, which, thus prepared, was presented to the initiated. He preserved it as a sacred talisman, and carried it with him wherever he went, as a means of recognition—it being efficacious to procure him relief from distress and security from danger. It was at the same time the emblem of victory over fear, and darkness, and error, and the means of security, enjoyment, and peace. St. John, of the Apocalypse, was undoubtedly an initiate of the *Cabiria*, and evidently alludes to the *mystic stone* just noticed when he says: “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the *hidden manna*, and will give him a *white stone*, and in the stone a *new name written*, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.”* The apostle means to say: “As the initiate in the Cabirian rites, who, with a brave heart and an unfaltering step, passes boldly through the terrible ordeals appointed to try his patience, receives a white stone, with a new name, and a mysterious inscription upon it, which is a powerful resource against misfortune, and gives him immunity from many dangers—so shall be given to the triumphant Christian, that which, like the mystic

stone, will secure him also from numberless dangers. It will raise him to a divine companionship, to membership in a celestial Fraternity, and to a full participation in the most mysterious enjoyments of the Secret Pavilion above."

These rites were spread through all the cities of Syria. Hiram, the king of Tyre, was undoubtedly a High Priest of these Mysteries.

This institution existed in Judea, in the time of Christ. And it is a notable fact, that while Christ denounced, in the severest terms, the two sects—Pharisees and Sadducees—he said not a word in condemnation of the Essenees, who were the Freemasons, if we may so say, of that age—the faithful depositories of the ancient Cabirian rite. That our Savior was familiar with this Order is certain; because it can not be supposed that a mind like that of Christ could pass over, without due consideration, a society like that of the Essenees, admired for the amiability and gentleness of its manners, and dignified with so many virtues. Besides, the moral sentiments, the social maxims, the ideas of liberty, fraternity, and equality, which distinguished the Essenian Order, differ in no respect from the Christian teachings regarding the same things.

CHAPTER VII.

RELATION OF THE MYSTERIES TO ART AND PHILOSOPHY.

FROM the foregoing description of the ancient Mysteries, it will be seen, that, to a certain degree—following the opinion of many of the early Christian fathers—they realized the idea of a church. As none but the just and virtuous were eligible to membership, the initiated were—or, at least, were reputed to be—the wisest and best of all countries, and constituted the ancient Pagan Ecclesia—if one may so speak—the Church, or Assembly of the Wise and Good—a body competent to teach and enforce the everlasting truths of religion.

Their chief object was to teach the doctrine of one God, the resurrection of man to eternal life, the dignity of the human soul, and to lead the people to see the shadow of the Deity, in the beauty, magnificence, and splendor of the universe. By the most solemn and impressive ceremonies, they led the minds of the neophytes to meditate seriously the great problems of human duty and destiny—imbued them with a living sense of the vanity and brevity of life—and of the

certainty of a future state of retribution—set forth in marked contrast, the beauty of virtue and truth, and the deep bitterness and tormenting darkness of vice and error; and enjoined on them, by the most binding obligations, charity, brotherly love, and inflexible honor, as the greatest of all duties, the most beneficial to the world, and the most pleasing to the Gods.

They, also, by these rites—rites magnificent and impressive, and startling, by sudden transitions and striking contrasts—rites commencing in gloom and sorrow, and ending in light and joy—dimly shadowed forth the passage of man from barbarism to civilization, from ignorance to science, and his constant progress onward and upward through the ages, to still sublimer elevations. The trembling and the helpless neophyte, environed with terror and gloom, and pursuing his uncertain and difficult way, through the mystic journey of initiation, which terminated in light and confidence, was a type, or representative, of humanity marching upward, from the gloom and darkness of the primitive state of barbarism, to a high degree of enlightenment, and of social refinement and perfection. The mystic ceremony was, therefore, emblematical of the progressive development of man, and was intended as an aid to that development.

The initiatory rituals of Orpheus, of the Cabiria, and of Isis, typifying thus the development of man, and the progress of society, were in a sense prophetic announce-

ments of a Golden Age to come—a more perfect state where virtue, triumphant over vice, and truth victorious over error, would be installed on the throne of the world, and direct all human actions and relations. The Roman poet, Virgil, himself a Mystagogue, well versed in the ancient Mysteries—borrowing from them some of his finest thoughts*—describes this epoch in a strain of sublime and lofty eloquence: “The last era of *Cumæan song* is now arrived. The great series of ages begins anew. Now, too, returns the virgin Astræa—returns the reign of Saturn. The serpent’s sting shall die, and poison’s fallacious plant shall die, and the Assyrian spikenard grow on every soil; and blushing grapes shall hang on brambles rude, and dewy honey from hard oaks distil; and fruits and flowers shall spring up everywhere without man’s care or toil. The sacred Destinies, harmonious in the established order of the Fates, will sing to their spindles, as they spin the mysterious threads of life. ‘Roll on, ye Golden Ages, roll.’”

The idea, which these rites presented of future retribution, is not in harmony with modern opinions, at least so far as most of our Protestant communions are concerned. All the ancient systems of Religion and

* Vide *Æneid*, lib. vi.—Bishop Warburton contends that Virgil’s entire description of the descent of *Æneas* into the lower regions, and his progress through hell to the Elysian Fields, is but a poetical, and somewhat highly-colored delineation of the initiation of a candidate into the Mysteries of Eleusis!

Philosophy, held that all punishment was purgatorial*—a means of purification—and consequently finite and limited in its character and duration, and was graduated according to the degree of moral turpitude attached to each offence. Hence in the initiation the neophyte represented the progress of the soul through the various stages of discipline—upward from the receptacles of sorrow to Elysian beatitude and purity.

In all these rites, indeed, the idea seemed to prevail; that man, society, humanity, could be perfected only by the ministry of gloom and suffering. The soul's exaltation, and highest good and truest repose, were to be approached only by the way of tears, and sacrifice, and toil. Those mystic dramas symbolize the profoundest mysteries of the soul—the deepest experiences of the human heart. They taught that through darkness and difficulty, in the midst of obstacles and opposition, man should ever struggle upward and onward—onward from the shadowy vale of doubt, and fear, and perplexity, to the golden ORIENT, whence comes the *light* of Eternal truth!

These ancient initiatory dramas, too, were emblematical of the pilgrimage of Life, which as man soon enough discovers, is often dark, and gloomy, and difficult, surrounded by sorrow, and fear, and doubt. Nev-

* Vide Enfield's History of Philosophy. Also Guigniaut: Religions de l'Antiquité considérées principalement dans leur Formes Symboliques et Mythologique.

ertheless, they taught him that over this dark, perplexed, and fearful course lay the way to a glorious destiny — that through night to day, through death to life — through earth to heaven, must he, the earth-pilgrim work his way — that by constant struggle, severe toil, and earnest endeavor, he might overcome every obstacle, conquer every foe — master the World — free himself of every fetter, and in light and freedom, stand face to face with the mighty secrets of the Universe — no longer a mystery to him ; — that, in science, religion, and morals, he might soar to the loftiest heights, whence he could look backward over the dark and tortuous path in which he had been wandering, and forward to sublimer elevations, to more glorious ideals, which seemed to say to him, “On on, for ever !”

The sentiment which pervades all of these rites, is so well expressed by the German poet, in the following beautiful lines, that we can not refrain from introducing them here :—

“ *Through Night to Light !* and though to mortal eyes
Creation’s face a pall of horrors wear,
Good cheer ! good cheer ! the gloom of midnight flies,
And then a sunrise follows mild and fair.

“ *Through storm to calm !* and though his thunder-car,
The rumbling tempest drive through earth and sky ;
Good cheer ! good cheer ! the elemental war
Tells that a blessed healing hour is nigh.

“Through strife to peace! and though, with bristling front,
 A thousand frightful deaths encompass thee;
 Good cheer! good cheer! brave thou the battle's brunt,
 For the peace-march, and song of victory!

“Through death to Life! and through this vale of tears,
 And thistle-world of mortal life, ascend,
 To the great Supper in that world, whose years,
 Of bliss unclouded, fadeless, know no end.”

Some writers have contended that the Mysteries, and, indeed, all the Mythuses of Antiquity, have no reference whatever to religious ideas, or to a spiritual sphere, but are merely allegorical representations of the phenomena of the physical world. Dupuis* explains all the mysteries in this way, and carries his theory so far, as finally to assert that Christ is only an astronomical sign, and that the mystical woman of the Revelations, whom St. John describes, as “clothed† with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars,” is but the constellation Virgo!

That portions of the Isianic and Cabirian Mysteries had reference to astronomical ideas, is undoubtedly true; but this fact by no means justifies the conclusions of Dupuis and others, that they have no spiritual reference at all. On the contrary, it was the deep, earnest, and positive faith of the ancients, in the unseen and spiritual, which led them to blend, in this manner—unfortunately so foreign to our modern

* Origin des tous les Cultes.

† Rev. xii. 1.

habits of thinking—the ideas of Science with those of Religion. And here we fall far below the ancients. We have divorced Science and Philosophy from Religion, and seem to regard them as quite different and distinct things, the deplorable results of which are seen in our modern systems of education, which are entirely material, and end in skepticism, if not in absolute irreligion. On the other hand, the ancients contemplated the universe from the religious point of view. All the phenomena of life—all the motions of the heavenly bodies—the whole stupendous spectacle of the world—revealed to them the presence of an unseen Intelligence. Hence their religion embraced all the facts of physical Science, as well as those ideas which relate exclusively to the nature and destiny of the soul. With them Science, and Art, and Philosophy, were necessary parts of Religion, and reposed on a spiritual basis. Hence, instruction with them was religious and moral. And were they not right?

The *Mysteries* were established for human instruction; and there all the sciences were studied with reference to a higher sphere of thought. Nature, with all its laws, its motions, and its mysteries, which Science attempts to explore, was, in their views, only a shadow, or reflex, or projection, of the more substantial verities of the Unseen—the Eternal World. Philosophy itself was Religion.

Physical Science, studied apart from religious ideas, lowers the tone of the moral attributes of man. It does not, indeed, demoralize man necessarily; for no *truth* can with justice be reproached for this. But studied by itself alone, with no reference to the invisible and infinite Cause of all motion, it is not calculated to elevate the character of man. Physical philosophers, therefore, do not rise to the heroic sphere. They do not occupy the intellectual summit. They do not rise so high as Confucius, Socrates, Plato, Seneca, and Epictetus, of the Pagan, or as Paul, Peter, and John, of the Christian school. Let them praise and exalt this physical Science as they may—let them exhaust all their poetry, and all their eloquence in eulogizing it—still the human heart can never admit that the highest scientific attainments are equal to the highest moral and religious attainments. A physical philosopher may be a bad man; a drunkard, a coarse and profane swearer, a liar, a swindler; but a religious philosopher can not. The excellence of the one consists in knowing facts about stones, earth, plants, animals, chemical agencies, and the laws of matter, and motion; and vice can learn all this, as well as virtue. The excellence of the latter consists in knowing how to govern the passions, in exemplifying the virtues and the graces, and exhibiting the fruits of true wisdom.

Such was education among the ancients, so far as

it went. It was eminently religious. Hence the dramas, represented in the Mysteries, and the rites of initiation, took note, at the same time, of the facts of Science and the verities of Religion. And because these dramas and rites shadowed forth some of the phenomena of nature, and the motions of the heavenly bodies, we are not to infer, with Dupuis and others, that these Mysteries had no spiritual reference at all, and that those who celebrated them, had no faith in God, Accountability, or a Future Life, but rather, on the contrary, that those old Grecians and Egyptians were men of positive faith, who saw in all the phenomena of nature — in all the motions of the starry spheres, and in all the miracles of the world — the Awful Shadow of that mysterious One, who, although infinite and indivisible, yet, in some manner, incomprehensible to human intelligence, individualizes himself to every human thought, and localizes himself in every place.

The Mysteries were established then to assist the education and development of man. And with this intention, the Mystagogues employed every resource to stimulate the moral energies, and awaken the nobler instincts of those they sought to elevate. As poetry and music were considered the most efficient means of moral and mental advancement, they were cultivated with great assiduity, and were brought to great perfection in those institutions.

The ceremonies, we have seen were themselves highly poetical, and music entered largely into the composition of them. The imposing spectacle of the Universe, and the great Truths which the Creator reveals through it, to the earnest soul, furnished the subjects of those scenes, as astonishing as they were varied, which were represented in the sanctuaries of Egypt, Asia, and Greece. Whatever could excite enthusiasm, or appeal strongly to the imagination; all the pomp of festivals, the variety and splendor of decorations and symbols; the majesty of the ritual, and the enchanting force of music, were put in requisition to awaken the moral sensibilities of the people.

It was in this way that Orpheus,* that great enchanter of the old world, drew together the savages which were scattered through the forests of Greece, charmed them by the harmonious sounds of his lyre, and by the accents of his voice, and accustomed them, insensibly, to receive the first lessons of virtue, which is the basis of all society. He felt that Liberty should be founded on and supported by absolute Justice, and those sweet and gentle sentiments, which we call humanity—that the equality of rights finds, in the law, a security against the inequality of force; and that man is happy, only so far as he is just, and so far as he unites his own interests with those of his fellow-men.

* Horat, de Art Poetic, 389. Vide Dupuis: Les Mysteres.

The first of the lessons of Orpheus, was that which taught men to be strong by their courage, to respect the blood of their kind, and to remember their obligations of fraternity, instead of fighting and devouring each other: Societies were formed, cities arose, and poetry, become the organ of wisdom, taught men to distinguish the public good from particular interests—the sacred from the profane.

The manners and habits of men were gradually purified and refined, and the laws were written upon wood.

This passage, or transition from the savage to the civilized state, which Horace here describes, was attributed to the force of harmony, the charms of music, and the power of song, which the chief of the Mysteries of Thrace knew so well how to employ. All other ancient institutions made use of the same means. Strabo observes, with much truth—speaking of the Curetes, the Corybantes, the Telchines, and, in general, of all the ministers of the religious and mystic ceremonies of Crete and Phrygia—that they all resemble each other, by their enthusiasm and inspiration, and by the employment of music. He asserts that music, by its inspiring influence, elevates the soul to God. He comprehends, in the general idea of music, rhythm, melody, and dancing. He tells us that the first who cultivated this divine Art, were the same who established the Mysteries: *i. e.*, Orpheus,

Museus, and Eumolpus—at least, they were the first who introduced it among the Greeks, by the use they made of it in civilizing the people, and in the celebration of the Mysteries, where the chorus played so important a part. He does not separate music from morality, which it served originally to establish, nor from philosophy, which employed it as an instrument. And if sometimes it has been abused and degraded in the theatre and elsewhere, we ought not, on that account, to accuse the Art itself, nor forget the nature of the teachings, of which it is the principle and the source. Whatever contributes to man's moral perfection, comes to us from the Gods. Strabo cites the authority of Plato, and, before him, that of the Pythagoreans, who gave to music the name of Philosophy. We see, indeed, that among the means of perfecting man, which the ancient sages relied on, music and philosophy are the two, to which they attached the first importance.

“Music and philosophy,” another ancient writer remarks, “have been established by Heaven, for the education and advancement of man. They habituate, they persuade, they compel his irrational and animal powers to obey the nobler impulses of his soul. They curb the passions and tranquillize desire, and restrain both from moving against reason, or from remaining inactive, when reason calls them to act or enjoy. For it is the height of wisdom to act or restrain oneself according to enlightened reason.”

“Philosophy, venerable and august, has purged us from our errors, to give us knowledge; it has redeemed our minds from ignorance to raise them to the contemplation of divine things, by which man becomes happy, when he knows how to unite with knowledge, moderation in human things, and a just activity in all the course of his life.”*

THE ANCIENTS ALL CLAIMED FOR THESE INSTITUTIONS A DIVINE ORIGIN. Bacchus, in Euripides,† responds to the questions of Pentheus, who demanded, from whom he received his new worship and his *Mysterics*, that he received them from the son of Jupiter. All the ancient educators of the race affirmed the same of their teachings. Rhadamanthus says that he received from Heaven the laws that he gave to the Cretans.‡ Minos shut himself up in a sacred cave, to compose his code of laws, which he affirmed were revealed to him by the Divinity. Zoroaster, the Persian Seer, claims also to have been divinely inspired.§ He separated himself from society, and gave himself up to sacred meditations. He invoked the supernal powers, and at length the light of a heavenly inspiration descended upon his soul, and a divine messenger visited him, and instructed him in celestial things. Thus, according to Chandemir, he received from Heaven the Zend Avezta, that great depository of

* Plato: *Timeus de Loc.*, c. vi.

‡ Strabo, l. x., p. 476.

† Euripid.: *Bacch.*, p. 460.

§ Hyde de *vet. Pers.*, p. 317.

sublime maxims, so revered by the ancient Persians. Ardeshir desiring to reform the religious code of his kingdom, appointed one of the sages to accomplish the work. The new reformer, not wishing to make innovations which might not be authorized by Heaven, invoked the aid of the spiritual powers. He sunk away into a mysterious sleep, and experienced an ecstasy, during which his soul seemed to go forth out of his body. At the end of seven days he awoke, and declared that he had been in communication with the unseen world of spirits, and employed a scribe to write the new revelations, which he had received from the gods. Pythagoras* also professed to receive the Divine direction in the foundation of his famous society. He affirms of himself what Titus Livius† asserts of Numa; viz., that the secrets of nature, which others knew by opinion and conjecture, were communicated to him by the direct interposition of the gods, and that Apollo, Minerva, and the Muses, had often appeared to him.

Whatever we may think of these professions and claims to a Divine enlightenment, on the part of the ancient reformers, we can not but respect that faith and piety which always led them to refer all wisdom and virtue to a Divine influence. Their maxim seemed to be, that whatever is useful to men, is divine. And as the Mysteries, and the rules of virtue

* Phil., l. i., c. 1. Vit. Apoll.

† Plut. Vita Numa.

which they cultivated and enforced, were useful to humanity, they were, of a consequence, providential institutions created by the will of the Eternal.

After what we have now said, it can not be difficult to see clearly the true end and purpose of the Mysteries, the first and greatest fruits of which were, according to the ancients, to civilize savage people, to soften their ferocious manners, to render them sociable, and to procure them a kind of life more worthy of the dignity of man. Cicero places, in the number of supreme benefits which the Athenians enjoyed, the establishment of the Mysteries of Eleusis, the effect of which was, he tells us, to civilize men, to reform their wild and ferocious manners, and to make them comprehend the true principles of morality, which initiate man into an order of life, which is alone worthy of a being, destined to immortality. The same orator-philosopher, in another place, where he apostrophizes Ceres and Proserpine, says that we owe to these goddesses the first elements of our moral life, as well as the first aliment of our physical life; viz., the knowledge of the laws, the refinement of manners, and the examples of civilization, which have elevated and polished the habits of men and of cities.

Their moral end was well perceived by Arrien, who tells us that all these Mysteries were established by the ancients, to perfect our education and reform our manners.

Pausanias,* speaking of the Eleusinia, says that the Greeks, from the highest antiquity, had established them as an institution the most effectual to inspire men with the sentiments of reverence and love for the gods. And among the responses that Bacchus† makes to Pentheus, whose curiosity is excited by his Mysteries, he tells him that this new institution merits to be widely known, and that one of the greatest advantages resulting from it, is the proscription of all impiety and crime.

From the above it appears that the Mysteries must have been of the highest utility in advancing the civilization of our race, in promoting the arts and stimulating a taste for science and letters.

We have seen that the cultivation of Music commenced with the establishment of the Mysteries, and formed a great portion of the ceremonies. Sculpture and painting were encouraged, and received their first impulse in these institutions. Literature and Philosophy were pursued with ardor by the disciples of Orpheus and Eumolpus, and through them Religion shed a benign and gentle radiance over all of life. Through the Mysteries, society received wise and wholesome laws, and that moral and mental impulsion which raised Greece to the summit of human greatness.

The drama also owes its birth to these institutions. The first plays, symbolical of Man, and his progress,

* Paus. : Phoc., p. 348.

† Euripid. : Bacch. v., p. 460.

his struggles, his trials, his labor, his combats, and triumphs, were performed within the secret enclosures, secure from the intrusion of profane eyes. The ceremonies were, themselves, dramas shadowing forth, more or less perfectly, the great truths of God, of Nature, and the soul — pointing man forward to his great destiny, acquainting him with the conditions of moral perfection, and aiding him in advancing toward it.

Such were the secret societies of antiquity. Who can say, after this examination, that they were not useful? — that they did not bring new moral life to society, and contribute largely to the general amelioration and improvement of the condition of Man?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SECRET ORDER OF PYTHAGORAS.

As this celebrated Society singularly confirms the theory of secret association which we have ventured to propose, and as the philosophical Mystagogue, Pythagoras, is frequently mentioned in Masonic traditions, we are confident the reader will not complain if we give a somewhat extended account of the society, and of its founder and of his teachings.

Pythagoras was a Samian by birth, and lived somewhere about the sixth century before Christ. He received his first instruction from Creophilus in his native city. Thence he went to the island of Cyros, and studied with Pherecides, till the death of the latter. He was also for a time the scholar of Thales. He possessed an inquiring mind, a philosophical spirit, and an unquenchable thirst for wisdom. In the pursuit of science he spent considerable time in Phœnicia, in communion with the successors of Moschus and other priests of that country, by whom he was initiated into the Cabirian Mysteries. Continuing his journey, he visited various parts of Syria, in order to

become acquainted with the most important religious doctrines and usages. He also visited Judea, and a Pythagorean society—the Essæans—existed there as early as the time of the Maccabees, and down to the time of Christ. Recommended by Polycrates, king of Samos, to Amasis, the Egyptian king, he visited Egypt, and was initiated into the Mysteries of Isis,* and became acquainted with all the learning of that remarkable people. From Egypt he journeyed to India, to acquaint himself with the wisdom of the Gymnosophists, visiting the Magi and the Chaldean sages on his way. He also visited Crete, where the priests of Cybele took him to the caverns of Ida, where Jupiter had been cradled, and where, it was pretended, his grave could be seen. There he met Epimenides, whom he initiated into the sacred Mysteries of the Greeks. From Crete he went to Sparta and Elis, and thence to Phlius, where, being asked by King Leon what his profession was, he replied, that “he was a *philosopher*, friend of wisdom,” declaring that the name of *sage*, or the wise, belonged solely to the divinity.

Having thus acquired all the wisdom of his age, and master of the science of all countries, he returned home and established a school at Samos, where, in imitation of the Egyptians, he taught his doctrines in a symbolical form. His teachings seemed divine

* Ritter: Geschichte der Pythagoraischen Philosophie.

oracles, and the sacred obscurity in which he veiled them, attracted great numbers of disciples. But as his ideas embraced politics, the structure of society, and the science of government, as well as religion and philosophy, and desiring probably to apply his theories to a practical result, he left Samos and established himself at Crotona, in Magna Græcia. Here he established his secret brotherhood, which was organized after the ideal, and in harmony with those political principles, which he wished to see realized in all civilized institutions. It was an aristocratic republic, although all who became members united their property in one common stock for the good of the whole. The most influential citizens of Crotona were numbered among its members.

Candidates for initiation were subjected to a severe discipline and examination before they were admitted to all the mysteries. They were required to practise the greatest simplicity of manners. A silence of two to five years was imposed upon them. He alone who had passed through the appointed series of severe trials, was allowed to hear the word of the master, in his immediate presence. Whoever was terrified by the difficulties of initiation, might withdraw without opposition, and his contributions to the common stock were repaid, a tomb was erected to his memory as if he were dead, and he was no more thought of. To the *illuminated* the doctrines were not delivered as to others,

under the veil of images and symbols. As soon as they had made sufficient progress in geometry, they were introduced to the study of Nature, to the investigation of fundamental principles, and to the knowledge of God and religious ideas. They were instructed in morals, economics, or politics, and afterward employed either in managing the affairs of the order, or sent abroad to inculcate and bring into practice these principles of philosophy and government in the other Grecian states.

It appears, therefore, that the secret fraternity of Pythagoras was intended as a *propaganda* of new ideas and social relations, as a means of fashioning society after a higher and better idea of justice and right. The members lived together, with their wives and children, in buildings, in perfect harmony, as one family. Each morning it was decided how the day should be spent, and every evening a review was made of all that had been done. They rose before the sun for religious worship; verses from Homer and other poets were then recited, or music was introduced, to arouse the mental powers, and fit them for the duties of the day. Several hours were then spent in serious study. A pause for recreation followed, in which a solitary walk was usually taken, to indulge in contemplation; a conversation then took place. Before dinner, various gymnastic exercises were performed. The common meal consisted principally of

bread, honey, and water. The remainder of the day was devoted to public and domestic affairs, conversation, and religious performances.

Such was the character of this famous *confrérie*, which was to achieve the social regeneration of Magna Græcia. Previous to, and at the time of, its establishment there, the inhabitants were notorious for the looseness of their manners. They were licentious and vicious to the last degree. Lawlessness, disorder, and crime, prevailed on one hand, and despotism on the other. But the influence of the Pythagorean Brotherhood was not long in showing itself. Sobriety, temperance, justice, and virtue, soon predominated over the prevailing dissoluteness. Justice and equity appeared in the administration of the laws, and society rapidly advanced to a high degree of prosperity.

Unfortunately, the social Ideal of the order did not reach far enough. The society was republican, but it retained the aristocratic element. In progress of time a struggle arose between this and the democratic element. The fault of the society was, that it did not provide for the unlimited development of social ideas, nor for their application to life. It did not yield readily to the progress of the democratic principle, and as nobles and princes were active members of the order, it was suspected of too great a leaning in that direction. The rejection of one Cylon, an influential

citizen, who had made application for initiation, was made the occasion of an attack on the institution, which ended in the breaking up of the establishment at Crotona. But this turned to the advantage of the order at large; for the members dispersing, carried the ideas of the society into all lands, and Pythagorean lodges or clubs—to use modern appellations for want of better—were established in all quarters of the globe and flourished through many ages.

The objects of the associations were mutual aid, social communion, intellectual cultivation, and social and personal progress. The scope of the Pythagorean Mysteries was therefore as wide as the circle of human wants, and human science. By an admirable system of education, they led the neophyte, gradually step by step, through the mazes of science, up to the sublimest secrets of philosophy. In this progress of the human mind, the first step was the study of

THE MATHEMATICS.

The doctrine of *numbers* was considered the foundation of the mathematics, according to Pythagoras. They are, as it were, the model by which the world is formed in all its parts. The odd numbers are limited and perfect; the even unlimited and imperfect. The *monad*, or unity, is the source of all numbers. The *dyad* is imperfect and passive, and the cause of increase and division. The *triad*, compounded of the

monad and *dyad*, partakes of the nature of both. The *tetras*, or number four, is, in the highest degree, perfect. The *decad*, which contains the sum of the four prime numbers, and is therefore called the *tetractys*, comprehends all musical and arithmetical proportions, and denotes the system of the world.

The real meaning of this Pythagorean doctrine of numbers is not well understood. It is probable, however, that *numbers* were considered the symbolical or allegorical representations of the first principles or forms of nature. As Pythagoras could not express abstract ideas in simple language, he seems to have made use of numbers, as geometers do of a diagram, to assist the comprehension of his scholars. He perceived some analogies between numbers and the attributes of the Divine understanding, and made the former the symbols of the latter. As the numbers proceed from the *monad* or unity, undergo various combinations, and, with progress, assume new properties, so he regarded the pure and simple essence of the *Deity*, as the common source of all the forms of nature, which, according to their various modifications, possess different properties. Here, as in all the philosophical systems of antiquity, God is presented as the basis of all existence, and interpenetrates all things.

The second preparatory step, in the pursuit of wisdom, was

MUSIC.

As it raised the mind above the dominion of passion, it was considered as the most proper exercise to fit the mind for contemplation. Pythagoras considered music not only as an art, to be judged of by the ear, but as a science to be reduced to mathematical maxims and relations, and allied to astronomy. He believed that the heavenly spheres, in which the planets move, dividing the ether in their course, produced tones, and that the tones must be different according to their size, velocity, and distance. That these relations were in concord, that these tones produced the most perfect harmony, he necessarily believed, in consequence of his notions of the supreme perfection of the universe. Here, we have that sublime conception of the music of the spheres, so poetical, so lofty, and so beautiful! To the initiate of the Pythagorean mysteries, the universe overflowed with melody and song! The whole system of worlds swam in a celestial harmony. Around the central Throne, where He, the All-beautiful, and Mighty, sits in unspeakable majesty, hidden from mortal eyes by the golden drapery of innumerable suns and stars, swells, from age to age, this ineffable chorus of the spheres. In the midst of such contemplations, was the mind of the Pythagorean disciple exalted and refined. To him —

“The earth and sea, those orbs of fire,
Which sweep the clear serene along,
Were parts of one stupendous lyre,
That wrapped the worlds in mighty song.”

ASTRONOMY.

THE astronomical idea of the Pythagorean mysteries was, that *heaven* denotes either the spheres of the fixed stars, or the whole space between the fixed stars and the moon, or the whole world, including both the heavenly spheres and the earth. Agreeably to the arithmetical hypothesis, there are ten heavenly spheres, of which nine are visible to us, viz: the sphere of the fixed stars; the seven spheres of the seven planets, including the sun and moon; and the sphere of the earth. The tenth earth, called, by Pythagoras, *antithon*—anti-earth—is invisible, but necessary to the perfection of the harmony of nature, since the *decad* is the perfection of the numerical harmony. By this anti-earth, he explains the eclipses of the moon. In the middle of the universe is the central fire, the principle of warmth and life. The earth is one of the planets moving around the sphere of fire. The atmosphere of the earth is a gross immovable mass, but the ether is pure, clear, always in motion, and the region of all the Divine and immortal natures. His moon and stars are Divine intelligences, or inhabited by such.

OF PHILOSOPHY.

The Pythagorean mysteries taught that true knowledge embraced those subjects, which are in their nature immutable, eternal, and indestructible, and of which alone it can be properly predicated, that they exist. The object of philosophy is, by contemplation, to render the human mind similar to the Divine, and make it fit to enter the assembly of superior and purer intelligences. For this purpose it is necessary to invoke, in prayer, the assistance of the Divinity and of good angels. Contemplative wisdom can not be fully attained without entire abstraction from common things—without entire tranquillity and freedom of mind. Hence the necessity of societies, separate from the world, for contemplation and study.*

OF GOD.

Pythagoras taught that God was a universal spirit, diffused in all directions from the centre, the source of all animal life, the actual and inward cause of all motion; in substance similar to light—the first principle of the universe, incapable of suffering, invisible, indestructible, and to be comprehended by the mind alone. To the Deity, there were three kinds of subordinate intelligences—gods, demons, and heroes—

* This Pythagorean idea seems to have been perpetuated and practised on, by the Roman church, in its monastic system.

emanations from the supreme God, varying in dignity and perfection, in proportion as they were more or less removed from their source. The heroes, he believed, to be clothed with bodies of subtle matter.

As God is one, and the origin of all variety, he was represented as a monad, and the subordinate spirits, as number, derived from and contained in unity. In the organization of his secret society, this idea was displayed. The regions of the air, he thought, filled with spirits, demons, and heroes, who were the cause of health or sickness to men and animals, and by means of dreams and other kinds of divinations, imparted the knowledge of future events. The soul was likewise a number, an emanation of the central fire, and consequently always in motion, and indestructible.

OF MAN.

In the mystic science of Pythagoras, man consisted of an elementary nature, of a divine and rational principle. His soul was a self-moving power, and consisted of two parts—the rational, which was a portion of the universal soul, an emanation of the central fire, and had its seat in the brain; and *irrational*, which comprised the passions, and lived in the heart. The sensitive soul (*thumos*) was supposed to perish; but the rational mind (*phrenes, nous*) was believed to be immortal, because it had its origin in an immortal source. When the latter was freed from the fetters

of the body, it assumed an ethereal vehicle, and passed to the habitations of the dead, where it remained till it returned to the world, to dwell in some other body.* This transmigration of the spirit was continued, until it was purified of all taint of sin, when it was received to everlasting beatitude in the bosom of Him from whom it proceeded.

Such was the sublime and lofty character of that ancient system of Free-Masonry — if we may call it so — which was so celebrated in the ancient world, and exercised so mighty an influence on subsequent ages. It had its errors, both in its organization and the ideas it sought to propagate, yet its results were eminently advantageous to the human race. Many of its teachings were profoundly philosophical, and are accepted by the most critical systems of the present age. Its idea of association around the secret principle, for mutual aid, social enjoyment, intellectual culture, is still the ideal of earnest positive spirits, who believe in the everlasting progress of the race, look forward, with a sublime hope, to “a good time coming.”

* Pythagoraischen Philosophie (Hamburg, 1826); et Bökh's Disputat. de Platónico Systemate Cælest. Glob., &c. (Heidelberg, 1810. 4to.)

CHAPTER IX.

SECRET SOCIETIES IN ANCIENT SCANDINAVIA.

ABOUT fifty years before the Christian Era, an event transpired on the western limit of Asia, which was destined many centuries after to change the whole aspect of Europe, and affect the destinies of the whole civilized world. The Roman commonwealth had arrived at the height of its power, and beheld all the then known world subject to its laws.* Its last formidable enemy, Mithridates, had fled before the victorious arms of Pompey, and sought refuge and new means of resistance in the forests of Scythia. He hoped to arm against the ambition of Rome all the barbarous nations, his neighbors, whose liberties she threatened. He succeeded at first; but all those peoples—ill united as allies, ill-armed as soldiers, and still worse disciplined—were forced to yield to the genius of Pompey, and some of them were compelled to serve in the victorious army. Of this number was ODIN the great Mystagogue of the North. His true name was Sigge. The degrading position he was obliged to occupy, stung him to the depths of his soul. He could

* Vide Mallet. L'Introduction à l'Histoire de Dan.

ill-disguise his resentment, which broke forth beyond all restraint, on receiving a blow from the Roman general. The insult burned in his heart like a coal of living fire. He fled into the wilderness, the idea of revenge being his supreme thought. He ran from nation to nation, exciting the people by his wondrous eloquence, and the indefatigable zeal with which he propagated the religion, of which he now claimed to be the minister. He assumed the name of Odin, who was the Supreme God of the Teutonic nations, either because he believed himself inspired by the gods, or because as chief priest, he presided over the worship which was paid to that Deity. It was usual with many ancient nations to give their pontiffs the name of the god they worshipped.

Sigge or Odin, was the chief of the Æsir, whose country must have been situated between the Pontus Euxinus and the Caspian sea. Their principal city was Asgard. The worship they paid to their supreme god, was famous throughout the surrounding countries. Odin having united under his banners the youth of the neighboring nations, marched toward the north and west of Europe, subduing, we are told, all the people he found in his passage, and giving them to one or other of his sons for subjects.

After having disposed of so many countries, and confirmed and settled his new governments, Odin directed his course toward Scandinavia, passing through Cimbria, now Holstein and Jutland. These provinces

made him no resistance; and shortly after he passed into Funen, which submitted as soon as he appeared. He stayed a long time in this agreeable island, where he built the city of Odensee, which still preserves in its name the memory of its founder. Hence he extended his power over all the north. He subdued the rest of Denmark, and made his son, Skiold, king. Odin, who was apparently better pleased to give crowns to his children than to wear them himself, afterward passed into Sweden, where, at that time, reigned a prince, named Gylfi, who, persuaded that the author of a new worship, consecrated by conquests so brilliant, could not be of the ordinary race of mortals, paid him great honors, and even worshipped him as a divinity. By favor of this opinion, Odin soon acquired in Sweden, the authority he had obtained in Denmark. He enacted new laws, introduced the customs of his own country, and established at Sigtuna (a city now destroyed, situated near the present city of Stockholm) a supreme council, composed of twelve judges or pontiffs. Their business was to watch over the public weal, to distribute justice to the people, to preside over the new worship, and instruct the people therein, and to preserve faithfully the religious secrets which Odin had deposited among them. He established there the *sacred mysteries*, by the influence of which Scandinavia began to live a new life—emerged from obscurity, and gained a name and a place in history.

Gylfi himself, a reputed magician, and thousands of Swedes, flocked to Sigtuna, to be made acquainted with the new instructions. The Prose Edda contains a full account of the initiation of Gylfi, an analysis of which we shall give hereafter.

After he had finished these glorious achievements, and feeling his end drawing near, he would not wait till the consequences of a lingering disease should put a period to that life, which he had so bravely hazarded in the field; but assembling the friends and companions of his fortunes, he gave himself nine wounds, in the form of a circle, with the point of a lance, and many other cuts in his skin with his sword. As he was dying, he declared he was going back to Asgard to take his seat among the other gods at an eternal banquet, where he would receive with great honor all who should expose themselves, intrepidly in battle, and die bravely with their swords in their hands. As soon as he had breathed his last, they carried his body to Sigtuna, where, conformably to a custom, introduced by him into the north, his body was burnt with much pomp and magnificence.

Such was the end of this extraordinary man, whose death was as wonderful as his life. Whoever and whatever he was, it is certainly evident, that he was one of these heroic geniuses, which are sometimes sent into this world to stimulate the human race to sublime activities, and communicate to it a new element of

progress. His influence on the life of the world can not be measured. His shadow reaches down through centuries even to the present time. The whole of Europe felt and still feels to-day the power of his mighty life. With all his limitations, he read the future with the clear vision of a prophet, and in preparing his vengeance on Rome, which had insulted him, he laid plans which required centuries to put in execution. The ideal which he gave to the northern people continued to inspire them after his death, the seed which he planted germinated with fearful productivity — and it was not long before the Scandinavian nations, overflowing with an immense vitality and moved by an uncontrollable instinct, began that career of conquest which changed all the aspects of Europe. One day his worshippers found themselves before the walls of the Eternal city, and hammering at its gates, which fell beneath their sturdy blows. The Odinic vengeance was executed. The imperial grandeur withered beneath the breath of the terrible Spirit of the north, and the might of Rome vanished before the storm of his wrath. And thus Odin became, by the inscrutable decree of Providence, the Nemesis of the empire.

According to the old chronicles, Odin resembled in many particulars, Orpheus the Thracian. Like him, Odin is described as the most persuasive of men. Nothing could resist, they tell us, the force of his words — that he sometimes enlivened his harangues

with verses, which he composed extempore, and that he was not only a great poet, but that it was he who first taught the art of poesy to the Scandinavians. He was also the inventor of the Runic characters, which so long prevailed among that people. He was also the prince of magicians. His followers believed that he could run over the world in the twinkling of an eye—that he had the direction of the air and tempests—that he could transform himself into all sorts of shapes—could raise the dead—foretell things to come—deprive his enemies of health and vigor by enchantments—and discover all the treasures concealed in the earth. The chroniclers add, that he also knew how to sing airs so tender and melodious, that the very plains and mountains would open and expand with delight; and that the ghosts, attracted by the sweetness of his songs, would leave their infernal caverns, and stand motionless before him.*

Such was the character of this great Mystagogue, who first established secret societies in the north of Europe. The rites of initiation were at first celebrated in one place, but after the death of Odin, and in the course of many years, various fraternities were formed, all of which had their special rites and places for their performance.

The initiation of Gylfi, referred to above, presents some curious features, and deserves an extended no-

* Vide Snorri: *Heimskringla*.

ticè. Arrived at Aggard—i. e., the city of God—he saw a very lofty mansion, whose roof, as far as the eye could reach, was covered with golden shields. Approaching the entrance, he found it guarded by a man who was amusing himself by tossing seven small swords in the air, and catching them as they fell, one after the other.

Guard.—Whence comest thou, stranger, and what dost thou desire?

Gylfi.—My name is Pilgrim; I have wandered long, and am weary, and desire rest. To whom belongs this fair mansion?

Guard.—To the king; and to him will I lead thee.

Pilgrim was then led into the hall, and, with a thunder-crash, the great iron doors closed behind him. Following his guide he traversed many stately rooms crowded with people; some playing, some drinking, and others fighting with various weapons. Seeing many things he could not comprehend, he softly pronounced the following verse:—

“Scan overy gate
Ere thou go on,
With greatest caution;
For hard to say, 'tis
Where foes are lurking,
In this fair mansion.”*

Advancing through the mystical journey, he at length stood in a suppliant posture before three thrones, raised one above another.

* Hava mal. St. I.

Guide.—Pilgrim, behold the **THREE!** He who sitteth on the lowest throne is called the High, or Lofty One; the second is named Equal to the High; and he who sitteth on the highest throne, is called the Highest, or the Third. Listen to what they shall say to thee; question them, and they will answer.

The High.—Stranger, thou art welcome here, and mayest eat and drink, without cost, in the hall of the Sublime. What is thy errand? and what dost thou desire?

Initiate.—Knowledge of the Supreme. Tell me, O Lofty One! who is the first of the gods. Where does he dwell? What is his power? and what has he done to display his glory?

The High.—He liveth from all ages; he governeth all realms, and swayeth all things great and small.

Equally High.—He hath formed heaven and earth, and the air, and all things thereunto belonging.

The Highest.—And what is more, he hath made man, and given him a soul which will live and never perish, though the body shall have mouldered away, or shall have been burned into ashes.

Initiate.—What was the beginning of things?

The High.—

“’Twas time’s first dawn,
When naught yet was.
Nor sand, nor sea,
Nor cooling wave;
Earth was not there,
Nor heaven above.

“Naught, save a void
 And yawning gulf.
 But verdure none.”*

The **THREE** then proceed to instruct the **Pilgrim** in the science of the universe, and in those instructions we have a full description of the cosmogony of the ancient Scandinavians. They describe the creation of the heavens and the earth, and of the first man and woman; they discourse to him of the mysteries of the world—of night and day—of the sun and moon—of the golden age—of the World-Tree, Yggdrasill, and the Destinies—of the winds and seasons—of the gods and goddesses—of the way that leads to heaven—of the twilight of the gods—of the conflagration of the universe, and destruction of the world. The ceremony of initiation ended with a glowing and sublime description of the *palingenesia* of the universe; the ultimate restoration of all things to purity, and harmony, and peace; and with the statement of some moral precepts for the regulation of human conduct.

Initiate.—“What is the end?”

The High.—“There will be a new heaven; and there will arise out of the sea a new earth, most lovely and verdant, with pleasant fields where grain shall grow unsown. A dwelling shall be there more radiant than the sun. There the sons of men shall dwell together again in peace and concord; evil shall disap-

* *Vide Voluspa, in Rhas Edda.*

pear from the empire of Odin, and happiness and virtue shall be universal and perpetual."

The Highest.—"Wanderer thou hast heard the **THREE**; profit by the instructions thou hast received.

"To the guest who enters your dwelling with frozen knees, give the warmth of thy fire; he who hath travelled over the mountains hath need of food and garments well dried.

"He who travelleth hath need of wisdom. One may do at home whatsoever one will, but he who is ignorant of good manners will only draw contempt upon himself when he comes to sit down with men well instructed.

"He who goes to a feast where he is not expected, either speaks with a lowly voice, or is silent; he listens with his ears, and is attentive with his eyes; by this he acquires knowledge and wisdom.

"A man can carry with him no better provisions for his journey than the strength of understanding. In a foreign country, this will be of more use to him than treasures, and will introduce him to the table of strangers. A man can not carry a worse custom with him to a banquet than that of drinking too much; the more the drunkard swallows, the less is his wisdom, till he loses his reason. The bird of oblivion sings before those who inebriate themselves, and steals away their souls.

"While we live, let us live well; for be a man ever

so rich when he lights his fire, death may, perhaps, enter his door before it be burned out. Riches pass away like the twinkle of an eye; of all friends they are the most inconstant. Flocks perish, relatives die, friends are not immortal; thou wilt die thyself, but one thing done is out of the reach of fate; and that is the judgment which is passed upon the dead.

“Trust not to the words of the girl; neither to those a woman utters; for their hearts are made like unto a wheel that turns round and round; levity was put into their bosoms.*

“The heart alone knows what passes within the heart; and that which betrays the soul is the soul itself. There is no malady or sickness more severe than not to be content with one's lot. Do not accustom thyself to mocking; neither laugh at thy guest nor a stranger; they that remain at home often know not who the stranger is that cometh to their gate.

“Where is there to be found a virtuous man without some failing? or one so wicked as to have no good quality? Laugh not at the gray-headed declaimer nor at thy aged grandsire, for there often come forth from the wrinkles of the skin, words full of wisdom.

The High.—“Now have sublime strains been sung in halls sublime! Useful are they to the sons of men

* The ungallant old Mystagogue! he could have had no heart to speak thus of the ladies! That part of his doctrine we certainly do not endorse.

Hail to him who hath sung them! Hail to him who hath understood them. May they profit him who hath retained them! Hail to those who hath lent an ear to them!

“Now, O wanderer! thou hast heard. Make the best use of what has been imparted to thee. Go!”

In the twinkling of an eye, a cloud blacker than midnight enveloped the magnificent palace, with its roof of golden shields. The earth trembled, horrid phantoms glared through the gloom; the most terrible noises moaned through the air, the red-winged thunder rolled through the shuddering skies, and the storm raved along the pine-forest.

When Gylfi opened his eyes, which terror had closed, the entire scene had vanished. City and palace, thrones and warriors, had all disappeared. He stood in an open plain where nothing could be seen but the huge dark rocks, whose brows had been blackened by the tempests of countless years, and the frowning, dismal forest, which was yet writhing in the embrace of the storm.

Although the secret principle and the initiation were established, in Scandinavia by Odin himself, it was not until a subsequent age that particular societies, or brotherhoods, for mutual support, came into being.

We now desire to call the attention of our readers to those particular secret societies, or fraternities, which prevailed among the ancient Scandinavians, for

the purpose of explaining their structure, and the influence they exerted on the life of the people.

In the Icelandic Sagas, we find frequent mention made of these *confreriés*. Men banded together for mutual protection; and the sentiment of honor as well as interest made them faithful to each other in an association so necessary to their welfare in that rude age. There was scarcely a man of any worth, who was not a member of one of these societies; the chief attraction and tie of which were the secret of initiation, and the solemn obligation to support and defend their brethren or companions at the hazard of their own lives. They were governed by constitutions and by-laws.* Each member was required to pay regularly a certain sum of money, to defray the common expenses of the brotherhood, and hence the societies were called Guilds—a word derived from the old Norse verb *gjalda*—to pay, to contribute to.† Beneficent as these societies were, they were not free, of course, from the vices of the times. Conviviality seems at times to have been carried to excess. Some of their statutes, found in a manuscript of the thirteenth century, remind us strongly of the by-laws of the ancient Lodges of the M. U. I. O. O. F., and some Masonic Lodges. We have before us a copy of the

* Vide Mallet: L'Introduction a l'histoire de Dannemarc.

† These societies were, undoubtedly, the parent of the modern Guilds or Clubs.

by laws of an English Lodge, printed thirty years ago, in which we find the following:—

“If any member so far forgets his dignity as a gentleman, as to become intoxicated in the Lodge, he shall pay a fine of one shilling and sixpence.”

Not unlike this, is the rule that follows, taken from the old Latin manuscript of the Scandinavian Order:—

“*Si quis pro ebrietate ceciderit in ipsa domo convivii, vel antiquam proporiam curiam intraverit Oram* — [a small piece of money] — *persolvat.*” — “*Quicumque ebrietatis causa in domo convivii vomitum fecerit, Dimidiam Murcum persolvat,*” * &c.

After the introduction of Christianity into the north, these vices were very much restrained, if not wholly removed: the brethren pledging themselves to check intemperance, and labor for the advancement of virtue.

In the latter part of the twelfth century, we find that these associations had become powerful and influential corporate bodies, and that the brethren were bound by solemn oaths to afford each other mutual aid and protection, and to succor the distressed wherever found. They performed a most important work in achieving the municipal franchises of the Middle Ages. And although conviviality frequently outstepped the bounds of reason and good order, the statutes of these protective brotherhoods show that the members devoted their attention to the amelioration of

* Bartholin: *Caus. contempt. mort.*, &c., p. 183.

the laws for the security of person and property, and the general advancement of the public good.

The chief religious and moral teachings of their ritual, were of the Divine powers and their relations with men; of immortality, and the means of securing future happiness. Valor was considered the chief of all virtues, and a life of toil and combat, the necessary condition of eternal felicity.

But the most remarkable Fraternity of ancient Scandinavia, was the celebrated military Order, founded by a Danish chief, named Palnatoki, and known by the name of the Society of Jomsburg. The society was founded, A. D. 942, and built a stronghold, called Jomsburg, on the south shore of the Baltic, near the mouth of the river Oder. It possessed the entire island of Wollin. The city of Jomsburg, or Julin, as it sometimes was called, grew so rapidly, that in the eleventh century, according to Adam of Bremen, it was the most flourishing commercial city in Europe.

The Order had its secret rites and signs of recognition, and the members were distinguished by badges indicative of their degree or rank. So powerful did this association become, that men of the highest rank—princes and even kings—were proud to wear the mystic cincture of the brotherhood. None were admitted to membership under the age of fifteen, nor over that of fifty. No one who had not shown that he did not fear to face two men equally as strong and

well-armed, or who had not proved himself by some distinguished act of heroism, could be received. The associates were to regard and address each other as brethren. They were bound together in a friendship which was cemented by solemn oaths, and consecrated by the rites of religion. The rules which governed them were most strict. They were devoted to a life of celibacy. No females were allowed to step on the island or to enter the city. Afraid of the softening influence of female charms, the chief of the Fraternity might have exclaimed, like St. Senanus, to any stray dame who attempted to allure the brethren :—

“ Oh, haste and leave this pirate isle,
 Upwelcome bark, ere morning smile,
 For on thy deck, though dark it be,
 A female form I see;
 And I have sworn, this Spartan sod
 Shall ne'er by woman's foot be trod.”

But the brothers of Jomsburg were obliged at last to yield to the might of love, and so far modified their rules as to allow those to marry who desired to do so.

Many distinguished persons were members of this Order. Sweno, a prince of Sweden; Sigvald, and Thorkell the Tall, and Bjarni, a celebrated navigator, whose voyages led to the discovery of America, A. D. 984, were among them. While they were bound to protect each other, they were obliged by their oath to assist and aid all the weak and unfortunate. They were bucaniers, or sea-rovers, it is true, but then it

must be remembered that in those rude and early times, that was considered an honorable calling, and was the only career of activity which was open to them.

The Jomsburg brothers had no fear of death. Their discipline—the whole teaching of their ritual—was admirably calculated to create feelings of contempt of all danger. Their faith in immortality was intense and earnest. When death came to them, although in the most terrible and painful form, they met it with composure, and even with joy.* Several of them were at one time taken prisoners, and doomed to death by beheading. A Norwegian chief, named Thorkell Leire, was the executioner. The prisoners being seated on a log of wood, with their legs bound together by a rope, osier twigs were twisted in them. A slave was then placed behind each to keep his head steady, by holding fast the twigs twisted into a band for that purpose. The executioner began his sanguinary task by striking off the head of him who sat outmost on the log. After he had beheaded the next two, he asked the prisoners what they thought of death. "What happened to my father," said one, "must happen to me. He died, so must I."

Another said: "I remember too well the laws of Jomsburg to fear dying."

* Vide *Jomsvikings Saga*. The *Heimskringla*, vi., 38, 47; and *Muller's Sagabib*, iii., p. 39.

A third declared: "A glorious death is ever welcome to me, and such a death as the present is far more preferable than an infamous life, like that of Thorkell's."

"I only beg of thee," said a fourth, "to be quick over thy work; for thou must know that it is a question often discussed at Jomsburg, whether or not a man feels any pain after losing his head. I will, therefore, grasp this knife in my hand; if, after my head is cut off, I throw it at thee, it will show that I retain some feeling; if I let it fall, it will prove the contrary. Strike, therefore, and decide the question, without further delay."

"Strike the blow in my face," said the next; "I will sit still without flinching, and take notice whether I even wink my eyes; for we Jomsburg people know how to meet the stroke of death without betraying emotion."

"I fear not death," said another, a beautiful youth, "since I have fulfilled the greatest duty of my life."

We do not present this association, and the others noticed in this article, as, by any means, perfect specimens of ancient Free-Masonry. On the contrary, they had great and numerous imperfections. But then they were rude attempts in a rude age to realize that Ideal of Brotherhood which is more perfectly accomplished in the modern Order of Free and Accepted Masons. Nevertheless, these early associations will

be studied with interest by all earnest members of our Order, who find pleasure in tracing the history of that principle of fraternal love, which is destined at last to control the life and action of this world.

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CHAPTER X.

THE FEHM-GERICHTE OF GERMANY—THE HERMANDAD OF SPAIN.

THE laws and institutions of society are always necessarily imperfect, and never meet entirely all the wants of those who live under them. Established for the protection of the weak, against the encroachments of the strong, and for the subjugation of FORCE to the sentiments of justice and equity, they sometimes, even in the most favored times, fail to accomplish all they propose, while in rude and turbulent ages—in times of anarchy and violence—their influence is scarcely felt. Such was the condition of Europe in the thirteenth century.

The law of might everywhere prevailed. The old barons despised all law and justice, looked on the people with contempt, and impiously trampled all the sacred rights of humanity beneath their feet. Justice everywhere was outraged, the homes of the poor were desolated, and violence and crime filled every land. So powerful became those numerous oppressors, the royal authority could not reach them, and no law could com-

pel them to appear at the tribunal of justice, to answer for their misdeeds.

In such circumstances, the oppressed have no resource but to oppose a *secret* force to the open acts of violence. The Fehm-Gerichte of Germany, and the Hermandad of Spain—secret orders, celebrated in those lawless times—originated in this necessity.

This object is most clearly apparent in the Spanish brotherhood—the Hermandad—formed in 1295, in the cities of Castile and Leon. It was based on the secret principles, having secret signs of recognition, and secret places of meeting, where causes were tried, and offenders against justice were judged and punished. It operated in secret, and the blow of justice fell sure and speedy, like the bolt of lightning. It sought not only to punish crime, but to prevent it. It warned every nobleman, who showed a disposition to wrong a citizen, of the certain destruction that awaited him, if he persisted. Should he rob or injure a member of the brotherhood, or a citizen, and refuse to make satisfaction, or give security for the better observance of the laws, his cattle, his vineyards, and gardens were destroyed.

This fraternity was the model of the later Hermandad of the municipal communities, which were formed in Castile, under the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella. It was established in 1486, with the approbation of the king, at a time when the nobles paid no attention to

law, and had no respect or fear for the usual tribunal of justice, but robbed defenceless villagers and industrious citizens, and rendered the lives and property of the people everywhere unsafe.

The disturbers of the public peace were arrested by the secret brothers, carried before the judges, and punished. Neither rank nor station protected the offender against the tranquillity of the country, nor could he find safety even in the churches. The mysterious power of this terrible, but righteous brotherhood, penetrated every place—through barred and bolted gates, and armed sentinels—and often struck its blows in the royal presence itself.

The nobility, who saw their turbulence restrained, and their judicial power limited, by this institution, opposed it with all their power, but without success; for the king protected it as a powerful means of preserving public peace.

The institution was also introduced into Aragon in 1488. The Santa Hermandad—holy brotherhood, a name which has occasioned some to confound this society with the inquisition, or to consider it as depending upon that establishment—had, like the earlier institution of which it was a continuation, the object of securing internal safety, and seizing robbers, and all disturbers of the public welfare.

Of the utility of the Spanish brotherhood there can not be a doubt, and its beneficial effects, in those

stormy times, were immeasurable. Its ideas were justice—absolute justice in the administration of the laws, and equality in society, before God. And those ideas it strove, as best it could, in those rude ages, to realize in society and life.

The Westphalian Brotherhood* also originated in the same circumstances, which gave rise to the Hermandad. It was established in 1267, and soon extended over the entire of Germany. It was strictly an institution of the people. Its objects were to protect the weak, to succor oppressed innocence and to punish crime, when the laws, either by their imperfection, or injustice, or inefficiency, failed to do so. To secure these objects, it received into its secret communion, jailers, executioners, and all such as were connected with the administration of the laws. In every city and town, around every prison, and in the castles of every noble, it had its emissaries; and there was no place, however high or well guarded, secure from its intrusion. It contained over a hundred thousand members, all of them bound by the most solemn obligations to the strictest secrecy.

Its mode of operation was as follows: When a crime was committed, which the laws could not, or would not punish, the offender was summoned in the

* A degree of romance has been thrown around this institution by Scott, who has given a long, and, for the most part, correct description of its *modus operandi*, in his "Maid of the Mist."

name of the emperor—for in his name the society always acted—to appear before the secret tribunal at some place appointed, and offer his defence. Should he fail to appear, he was declared guilty by default, and punished accordingly. When a citizen was unjustly accused, and aristocratic vice and injustice seemed on the point of triumphing over humble virtue, the mystic brotherhood would suddenly appear, and the victim and accuser would exchange places on the scaffold. Sometimes, indeed, the trial was public—in the market-place, or an open field—although the judges and officers were disguised.

The influence of this dread fraternity was highly beneficial. It restrained the power of the feudal barons, and opposed to their lawless encroachments, an irresistible might. It was a powerful protector of the weak, and of those who were unjustly oppressed. It opened the prisons, where the victims of injustice languished in hopeless confinement, restored them to freedom, and punished, with fearful penalties, their proud and lordly persecutors. Its power, like the rays of the sun, radiated in all directions, and penetrated all places. In the castles of the barons, in the palaces of princes, and the halls of kings, the invisible brotherhood took note of all that transpired. It glided through them an unseen Nemesis, and laid low the tyrant, although he were a prince surrounded by his courtiers, or a general at the head of his armies, or a

baron in the midst of his retainers, and protected by his castle-walls.

Such was the character of this remarkable Order, which became so terrible to the proud oppressor and unjust ruler, and so able a defender of the poor, the helpless, and down-trodden. Its results on society in general, were in the highest degree beneficial, and its influence is conspicuously seen in the progress of European civilization. It tended to repress the power and prerogatives of the aristocracy, and to develop, in a degree, the popular power—that new element of democracy, which has been steadily rising for centuries, and which is destined to rule the future. It served to foster and perpetuate that law of personal independence among the German people, which they inherited from their liberty-loving ancestors. It led to the establishment of more equitable institutions, more righteous laws, and a more important and equal administration and execution of them. And, finally, it presented to the eyes of those who were permitted to enter its mystic circle, that Ideal of Freedom, Liberty, and social Equality, which inspires the dream of all earnest, and true, and enthusiastic spirits, who believe in the progressive development of man, and look forward with hope to the future that lies before him.

THE CARBONARI OF ITALY.

FOR many centuries, the divided state of Italy, and the unhappy condition of its inhabitants, subject, for the most part, to foreign rule, and oppressed by military despotism, have been the subject of sorrowful contemplation to all those elevated Italian spirits, who cherish the remembrance of the ancient glory of their country, and who still dream of the possibility of a free, united, and independent Italy. More favored by nature than other lands beneath the sun—the inhabitants bound together by the same social habits, the same national remembrances, the same language, and the same religious faith—we should naturally expect to find there, more than anywhere else, a great, free, independent, and united people, united under one government, and able to bid defiance to all foreign interference. But such a happy destiny is still far distant from unfortunate Italy. Divided between numerous governments, all of them despotical, and having no sympathy with each other—and these again acknowledging the dominance of foreign despotism, still more intolerable—the proud and fiery-hearted

Italian is sunk to the grade of a bondman, ignobly exploiting in the chains of a double servitude. On every hill and valley, in every city and town of Italy, seems to be inscribed, in ineffaceable letters, the name which Dante, ages ago, gave to his unhappy country —“*di dolor' ostello*”—the mansion of pain!

The Italian heart, however, is not crushed, and visions of national unity and independence seem, at times, to float before the Italian mind. There is room to believe that the hope of a political regeneration shines bright and clear in the thought of many, and that the aspirations of the whole people, however faint they may be, point to the same idea.

The secret society of the Carbonari* is an expression of this thought—of the national aspiration to unity and independence. Like most societies of the kind, the origin of this great association is involved in obscurity. Some say that it was founded by Francis I. of France, on which account the members to this day drink to his health at their festivals. Others associate them with the disturbances among the German peasantry in the sixteenth century. And others, again, look for the origin of the society in the oppressive forest laws of the Norman kings of England. Whether we receive or reject either of these hypotheses, we must still admit the antiquity of the institution: If, however, it could be proved to be a branch of the Wal-

* Carbonari is an Italian word, signifying *Colliers*.

denses, its religious character, which aims at evangelical purity and a rejection of traditions, would be best accounted for.

The association, for many years, was quite inactive, or, at least, was little observed by the world.* In 1818, however, it emerged from obscurity, and soon acquired great power and importance. From its published instructions, catechisms of the different degrees, statutes, and rituals, we learn that its leading ideas were civil liberty and religious freedom.

According to Botta's "Historia d'Italy," the republicans, under the reign of Murat, fled to the recesses of the Abruzzi, inspired with an equal hatred of the French, and of Ferdinand. There they joined the society of the Carbonari. Their chief, Capobianco, possessed great talent as an orator. Their celebrated war-cry—"Revenge for the land crushed by the wolf"—makes sufficiently clear the objects of the society at that time. The symbol and the ritual of the Carbonari, are based on this idea, of *clearing the wood of wolves!* in other words, delivering the land from tyrants.

There were four degrees in the Order. Those of the second degree were called Pythagoreans, and the substance of the oath of admission was, "Hatred to all tyrants!" The place of meeting is called *baraca*, that is hut or lodge; the exterior parts are called the

* Vide *Memoirs of the Secret Societies of Italy*. London, 1821.

wood; the interior of the lodge is called the *vendita*—*colliery*. The confederation of all the lodges of the province is called the *Republic*, generally bearing the ancient name of the province; for instance, the Republic of West Lucania, in Principatro Citra, which consisted of one hundred and eighty-two lodges, and had its seat at Solerno; and the East Lucania Republic, in the province of Basilicata, with its chief seat at Potewza.

The growth of the Order, after its revivification, was one of unparalleled rapidity. It spread through all Italy, and in one month alone, it is said, the society received six hundred and fifty thousand new members. Whole cities joined it. The little town of Lanciano, in Abruzzo Citra, contained, at one time, twelve hundred armed members of this fraternity. The clergy, and the military especially, seem to have thronged for admission.

Knowing the hatred which the Order bore to all foreign invaders, Ferdinand and Caroline endeavored to obtain their assistance against the French. Prince Moliterni, himself a republican at heart, was sent to them for this purpose. In 1812, when Murat meditated a separation from Napoleon, and the raising of the standard of Italian liberty and independence, the Carbonari gave him their support, but abandoned him as soon as they saw he would not, or could not, perform what he had promised.

After the suppression of the Neapolitan and Piedmontese revolution in 1821, the Carbonari throughout Italy were declared guilty of high treason, and punished as such by the laws.

The Order, however, still exists, and relinquishes none of its hopes and none of its efforts for Italian liberty. Addressing the highest and holiest sentiments of the human heart, the principles which it inculcates will yet awaken the dormant energies of the Italian people, and lead them forward to a sublime destiny. Propagating republican ideas, and asserting the freedom of worship, it is in harmony with the spirit of the age, and must be triumphant in the end.

The religious character of the Order, appears from the following statute: "Every *Carbonaro* has the natural and inalienable right to worship the Almighty according to his own opinions, and the dictates of his conscience." This spirit shows most clearly the great power and importance of the society; for the religious spirit is far more difficult to be suppressed than the political spirit, and indicates a more universal and profound excitement. Should the dreams of the Italian patriots be realized, and unity, liberty, and independence, find a home in that delightful land, it will be found that the Secret Brotherhood of the Carbonari has been the chief agent in the accomplishment of so desirable an

CHAPTER XII.

THE TEMPLARS.

IN the twelfth century, when the nations of Europe were yet young, and the piety of the church possessed all its primitive ardor, the universal heart of Christendom turned with affectionate reverence toward the East, and longed to pour forth its expressions of gratitude and of penitence at the tomb of the Crucified. Urged by this devout impulse, thousands, every year, set out on this pious pilgrimage to the Holy City, encountering indescribable difficulties, and exposing themselves to innumerable dangers. Moved by the enthusiasm of the age, and by the laudable desire to protect the Christian pilgrim on his journey through Palestine to the Holy Sepulchre, eight Christian knights established the society of the Templars. Subsequently the objects of the Order increased, and included the general defence of Christianity against the encroachments of the Mohammedans. The members took the vows of chastity, of obedience and poverty, like regular canons, and lived at first on the charity of the Christian lords in Palestine. King Baldwin II.,

of Jerusalem, gave them an abode in that city on the east of the site of the Jesuits' Temple, from which circumstances they received the name of **TEMPLARS**. Pope Honorius II. confirmed the Order in 1127, at the Council of Troyes, and imposed upon it rules, drawn from those of the Benedictine monks, to which were added the precepts of St. Bernard de Clairvaux, who was an earnest friend of the fraternity.

The Order grew in popularity, and in a few years came to be the most powerful corporation in Christendom. By the principle of the secrecy, the members were bound together in the closest unity, and cemented in the bonds of a mystical friendship.

The Templars were divided into three classes, viz., knights, squires, and servitors, to which were added, in 1172, some spiritual members, who served as priests, chaplains, and clerks. All wore the badge of the Order—a linen girdle. The clerical members had white, and the servitors gray gowns. The knights wore, besides their armor, simple white cloaks, adorned with octangular blood-red crosses, to signify that they were to shed their blood in the service of the Faith. From the class of the knights, the officers were chosen by the assembled chapters. They consisted of, first: *Marshals* and *Bannerets*, the leaders in war; second, *Drapiers*, the inspectors of wardrobes; third, *Priors*, the superiors of single preceptories; fourth, *Abbots*, *Commanders*, and *Grand Priors*, rulers

over provinces; and fifth, the Grand Commander, who was the chief of the whole Order. He had the rank of prince, and was considered the equal of the sovereigns of Europe.

Being entirely independent of all secular authority, and nearly so of all ecclesiastical, it exercised an absolute jurisdiction over all the affairs of its own members. Uniting thus the privileges of a religious Order with great military power, and always prepared for service by sea or land, it could use its possessions to more advantage than other corporations, and also make conquests on its own account. The principal part of its possessions was in France; most of the knights were also French, and the Grand Master was usually of that nation. In 1244, the Order possessed goods, bailiwicks, commanderies, priories, and preceptories, independent of the jurisdiction of the sovereigns of the countries in which they were situated.

Its members were devoted to the Order, body and soul, and by their solemn initiation, they abjured all other ties. No one had any private property. The Order supported all.

After the expulsion of the Templars from the Holy Land, they fixed their chief seat in Cyprus. There the Grand Master resided with a select body of knights, officers, and brethren, who exercised themselves by sea against the Saracens.

So powerful, at length, became the Order, that its

alliance and support were eagerly solicited by many Christian nations, when they went to war with each other. And the knights too often, unfortunately, by an unwise policy, were led to take side in many of these struggles; and to this policy is to be attributed their downfall.

In the quarrels between Philip the Fair and Pope Boniface VIII., the Templars engaged for the pope against the king. In consequence of this, Clement V., Philip's friend, under the pretext of consultations for a new crusade, and for a union of Knights Templars with the Knights of St. John, summoned, in 1306, the Grand-Master Molay, with sixty knights, to France. After their arrival, these and all the other knights present were suddenly arrested by the king's soldiers. This occurred on October 13, 1307. Philip seized upon the estates of the Order, removed his court into the temple—the residence of the Grand Master—in Paris, and ordered the trial of the knights to be commenced, without delay, by his confessor, William of Paris, inquisitor and archbishop of Sens. He endeavored, however, to justify this arbitrary procedure by the horrible crimes and heresies of which the Order had been accused. Historical records represent the accusers as some expelled Templars, who calumniated the Order at the instigation of its enemies. The charge of apostasy from the faith could not be substantiated. The other allegations, such as that

they worshipped the devil, practised sorcery, adored the idol called *Baphomets*, contemned the sacrament, neglected confession, and practised unnatural vices, were, according to the general opinion of historians down to the present day, malicious misrepresentations, or absurd calumnies. A gold box of relics, which the Templars used to kiss, according to the custom of the Catholics, was what gave origin to the story of the Baphomet; and because, in an age previous to the general reception of the doctrine of transubstantiation, they practised the ancient manner of celebrating the mass, viz., without the elevation of the host; this was called contempt of the sacrament; their confessing exclusively to their own clerical members, was the ground of the charge; that they received absolution from their own temporal superiors; and the bond, Friendship, Love, and Truth, by which they were united, gave rise to the imputation of unnatural practices.

In those times of general persecution against heretics, every one, whose ruin was resolved upon, and who could not be attacked in any other way, was accused of heresy. Accordingly Philip, being determined, before any inquisition took place, to destroy the Order, for whose wealth he thirsted, the inquisitors employed, who were entirely devoted to him, and for the greater part Dominicans, enemies of the Order, used these means to excite public opinion against

them. By means of the most horrid tortures, confessions of crimes, which had never been committed, were extorted from the prisoners. Overcome by long captivity and torment, many Templars confessed whatever their inquisitors wished, since a persevering denial of the crimes with which they were charged, was punished with death. Clement V. at first opposed this arbitrary treatment of an Order which was amenable only to the church; but Philip soon prevailed on him to join in its suppression. Two cardinals were sent to take part in the examinations at Paris, and other clergymen were united to the courts of inquisition in the provinces, in order to impart a more legal appearance to the procedure. Though little was, in fact, proved against the Templars, the Archbishop of Sens dared, in 1310, to burn alive fifty-four knights who had denied every crime of which they were accused. In other dioceses of France, these victims of tyranny and avarice were treated in a similar way. The other provinces of Europe were also exhorted by the pope to persecute the Templars. Charles of Sicily and Provence imitated the example of Philip, and shared the booty with the pope. In England, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Germany, the Templars were arrested but almost universally acquitted. The inquisitions at Salamanca and Mentz, also resulted in the justification of the Order. Nevertheless, the pope, at the council of Vienna, in Dauphiny, solemnly abolished the Order

by a bull of March 2, A. D. 1312, not in the legal way, but by papal authority—*per provisionis potius quam condemnationis viam*. The members of the Order were, according to this bull, to be punished with mildness when they confessed the crimes imputed to them; but those who persevered in denying them, were to be condemned to death. Among the latter, were the Grand Master Molay, and Guido, the Grand Prior of Normandy, who were burned alive at Paris, March 13, 1314, after they had cited Philip and Clement to appear before the judgment-seat of God within a year and a day. The pope died, in fact, April 19th, in the same year, and the king November 29th.

The estates of the Order were conferred, by the council of Vienna, upon the knights of St. John, and its treasury, in money and precious stones, was assigned for a new crusade. But in France the greatest part fell to the crown, and the pope kept considerable sums for himself. In Spain and Portugal some new military orders were founded and endowed with the estates of the Templars. In other countries the knights of St. John acquired the rich inheritance of their rivals. The Templars maintained themselves longest in Germany, where they were treated with mildness and justice. At Starlitz, some were found as late as 1319. The members who were discharged from their vows, entered the order of St. John.

Such was the unhappy destiny of this great and

powerful fraternity, whose valor and devotion and achievements form so brilliant a page in the book of European history.

For many years this great fraternity was one of the strongest bulwarks of the Christian faith—the most efficient defender of the pious pilgrim—the ablest champion of the Cross. The literature of all lands have celebrated its deeds—romance and song have immortalized its virtues and recorded the story of its wrongs.

That the Templars were earnest, sincere, and worthy men, is plain, but that the ostensible objects of their society were the sole ends which they aimed to accomplish is by no means certain. On the contrary, it is evident from what appears on this subject, that behind the veil of mystery which concealed the interior of the Order from the profane eye, the Templars conceived vast and magnificent plans for the social and religious regeneration of Europe—that their esoteric doctrines embraced notions far in advance of the age. It is certain that, at a very early period, rumors were extensively spread, that the Templars meditated plans that embraced the political unity of Europe, by the universal overthrow of monarchy and the founding of an immense republic; and the complete purification and reformation of the Catholic faith.

The very organization of their society, and the character of the government they had adopted, must have

suggested to them the ideas of republicanism, as well as the antique models which they constantly had before their eyes. And the favorable position of their fraternity, established as it was, and exercising an extensive influence among all the nations of Christendom, must have suggested to them, at least, the possibility of success. Composed of men of all nations, and through their members allied to the most powerful families in all countries, and though existing in the territory of the various kingdoms of Europe, yet exercising an independent jurisdiction like a sovereign state, it would have been strange, indeed, if the idea had not sometimes come to them, of the feasibility of destroying the political divisions of Europe, and blending all the states together in one vast republican fraternity similar to their own, and governed by similar constitutions and laws.

While the society of Templars was secretly antagonistic to the existing political institutions, it was also at variance with the doctrine and policy of the church at Rome. The calumniations of Catholic writers allows us to refer to this. In the charge that they worshipped Mohammedan relics, and cultivated Pagan philosophy, we can see only this—that in their fraternity they respected the rights of conscience, and tolerated all religious opinions.*

* Vide *Magaz. Encyclop.*, 1806, tome vi.; also, *Monum. Histor. Relatifs a la Condemnation des Chevaliers du Temple*. Raynouard; Paris, 1813.

But in the realization of these vast schemes, and in propagating these ideas, the Order was not successful, and finally fell by treachery before the united powers of civil and religious despotism. But the last moment of its life was one of sublime magnificence. James Bernard Molay, the last Grand Master, ascended the scaffold prepared for him by the pontiff of Rome, and the king of France, and died with the fortitude and calmness of a Christian hero. But in dying he announced the future downfall of all despotisms: "I summon you, tyrant of Rome, and you, despot of France, to meet me in one year before the Eternal Throne!" It was humanity, bleeding and torn, and outraged in all its sacred rights, summoning all despotisms, whether spiritual or temporal, before the judgment throne of future ages, to receive their condemnation, and to witness the inauguration of the divine sentiments Justice, Fraternity, and Equality.

Although the schemes of the Templars were unquestionably Utopian, and their notions confused and ill-defined, the ideal which they worshipped was prophetic of those institutions, which, in a subsequent age, should secure the civil and spiritual freedom of man. The positive ideas of the society could not perish. But from the tombs of the murdered Templars, they marched forth with a supernatural force to renew their contest with the tyrants of the earth. Mingling with the thoughts of other reformers, and

taken up by other societies, they advanced through the centuries, disenthralled the human mind from the abuses of kingcraft and priestcraft—brought kings themselves to the scaffold—and laid the foundation of a more promising future for man.

CHAPTER XIII.

FREE-MASONRY.

Among the secret societies existing to-day, the great Masonic Brotherhood is undoubtedly the first in importance. It is important by its antiquity, and also by its extent, and the greatness of the influence it has exercised, and continues to exercise, over thought and life of the world.

The authentic history of Free-Masonry is properly divided into two periods, which we shall find it more convenient to consider separately.

FIRST PERIOD.

The first societies of antiquity with which Free-Masonry appears to stand in an historical connection, are the corporations of architects, which, with the Romans, existed under the name *collegia* and *corpora*. It is related that Numa established the first corporations, if we may so term them, of architects (*collegia fabrorum*), with many other societies of mechanics and artificers (*collegia artificum*), after the model of the Greek societies or colleges of artificers and priests;

he also instituted for them proper meetings and certain religious rites. According to the laws of the twelve tables, the *collegia* had a right to make their own laws, and could conclude certain treaties with each other, if nothing was contained in either contrary to the public laws, which were conformable with Solon's legislation. Such corporations of all kinds, particularly the crafts connected with hydraulics, naval and civil architecture, early became dispersed through all the provinces of the Roman state, went on continually increasing, and co-operated most powerfully in propagating the Roman customs, sciences, arts, and laws. They, as it were, cultivated the soil which the sword had gained. The useful arts are, of course, among the most important gifts which a civilized race can confer on the rude tribes who may be dependent on it. When an Indian tribe first concludes a treaty with the United States, one of the points has often been a stipulation that the latter shall send a blacksmith among them. If we now remember that the Romans were pre-eminently an architectural race, like most conquering nations, who have already attained a considerable degree of civilization; and that the sciences and arts, connected with architecture, include a vast range, and are intimately connected with the other attainments of an advanced civilization, we shall easily comprehend that the colleges of architects must have been of great importance. As the *collegia*

were established in those early times, when states were formed after the model of a family, and the religious and political constitution confusedly mingled, they had, besides their character of a society of artificers, that of a civil and religious institution. This character was retained by the *collegia*, particularly the *collegium* of architects, to the end of the Roman empire, and transplanted into the corporations of architects of the Middle Ages, already mentioned, because the constant mingling of religion in law, politics, and science, by no means ceased in the Middle Ages; on the contrary, in some particulars, a still closer union was effected. As the Roman *collegia* held their meetings with closed doors, nothing was more natural than that they should become, in times of violent political agitation, the place of political parties and religious mysteries, secret worship, and doctrines of all sorts. The Roman emperors of the first centuries limited the *collegia* as much as possible, but the latter governments favored them so much the more. In the *corpus jurio* are contained several lists of the mechanic arts, legally existing, and free from taxation, in the third and fourth centuries, among which we find those of architects, ship-builders, machine-builders, builders of *ballista*, painters, sculptors, workers in marble, masons, stone-cutters, carpenters, &c. There was no town at all important, no province ever so distant, where some of the *collegia*, just mentioned, did not exist, to the

downfall of the western and eastern empires, with their peculiar constitutions, and having more or less of a political and a religious character. The corporations of artificers, whose occupations were connected with architecture, were called upon, by imperial orders, to come from all parts of the empire, to assist in the building of large cities, palaces, churches, &c. Similar artificers also accompanied each Roman legion. Such corporations also existed in Britain—where the Romans, during their conquests, built a great deal—both in the legions there stationed, and in the cities. The same was the case in Spain, France, on the Rhine, and on the Danube. It is true that these *collegia* vanished in Britain, with most of their works, when the Picts, Scots, and Saxons, devastated the country; but in France, Spain, Italy, and in the Greek empire, they continued to flourish, and from these countries the Christian Saxon rulers of Britain, particularly Alfred and Athelstan, induced a number of artificers and architects to come to England, in order to build their castles, churches, and convents. Although these foreign artists, and the few who had survived the ravages of the barbarous tribes, were Christians, and though most of their leaders were clergymen, yet the corporations which they formed, had no other constitutions than those transmitted to them from the Roman colleges, which were spread over all Christian Europe, and the character of which is still to be learned from

the *corpus juris Romani*.* As the members of these corporations of architects of the tenth century belonged to different nations, and at the same time publicly or secretly to sects, widely differing in their tenets, and often condemned as heretical; in short, as they were very different in faith, customs, and manner of living, they could not be induced to go to England, and to remain there, without receiving from the pope and king satisfactory liberties and letters of protection, especially jurisdiction over their own bodies, and the right of settling their own wages. They then united, under written constitutions, founded upon the ancient constitution of the Roman and Greek colleges, and the provisions of the civil law. The different tenets of the members, the scientific occupation, and elevated views of their leading architects and clergymen, naturally gave rise to a more liberal spirit of toleration, a purer view of religion, and stricter morals, than were common in those times of civil feud and religious persecution.

The lofty notions of Vitruvius (their constant manual) in regard to the dignity of an architect, may have contributed to ennoble their character. Their religious tenets being often objects of suspicion to the orthodox, they were obliged to keep them secret. Secrecy, moreover, was the character of all the corporations of

* Vide *Histoire du Grand Orient de France*. Paris, 1812; also *They's Acta Latomorum*. Paris, 1815.

the Middle Ages, and, down to the most recent times, the corporations of mechanics on the continent had what they called *secrets of the craft* — certain words, or sometimes impressive ceremonies, by which they were enabled to recognise each other. To this we must add, that the corporations of architects, in the Middle Ages, were descended from the times of antiquity; so that their societies had received, in the times when Rome adored all gods, and listened to all philosophical systems, impressions derived from the Greek philosophical schools, particularly the Stoic, united with some fragments of the Greek and Egyptian mysteries, and subsequently modified by notions acquired in the early times of Christianity, particularly from the Gnostics, which led to certain doctrines and sacred ceremonies, clothed, according to the spirit of the time, in symbols, and constituting their esoteric mysteries.* The watchful eye of the popes induced them to keep these doctrines closely concealed, in connection with the real secrets of their art, and its subsidiary branches, their rude chemistry, their metallurgy, and natural philosophy, and to preserve their knowledge in forms otherwise foreign to it, if they wished to escape persecution. The great importance which architecture assumed in those times, is to be accounted for from the enthusiasm for splendid houses of worship, in

* Lenning: *Frei-Maurer Encyclopädie* (Leipsic, 1822); et Sarsena, *Oder der Vollkommene Baumeister*.

which the religious spirit of those times displayed itself to an unparalleled degree.

The history of these corporations, as here given, and their connection with the present society of Free-Masons, appears, from what we know of antiquity— from the history of England, and from the agreement of the constitutions, symbols, and customs of the present Free-Masons with those of the above corporations.*

The architects, with their assistants and pupils, formed associations called *hutzen*, or *lodges*. At an assembly held at Ratisbon, in 1459, it was agreed that a grand lodge should be formed at Strasburg, as the place of general assembly, and that the architect of that cathedral, for the time being, should be the grand-master. The society was composed of masters, companions, and apprentices, who had a secret word, with signs of recognition. In 1464, and 1469, there were general assemblies at Strasburg; but they were afterward neglected for some time, until the Emperor Maximilian I., being at that city in 1498, granted them certain privileges, by charter or diploma, which were renewed and confirmed by subsequent emperors. These diplomas, together with the regulations and statutes, were kept in the house of the architect of the cathedral, in a chest with triple locks, of which the two oldest masons kept the keys, so that it required the presence of all before the chest could be opened.

* Vide Conversations Lexicon (German), Art. Frei-Maureur

These documents were in existence until the French Revolution, when they were destroyed, with many other papers, to prevent their falling into the hands of the Jacobinic commissioners. Their rules inculcated the necessity of leading moral lives; submission to the masters, whom the companions served for five or seven years; attention to their religious duties; and charity to the poorer brethren, &c. Among the symbols were the square, the plumb-rule, and the compasses, which are distinguishing marks of the officers of a Free-Masons' lodge at this day.

Three very ancient historical documents are yet extant, which further prove this historical connection, and also give us an insight into the doctrines and customs of those corporations, in the Middle Ages.* The eldest of the documents, above mentioned, is the constitution confirmed, in 926, to all the corporations of architects, by King Athelstan, through his brother Edwin, at York, the original of which, in Anglo-Saxon, is still preserved in York. The beginning reminds the reader immediately of the most ancient Oriental Church. Then follows a history of architecture, beginning with Adam, and comprising quotations from some Rabbinical tales, respecting the building of Babel, the temple of Solomon, with mention of Hiram, limited, however, to the information

* Vide Die drei ältesten Kunsturkunden der Frei-Maurer Bruderschaft. (Dresden, 1819.)

contained in the Bible; then passing over to the Greeks and Romans, mentioning particularly Pythagoras, Euclid, and Vitruvius. There the history of architecture, and the oldest corporations in Britain, is told, agreeably to the account of the best historians, and among other things is mentioned, that St. Albanus, an honorable Roman knight, patronized the art about A. D. 300, settled the fundamental institutions of the masons, procured them employment, wages, and a charter, from the Emperor Carausius, according to which they should form a society in Britain, under the government of architects. The devastation of the country, and the destruction of the edifices by the northern tribes and the Angles and Saxons, is related, and how the pious Athelstan had resolved to restore the ancient and venerable society. After this follow the sixteen most ancient laws, which agree exactly with everything that careful investigation can find in the *corpus juris* relating to the college of architects. This constitution was preserved in England and Scotland, in its essential features, until the fourteenth century, when the societies passed over into the stationary corporations in cities. It is proved by historical documents, that in Scotland and England, lodges, laboring according to these constitutions, existed in an uninterrupted series, and often admitted, as members, learned or influential men, who were not architects, including even kings (accepted masons).

In 1717, we find four lodges existing, in which the old symbols and customs were still preserved; most of their members were, however, merely accepted Masons. So far extends the first period of Masonry. Sir Christopher Wren was the last grand-master of the ancient order.

With these facts incontestably proved, who can doubt the high antiquity of Free-Masonry. There can be scarcely a question that the Order of Free and Accepted Masons is the legitimate successor of the *collegia fabrorum* of the ancient Romans, and of the corporations of architects of the Middle Ages. Indeed, the possession of the same rules, constitutions, symbols, and rites, would prove this, were there no other evidence.

It is not for us to say whether Free-Masonry existed in its present form or not, at the time of the building of Solomon's temple. We have reason to believe, however, that the prevailing masonic tradition touching that point is not entirely without foundation. Hiram, king of Tyre, must, of course, have been acquainted with the Phrygian mysteries, if he were not, indeed, the chief pontiff thereof, which is most probable. Coming to the assistance of King Solomon, in the great enterprise of building a temple for the celebration of the Hebrew mysteries, it is easier for us to conceive that some kind of organization existed, similar to ancient Masonry, than that it did not.

CHAPTER XIV.

SECOND PERIOD OF FREE-MASONRY.

IN 1717, an essential change was made by three members belonging to some of the four lodges just mentioned, Desaguliers, James Anderson, and George Payne. They changed the society into one which had nothing more to do with building, but of which "brotherly love, relief, and truth," were to be the essential characteristics. By retaining the name and customs and ceremonies of the ancient fraternity, the new lodges retained the privileges and charters of those societies. They further thought it well to establish a centre of union and harmony in one grand-master, the eldest Mason, who, at the same time, was a master of a lodge; to constitute themselves, *pro tempore*, one grand lodge; to renew the quarterly communications of the brethren; to hold the annual meeting and the festival; and to elect a grand-master from among them, until they should have a brother of high rank at their head. In 1721, James Anderson was charged to remodel the old constitutions, and to form thus a general book of constitutions, which alone should be valid for all the spe-

cial lodges, in future to be established under the authority of this grand lodge. The constitution of York was made, by him, the basis, though he compared a number of other constitutions. In 1721, his draught was accepted, and with some changes, acknowledged and printed in 1723. In 1738, a new edition was printed. In the editions of 1756, 1784, and in the latest book of constitutions of the grand lodge of old Masons at London, united in 1813 (of which the second part appeared in 1815), the traits of the ancient York instrument are always to be recognised. The following are the most important duties (*charges*) of the Masons, as they appear in the edition of 1784, and, with few alterations in the constitutions of 1815. The Mason is bound to obey the laws of morality, and, if he understands the principles of the society, he will neither be an atheist nor a profligate. Though the Masons of ancient times were obliged to profess the religion of their country, whatever that might be, it is considered now more beneficial to bind them to that religion alone in which all men agree, and to leave to each his peculiar opinion; they are to be men of probity and honor, whatever may be their differences in name or in opinion. By this, says the constitution, Masonry becomes the central point of union, and the means of establishing friendship among persons who, without it, would live in continual separation. The Mason is to be a peaceable subject or citizen, and never to allow himself to

be involved in riots or conspiracies against the public peace and the welfare of the nation. No private hatred or feud shall be carried to the threshold of the lodge, still less political or religious disputes, as the Masons, in this capacity, are only of the above-named general religion: Masons are of all nations and tongues, and decidedly against political feuds, which never have been favorable to the welfare of the lodges, nor ever will be. The second of the above-mentioned documents was written under Henry VI. of England, first printed in the Gentleman's Magazine, in 1753, p. 417, et seq., and since then, has been repeatedly reprinted. The last of the three documents is the ancient mode of admitting Masons, as it is still exercised by all the Masons of the ancient English system. It contains some customs of the Roman colleges, and of the most ancient Christian monks and ascetics.

From this period Free-Masonry rapidly regained its ancient dominion, and exercised a new and most powerful influence on the whole moral and intellectual life of Europe. It first gave the world the true import of the words Fraternity, Liberty, Equality. Long before the first French revolution, its presence, though invisible, was felt throughout Europe. Essentially republican in its nature, and aiming to establish political and social equality and freedom, it constantly presented to the initiated, the picture of a new social order, nowhere found on earth—the ideal of a society, opposed

to, and at the same time far more perfect than any existing civil organization. Consequently it became odious to tyrants. "It was anathematized," says an eminent writer,* "at Rome, by Clement VII., pursued in Spain by the Inquisition, and persecuted at Naples."

So, in France, the Sorbonne declared its members worthy of eternal punishment! And yet, thanks to the skilful mechanism of the institution, Free-Masonry found protectors among princes and nobles. Many of them disdained not to take the trowel and gird themselves with the apron. The existence of the higher degrees being carefully concealed from them, they saw nothing to be uneasy about, kept as they were in ignorance. As the real doctrine only gleamed dimly and confusedly through allegory, many saw in Free-Masonry only occasions for diversions and joyous banquets; principles laid aside and resumed at the door of the lodge; forms inapplicable to ordinary life; in a word, only a *farce of equality*. But in these matters, the farce touches the tragedy, and it happened, through a just and remarkable dispensation of Providence, that the proudest despisers and oppressors of the people were led to cover with their name, and serve blindly with their influence, enterprises which contemplated the destruction of all aristocracies and despotisms."

For the few years preceding the French Revolution,

* Louis Blanc.

Free-Masonry was very active and vigorous through all of Europe. Working in secret, like the Cyclops in the forges of Vulcan, it fashioned those thunderous bolts, which shivered the foundations of the throne, and sent despotism howling to its den of darkness. It contributed largely to the social improvement of our race, and to the establishment of civil liberty, besides making men more social, more humane, more benevolent, and more fraternal.

CHAPTER XVII.

CHRISTIANITY AND FREE-MASONRY.

IN a little work,* written by one of the most distinguished of modern French *litterateurs*, a work as beautiful and brilliant in style, as it is objectionable in sentiment, we remember meeting with the following, or, a very similar utterance: "I thought to repose me beneath the broad shadow of Christianity, but I have seen this majestic tree wither in the breath of the tyranny it had protected, and perish a victim of the poisons its own bark had nourished. I have learned that the church is without a principle of life, that the religion of the Christ is incomplete—that Jesus may take his place in the pantheon of divine men, but his work is done, his saving power is exhausted, and *Christianity is dead!*" Blasphemous as it is, this is the thought of not a few on the other side of the Atlantic; and its melancholy echo we have heard, even in this country, of puritanical faith and piety. And, when we throw our regards over Christendom—see the church, which is the visible body of Christ, and

* Spiridion, by George Sand.

the source of Progress, Freedom, and Life, shivered into a thousand fragments, society plunged into gross materialism, given over to the brutal instincts of selfishness, and the degrading worship of mammon; and when we look on the cruel spectacle of social wrongs, and the gloomy pictures of suffering, which every day unfolds, it is not strange, that some men of little faith, should cry, "*Christianity is dead!*" But Christianity *can not die*. It may have forsaken the ancient forms, in which it has been worshipped through long ages, but never can it perish. The mountain-top may be clothed with perpetual glaciers, while within its heart-core burn eternal fires. So beneath the fragments and rubbish of the dismantled church, in the very midst of the apathy, indifference, coldness, skepticism, and corruption, which prevail around, Christianity works with more directness and force, and achieves mightier results, than ever before. Christ is not dead. True, he no longer appears in the dusty habiliments of the cloister, nor does his majestic figure irradiate the portals of that church, which has been false to his ideal and doctrine of love. But, a spirit of awful beauty, he walks in our midst to-day; and the mighty throbbings of his earnest, loving heart, are recognised in the philanthropic institutions, and public charities, and benevolent associations, which are the boast and glory of our age. It is this which we wish to say of our honored institution! The loving spirit of Christ pre-

sides over all its arrangements, and inspires all its operations. Other associations for the relief of suffering, are beautiful and good, and worthy of praise, and Christ's spirit is in them: but their operations and influence are limited. They chiefly address themselves to one, of the many wants of humanity.

✓ But Free-Masonry has a wider influence and power, and far greater facilities for the accomplishment of its benevolent purposes; and besides, it looks out over all of life, and embraces all the possible circumstances of man. More truly here than anywhere else, is realized the Christian ideas of Love, Union, and Brotherhood. The beautiful ideal which Christianity presents, of a society, where men will bear the burdens of each other, relieve each other's necessities, and love one another in all circumstances, as a family of brethren, here, in our association, becomes a fact of life. There are no circumstances of want or suffering, in which a brother may be placed, for which Masonry does not provide. We do not hesitate, therefore, to say, that we regard Free-Masonry, as the truest expression of the mind and thought of Christ this age is destined to witness. Christianity is its central idea, and at the same time the foundation and corollary of our temple. Nay, Masonry is Christianity—Christianity applied to life—made actual in the arrangements of society—Christianity realized in man's relations one with another. Upon all the arrangements of our

order, and upon all its operations, we see the shadow of Him who loved humanity, and sought to assuage its griefs. Eighteen centuries ago, he went about doing good. The music of his footsteps charmed away human sorrows; joy brightened before him; and hearts were made bright and glad by reviving hope. Free-Masonry, to-day, continues his ministry of love, or rather, of Free-Masonry. He, himself, still carries forward his own benevolent work, soothing and protecting the lone-widow, and her fatherless babes, and extending to the child of sickness and penury, the tender consolations of fraternal sympathy.

We do not exaggerate, therefore, when we say that the order of Masonry stands one of the very first among the Christian institutions of the day. Its reach and influence are of great extent, and it is destined in the hands of Providence to accomplish great results for humanity.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MASONIC CHARITY, AND MORAL INFLUENCE.

FREE-MASONRY not only inculcates the principles of love and benevolence, it seeks to give them an actual and living presence, in all the occupations and intercourse of life. It not only feels, it *acts!* It not only pities human suffering, it *relieves* it! By a wise provision or law of the order, which requires each member to pay into the treasury of the lodge a specified sum per year—a sum generally very small, and never above the ability of laboring men—a fund of relief is formed, which, with the initiatory and degree fees, is amply able to meet all the demands which may be made on it by sick or distressed brothers.

Nowhere in the world can a good Mason feel himself alone, friendless, or forsaken. The invisible but helpful arms of our order surround him, wherever he may be. Mythic story tells us that the ancient gods invisibly and secretly followed their favorites in all their wanderings, and when these were exposed to danger, or threatened with destruction, would unveil themselves in their awful beauty and power, and stand

forth to preserve them from harm, or to avenge their wrongs.

So Free-Masonry surrounds all her children, with her preserving presence, revealing herself only in the hour of peril, sickness, or distress! If one be overtaken by illness or misfortune, be he in any part of the world, and never so poor, he will, if he make his wants known, receive the necessary assistance, and find friends to watch over him with fraternal solicitude. And should he fall a victim to disease, the brothers of charity will be there to close his eyes, and with solemn, yet hopeful, heaven-pointing rites, give his body to the repose of the tomb. Nor would their sympathy and love be limited by the grave of their brother. Oh no! False and empty is that charity, which expires on the borders of the tomb. And while, in Christian faith and Hope, their love will attend the spirit of the departed brother, up the pathway of Angels, to the dwellings of the pure and good, they will not be forgetful of their duties to his family, nor unmindful of those domestic interests, which were so dear to his heart. They will throw the protecting arm of the order around the fatherless children, and extend to the weeping wife the tender consolations of brotherly sympathy.

This will not be regarded as a trifling benefit—especially to one who is not rich in this world's goods. Who can estimate the importance of this institution to the mechanic, and all who depend on their daily labor,

for their daily support? This is a world of change. Posterity is uncertain; the strong and sinewy arm is liable, at any moment, to be made weak. The elements of the storm gather in the sunniest sky; so the form which is the stoutest and the heart which is the manliest to-day, may be stricken down and falter to-morrow. Now, what society but ours can come in here to break the blow of misfortune, and calm the sufferer's mind, and heal the stricken spirit? Will the public charities do this? Will society? Society makes provision for its paupers, but if the principles of our association were carried out there would be no paupers! Society, we say, makes provision for its poor, but then, in exchange it takes away from them their manhood, and deprives them of the prerogatives of citizens! Yet all this may be better than absolute starvation, and let us be thankful for it. But a member of our fraternity can be brought to no such extremity. He has a right to that charity which he himself, when prosperous and strong, and rich, extended to others. And now, in the hour of his weakness and want, it comes back to him, in a thousand generous streams, attended with the benedictions of his brethren, to relieve his necessities and gladden his heart.

It is sometimes said that Free-Masonry is selfish; that "Masons confine their benefactions to themselves." Were this charge true, to its fullest extent, it would be no serious objection to our institution; for it is clear

enough, to all who will reflect, that our charities, or *benefits*, must be limited by our resources! We adhere strictly to the apostolic rule—to do good, or to be charitable to all, “but especially to the household of faith.” And this right of individuals, to associate for mutual support, will certainly not be questioned.

Here is a number of persons, for example, who are deeply penetrated with a sense of their weakness, as individuals. They have learned how extremely uncertain is all earthly prosperity. The painful experience of life has taught them, that the spontaneous charities of the world, are entirely inadequate, as a remedy for misfortune. They say to each other: “We see, in our mutual weaknesses and dependencies, and in the affinities and relations, which make us social beings, the design of the Creator, that we should regard each other as brethren, and shield each other from misfortune. Come, let us accept this ordinance of Heaven. Let us covenant together, to support each other in the day of need.” Now, who can doubt the legitimacy and propriety of their scheme of reciprocal relief? and who would think of condemning those men, because they could not wipe away every tear, and relieve all the suffering in the wide world.

It is thus with our Masonic fraternity. It protects first its own children, as a loving parent should, but it also looks with a pitying eye on the miseries of others; and beyond its pale, has many a heart been made to

throb with reviving hope, and many an eye to sparkle with joy, by its benefactions. Still, it is true, all its benefits and charitable operations must circulate within the circumference of its means. As to the moral influence of Free-Masonry, it need only be said that it watches over all its children with paternal anxiety, shields from temptations, by its oft-repeated admonitions and its lessons of virtue, the younger members; and encourages the more mature to persevere in the upward way of ever-growing, ever-brightening perfection. The soul, which animates our order, inspiring all its members; and controlling all its acts, is the spirit of love. And certain we are, that one can not be a good Mason, without being a better man, a better citizen, and a better Christian. Christianity is the central idea of the institution. The sentiment of religion pervades all its arrangements. Every lodge meeting is opened with appropriate religious exercises. The great facts of God, accountability, a future life, and retribution, are kept constantly before the minds of the brethren. There is no religious organization—no Christian church more vigilant in watching over the conduct, or more strict in its discipline of its members.

CHAPTER XIX.

ADAPTATION OF FREE-MASONRY TO THE WANTS
AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF YOUNG MEN.

AMONG the almost endless variety of human wants, there is not one which makes itself so powerfully, and keenly felt, as the want of friendship—society—the intimate and constant communion of soul with soul. We all are conscious of it, the young especially. They have need of virtuous associates, whose conservative influence will always surround them; without these, their virtue has no security. We know how powerful the family influence, judiciously directed, is, to preserve one from the seductions of vice. In the bosom of a family, with brothers and sisters around him, the young man spends the first years of his life. Parental kindness, sisterly and brotherly affection, and the sympathy of the family acquaintances, gratify all his social wants, and leave him nothing, in that direction to desire. When he is ill, the most tender and self-sacrificing love watches over him, anticipates every want, and, without weariness or complaint, seeks to tranquilize his sleeping, or amuse his waking hours. But this

charming state can not endure. Life is inexorable in its claims—its duties and responsibilities and labors must be promptly met. A time must come when every youth must be thrown back upon himself—leave the tranquil security of his father's home, and seek for himself a position among strangers. Now, when he is beyond the reach of this family influence—beyond the reach of that tender providence which had so carefully guarded him from vice, and soothed his griefs, and sympathized with all his youthful aspirations and pleasures—when this influence ceases to surround him, what will take its place? what power will continue its ministry of love? what will be to him father, mother, brother, sister—HOME? Will society? Alas! society, to its deepest core, is selfish, corrupt, unnatural, unloving! Society will not, and can not! He is in the heart of the great world—seductions and temptations are rife around him—ever and ever do they sing to him, more and more do they gain upon him, and now he is drawn to the very edge of the abyss—troops of foul fiends are preparing to plunge him headlong; but where is the saving, helping arm, the rescuing power, that can redeem him from his fearful peril? He stands on the brink of a precipice, fascinated by the Delilan songs of vice, dazzled by its golden splendor, entirely unconscious of that thunder-stream of ruin which foams and boils at his feet, as if impatient to engulf him in its burning tide!

He is also in distress, and must suffer alone, with none to console him with a word of hope, of sympathy, or of love; he falls sick, and has no attention but such as money may purchase; he dies, and the cold eyes of strangers only, look upon his grave, if indeed, a grave he has.

This is the picture of thousands of young men; and we wish to say, that it is precisely here, that we see the beauty and utility of our order. We wish to present the institution of Free-Masonry, as a vast family circle, spread through the entire world; always powerful and efficient to preserve those who are brought within the sphere of its influence. The young man who is a member of this fraternity, may go where his father's counsel and his mother's care can not reach him—can not preserve him; but he can not go beyond the reach of that larger family, to which he belongs! Silently and invisibly, yet with unslumbering assiduity, it watches over him, and, by its wise counsels, its tender sympathies, its judicial disciplines and rational restraints, saves him from those ways of vice, which ultimate in perdition.

Were we the father of sons, who had grown to maturity, and who were about to enter upon the duties and labors of life, to work out their own moral, and spiritual, and temporal destiny, it would be one of the first wishes of our heart, that the protecting shield of this order should overshadow them. For we should

know, that when they were beyond the reach of our personal influence—where our counsels could not be heard, when temptations were luring them to their ruin; nor our paternal sympathy and love surround them, when misfortunes crushed their brightest hopes, or sickness laid them low, on the bed of suffering, they would still be protected and preserved in those same good principles in which they were cradled, and in those habits of virtue to which they had been reared; and receive those same tender cares, which our own paternal heart would have prompted, were they under our immediate inspection.

What we wish, then, particularly to say, is, that our order is the only substitute for that *home influence*, without which, there can be but little or no security for young men. And we would say, most earnestly, to all lovers of humanity, especially to you, fathers, who have sons, whom you wish to preserve in those virtuous principles, to which they were trained in their youth—to you, mothers, whose sons are already thrown upon the world, to be buffeted by its storms and assailed by its temptations—to you, sisters, whose brothers, far from the celestial consolations of parental and sisterly love, and victims to disease, would give worlds for some sympathizing breast, upon which to repose their throbbing temples—you should be the very last to say a word, or think a thought against an institution which is now nearly the only green-spot in the dreary

waste of life ; which binds those sons and brothers to the practice of every virtue, guides them in prosperity and health, and, as a ministering angel, bends over them with tenderest pity, in their chamber of suffering. True, there are sorrows which our order can not reach ; there are griefs which it can not remove ; but, nevertheless, it still pursues its way, imparts its healthful influence, accomplishes its beautiful ministry of charity. It breaks the blow, although it can not heal all the wounds of misfortune.

CHAPTER XX.

FREE-MASONRY IN HARMONY WITH THE SPIRIT
OF THE AGE, AND THE NEEDS OF MAN.

FREE-MASONRY seeks to restore the unity of the race, which the unhappy divisions of the Church have so deplorably disturbed, and to realize, in a more beautiful and efficient form, the holy ideas of Charity, and Love, and Brotherhood. The tendency to association is as old and universal as humanity. It is a sacred law, as binding as that of religion, which compels man to do homage to the Infinite. And among the almost endless variety of human wants, there is not one which makes itself so powerfully and keenly felt, as the want of friendship, society — the intimate and constant *communion* of soul with soul. And yet, such are the habits of modern society, and the spirit of the times, there is no want so difficult to supply. Many hearts there are, glowing with mighty affections, oppressed with deep and earnest longings for friendly communion with sympathizing and responding hearts, and yet, like the spirit of the parable, wander up and down the deserts of life seeking that they never find.

The cords of social unity have been severed, and individualism—selfishness has been, by some *diablerie* or other, installed into the godship of this lower world. These individual and material tendencies, which cast a withering and fatal paralysis over all social life, and all the soul's affections, may be referred chiefly to the unfortunate dissensions that exist among those who are especially bound to dwell together in love. I mean the professed followers of Christ. The fundamental ideas of Christianity are the unity and brotherhood of man—its chief law is that of *mutual love*. Penetrated with these ideas, the first apostles sought to gather all nations around the standard of the Christ, as one family of brethren, having one interest and one aim. Preserving the ancient and eloquent language of signs, they adorned their temples of worship with speaking images; pictures of saints and angels—symbols of exalted virtue—were to be seen in every city and village; and the cross—the sign of eternal freedom—was set up as a guide-post on every highway. Thus arose the Church. For many ages, it was the true body of Christ, and realized the high ideal of the gospel. It stood the protector of the weak against the strong, the indefatigable friend of the poor and the wretched. It went to man, oppressed, weak, miserable, tamed his savage ferocity, consoled him in his sorrows, told him of his alliance with Heaven, and in kindling tones bade him aspire to an immortal freedom

and a heavenly communion. Like the mythical ash-tree, Ygdrasill, it rose majestic and beautiful amid the ages, and spread its branches abroad over the nations, and a celestial hymn of love swelled through the ever-green foliage; but the serpent of corruption preyed upon its roots. The Catholic church consummated her suicide the very day she overturned the altars of charity, and conspired with tyrants against the rights and liberties of man. False to the Christian idea and doctrine of love, she lost the talisman of her power, and when the scorned spirit of love bade adieu to her unworthy altars, she was shivered into a thousand fragments.

Hence, instead of one Church, one Lord, one Faith of Friendship, one baptismal of Charity, we have isolated communities, bound together by no common bond of sympathy, or faith, or love. We need not enlarge here. We only speak a fact which all feel, and over which all sincere Christians mourn. We utter a mournful truth, when we say there is all too little of earnest faith in exalted and disinterested friendship, and in virtue and love, which are not based on the calculations of interest. There is too little of fraternal sympathy, too little of pity for the woes and sufferings of others—too little of that deep, exhaustless love for man as man, irrespective of nation, faith, or rank, which Christianity so strictly enjoins. There are thousands of causes operating, at the present time,

which prevent the free and fraternal communion of man with man. There are the jealousies of religious sects just noticed, and the warrings of political parties, the incessant toil and struggle after wealth, or some temporal and individual good, which break up the unity and harmony of society, transform life into an Arab desert, and men into plundering Ishmaelites.

Free-Masonry labors to introduce equality, and bring man to a clearer recognition of his duty to his fellow-men. In the world without, there are innumerable artificial distinctions and arrangements, which most painfully constrain the soul. There are barriers in the most democratic societies, which separate man from man, and tend to erase entirely the sense of fraternal obligations. Now Masonry designs to create another order of life, where there shall be no honors nor distinctions, but such as are based on MERIT. All the arrangements of the outward life—our social organizations, to which we owe allegiance as citizens, have a materializing tendency—are the result of selfish calculation, and give to the more earthly portion of human nature, a most fearful predominance; whereas our association, and all similar institutions, are calculated to develop, and make active, the social sympathies and affections, and thus make men feel that the sacred terms of Friendship, Love, and Truth, are something more than illusions—empty names, invented only to amuse or deceive.

Standing in the midst of the world, we do not see men as they are. Life is but a vast masquerade, where each one, seeking a personal interest, veils his real purpose, and appears what he is not; and where no one is certain of meeting a look, or of grasping a hand, which responds in sympathy to his own. Around us all is show, illusion, appearance! We wander among these shadows of men and of things; often are we disappointed and deceived; we dream of a friendship, a love, a sincerity, which will always charm us as an undying melody; sometimes we see what to us appear to be friendly forms, and hear what to us seem to be words of truth and love, but life! life! the terrible deception is before and around us; the vision dissolves—nothing remains but the ugly forms of deceit! In the very midst of society, this flaming pit where bodies and souls are consumed—of society—this terrific abyss where fiery passions and opposite interests struggle with hideous roar;—society, this mysterious phantom-land, over which roll everlasting shadows, and the wailings of an infinite despair;—in the very midst of society so living; so incessantly active, man feels himself to be but a solitary hermit! Alas! that man, while surrounded by beings created in the same image, and pressed by them on every hand, should yet be compelled to mourn that he is a lone wanderer on the earth! But such is the gloomy destiny which our imperfect social

organizations hold out to man. They isolate the individual, and make him the natural enemy of his brother man, deceiving and deceived.

Now he who enters our fraternal association is supposed to rise above this life of selfishness, hypocrisy, and deceit. He moves in the midst of men who have laid aside their dissimulation, and sees himself surrounded by friends and friendly faces; and hearts into which he may look, as into the pure and cloudless sky. The mystic tie of sympathy raises and binds him to the society of congenial spirits, on whose kindness and truth he may always rely—whose words to him will be always true, and whose acts will be always open and sincere.

Here, it seems to us, we *must* see the need of Freemasonry, and its adaptation to the wants of the present times. It opens a new temple, and erects a new altar above all prejudice, and dissensions, and selfishness—a temple dedicated to Friendship, Love, and Truth, where men of all parties are taught to lay aside their differences, and their hypocrisy, and meet on the common ground of truth and charity. Our lodges are the asylums of peace and love; political or religious disputes can never enter there, and within their peace-inspiring walls men of antagonistical faiths meet as brothers, and bind themselves by solemn vows to fulfill the Christian law of love, and to do good to all men, as they have opportunity or ability. There may

the lone wanderer, weary and discouraged in his search for friendship, find repose in sympathizing and loving hearts. We ask, then, if there is not a need, and a pressing need, of an institution like this?—an institution which will recombine the scattered elements of society, recall men to a sense of their fraternal relations and duties, and revive the almost extinguished faith in friendship and virtue? Our association is peculiarly adapted to this end; nay, unity, love, and friendship, are the *very* objects it seeks to promote. We affirm, then, without any qualification, that there is no human institution which has so many legitimate demands on our reverence and sympathy. There is no institution existing, save this, whose only aim is to promote social harmony.

But we would not be unjust. We would not say one word against those charitable and philanthropic associations, in which the present age is so remarkable and rich. There are peace societies, temperance, and other societies, all which spring from a laudable desire to improve the condition of man. These are all very good, but Masonry not only embraces all the excellences of each of these, it goes far beyond them. It asks not only that justice be done—it demands friendship and love. Thus it towers above them all, stands pre-eminent in beauty and splendor, as the bright moon amid a heaven of stars.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF MYSTERY.

IT is not strange that a society, which veils some of its rites and symbols from the public gaze, should be calumniated, by those especially who care more about prying into the business and secrets of their neighbors, than they do about attending to their own. That morbid curiosity—which, when it possesses an individual, transforms him into a foul spirit, and moves him to outrage every virtuous principle, and every sentiment of honor, and to violate the sanctity of domestic life, so he may gain his purpose and gratify his filthy taste—is a vice which every true man regards with the deepest abhorrence. And yet it is *the* vice of the age. It is a sort of *intellectual agrarianism*, which demands that all thoughts, plans, intentions, even the heart's sweetest secrets, shall be put into a general fund for the amusement or profit of the public. Of course, this spirit, which now walks incarnate among us, will deny the right of any man to keep any thought, however sacred in holy secrecy, or of any association to close its doors against the curious public.

There is, probably, no objection to our fraternity which is more frequently, or more strenuously urged, than this. "*We are opposed to all secret societies,*" is the universal exclamation. This is no new charge. It has been repeated these two thousand years—at least, ever since the age of Philo, the Jew. "God," he says, addressing the advocates of the ancient Mysteries—"God displays the beautiful spectacle of the Universe before the eyes of all men; now if your Mysteries are so sublime and useful, why not reveal them to all, that all may equally participate in their advantages?" This is plausible reasoning; it is equally sophistical. One might as well ask, why limit the mysterious enjoyments of the Holy Eucharist, to those who can approach that sacrament with pure hands and clear hearts? Why not allow all, the holy and profane, an equal participation therein? Again, the righteous man enjoys a peace which the world knows not of—a *secret* peace; if this *peace* be truly advantageous, why not allow the wicked as well as the good to possess it? These questions belong to the same category as the foregoing; and the answer which the devout man will make to them, we will accept as a satisfactory reply to the question—"If the Mysteries of Free-Masonry be so beneficial, why not open your lodges to all?" Notwithstanding this prejudice against what are called *secret societies*, it can not be denied that these much-calumniated institutions, have done

more for the civilization of the world, and the progress of society, than all other means combined.

But, let us examine this objection still further. It is said we are a *secret association*. In what respect can this be true? The society is known, its acts are known, its objects are known, its laws are known, and also its times and places of meeting. At least, if all these facts are not known to the public, it is not our fault. The truth is, we have no secrets, which it would be of the least importance for the world to know. Signs and tokens, by which masons, although strangers, may recognise one another, are all the secrets we have. And in this we are by no means peculiar. All individuals, and all business organizations, have their secrets. Ours is but a business organization, although of a holier character. Its business is charity, and our signs and secrets are necessary to transact the business efficiently. Were the institution limited to a town, county, or even state, signs might not, perhaps, be absolutely necessary. A certificate, declaring the possessor an acting and worthy member of the order, might be sufficient for all common purposes. But the institution is designed to spread over the world, and to embrace within its parental arms, all nations, kindreds, and *tongues*. Hence the necessity of some *universal language*, which shall be comprehended by Masons the world over. There are other and numerous cases where anything short of signs

would be entirely useless. One of the order, for example, is shipwrecked in a distant land. Penniless and friendless, he falls ill, and must have assistance, or perish. He can not beg, and that, which could open to him the gates of the Masonic temple—his certificate—is lost in the sea. To save a brother from so painful a position, something more is requisite. A sign, or token, a secret language unwritten—only upon the heart—and which, so long as the possessor has life and reason, can not be lost or stolen—will alone meet the case. Our secrets, then, are only a few necessary signs, yet entirely valueless as *things*, which all good men may know, if they will but take upon themselves our vow of charity. We are not, therefore, a secret society. We have, it is true, rites that are not made public, but they are of the most harmless character, and are useful only as instruments or agencies for good.

The order is based on the general principles of secrecy, because a unity and harmony can be secured thereby, which can not be obtained in any other way. Secrecy has a mystic, almost supernatural force, and binds men more closely together than all other means combined. Mystery has charms for all men, and is closely allied to the most spiritual part of our nature. A secret shared between a certain number of persons, is a perpetual bond of union and amity among them. The great temple of the universe is a vast labyrinth of

mysteries, and the progress of our race in knowledge and virtue, is a sublime and everlasting imitation, ever revealing more of the true, the beautiful, and the good.

The philosophy of secrecy and symbols is so well and ably set forth by one of the most brilliant writers* of this age, that we can not do a better service to the reader, than by giving his thoughts in his own language:—

“Bees will not work except in darkness; thoughts will not work except in silence; neither will virtue work except in secrecy. Let not thy right hand know what thy left hand doeth! Neither shalt thou prate even to thy own heart of ‘those secrets known to all.’ Is not shame the soil of all virtue, of all good manners, and good morals? Like other plants, virtue will not grow unless its roots be hidden, buried from the eye of the sun. Let the sun shine on it, nay, do but look at it privily thyself, the root withers and no flowers will glad thee. O my friends, when we view the fair clustering flowers that over-wreath, for example, the marriage-bower, and encircle man’s life with the fragrance and hues of heaven, what hand will not smite the foul plunderers that grubs them up by the roots, and, with grinning, grunting satisfaction, shows us the dung they flourish in! Men speak much of the printing-press with its newspapers: *du himmel!* what are they to clothes and the tailor’s goose?

* Thomas Carlyle—Sartor Resartus.

“Of kin to the so incalculable influences of concealment, and connected with still greater things, is the wondrous agency of symbols. In a symbol there is concealment, and yet revelation: here, therefore, by silence and by speech acting together, comes a double significance. And if both the speech be itself high, and the silence fit and noble, how expressive will their union be! Thus in many a painted device, or simple seal-emblem, the commonest truth stands out to us proclaimed with quite new emphasis.

“For it is here that Fantasy with her mystic wonderland plays into the small prose domain of sense, and becomes incorporated therewith. In the symbol proper, what we can call a symbol, there is ever more or less distinctly and directly, some embodiment and revelation of the infinite; the infinite is made to blend itself with the finite, to stand visible, and as it were, attainable there. By symbols, accordingly, is man guided and commanded, made happy, made wretched. He everywhere finds himself encompassed with symbols, recognised as such or not recognised: the universe is but one vast symbol of God; nay, if thou wilt have it, what is man himself but a symbol of God; is not all that he does symbolical; a revelation to sense of the mystic God-given force that is in him; a ‘gospel of freedom,’ which he, the ‘Messias of nature,’ preaches, as he can, by act and word? Not a hut he builds but is the visible embodiment of a thought; but

bears visible record of invisible things; but is, in the transcendental sense, symbolical as well as real."

"Man," says the professor elsewhere, in quite antipodal contrast with these high-soaring delineations, which we have here cut short on the verge of the inane, "man is by birth somewhat of an owl. Perhaps too, of all the owleries that ever possessed him, the most owlish, if we consider it, is that of your actually existing motive millwrights. Fantastic tricks enough has man played in his time; has fancied himself to be most things, down even to an animated heap of glass; but to fancy himself a dead iron-balance for weighing pains and pleasures on, was reserved for this his latter era. There stands he, his universe one huge manger, filled with hay and thistles to be weighed against each other; and looks long-eared enough. Alas, poor devil! spectres are appointed to haunt him; one age, he is hag-ridden, bewitched; the next, priest-ridden, befooled; in all ages bedeviled. And now the genius of mechanism smothers him worse than any nightmare did; till the soul is nigh choked out of him, and only a kind of digestive, mechanic life remains. In earth and in heaven he can see nothing but mechanism: has fear for nothing else, hope in nothing else; the world would indeed grind him to pieces; but can not he fathom the doctrine of motives, and cunningly compute these, and mechanize them to grind the other way?

“Were he not, as has been said, purblinded by enchantment, you had but to bid him open his eyes and look. In which country, in which time, was it hitherto that man’s history, or the history of man, went on by calculated or calculable ‘motives?’ What make ye of your Christianities, and chivalries, and reformations, and Marseillaise hymns, and reigns of terror? Nay, has not perhaps the motive-grinder himself been *in love*? Did he never stand so much as a contested election? Leave him to time, and the medicating virtue of nature?”—“Yes, friends,” elsewhere observes the professor, “not our logical, mensurative faculty, but our imaginative one is king over us; I might say, priest and prophet to lead us heavenward; or magician and wizard to leave us hellward. Nay, even for the basest sensualist, what is sense but the implement of fantasy; the vessel it drinks out of? Ever in the dullest existence, there is a sheen either of inspiration or of madness (thou partly hast it in thy choice, which of the two) that gleams in from the circumambient eternity, and colors with its own hues our little islet of time. The understanding is indeed thy window, too clear thou canst not make it; but fantasy is thy eye, with its color-giving retina, healthy or diseased. Have not I myself known five hundred living soldiers sabred into crow’s meat, for a piece of glazed cotton, which they called their flag—which had you sold it in any market-cross, would not have brought over three

groschen? Did not the whole Hungarian nation rise, like some tumultuous moon-stirred Atlantic, when Kaise Joseph pocketed their iron crown—an implement, as was sagaciously observed, in size and commercial value, little differing from a horse-shoe? It is in and through *symbols* that man, consciously and unconsciously, lives, works, and has his being: those ages, moreover, are accounted the noblest which can the best recognise symbolical worth, and prize it the highest. For is not a symbol ever, to him who has eyes for it, some dimmer or clearer revelation of the Godlike?

“Of symbols, however, I remark further, that they have both an extrinsic and intrinsic value: oftener the former only. What, for instance, was in that clouded shoe, which the peasants bore aloft with them as ensign in their Bauemkreig (peasants war)? Or in the wallet-and-staff round which the Netherland gueux, glorying in that nickname of Beggars, heroically rallied and prevailed, though against King Philip himself? Intrinsic significance these had none: only extrinsic: as the accidental standards of multitudes more or less sacredly uniting together; in which union itself, as above noted, there is ever something mystical and borrowing of the Godlike. Under a like category, too, stand, or stood, the stupidest heraldic coats-of-arms; military banners everywhere; and generally all national or other sectarian costumes and customs; they have

no intrinsic, necessary diviners, or even worth; but have acquired an extrinsic one. Nevertheless through all these, there glimmers something of a divine idea; as through military banners themselves, the divine idea of duty, of heroic daring; in some instances, of freedom of right. Nay, the highest ensign that man ever met and embraced under, the cross itself, had no meaning, save an accidental extrinsic one.

“Another matter it is, however, when your symbol has intrinsic meaning, and is of itself *fit* that men should unite round it. Let but the Godlike manifest itself to sense; let but eternity look, more or less visibly, through the time-figure (*Zeitbild*)! Then is it fit that men unite there, and worship together before such symbol, and so from day to day, and from age to age, superadd to it new divineness!

“Of this latter sort are all true works of art; in them (if thou know a work of art from a daub of artifice) wilt thou discern Eternity looking through Time; the Godlike rendered visible. Here, too, may an extrinsic value gradually superadd itself; thus, certain *Iliads*, and the like, have, in three thousand years, attained quite new significance. But nobler than all in this kind are the lives of heroic, God-inspired men; for what other work of art is so divine? In death, too, in the death of the just, as a last perfection of a work of art, may we not discern symbolic meaning? In that divinely-transfigured sleep, as of victory, rest-

ing over the beloved face which now knows thee no more, read (if thou canst for tears) the confluence of time with eternity, and some gleam of the latter peering through.

“Highest of all symbols are those wherein the artist or poet has risen into the prophet, and all men can recognise a present God, and worship the same; I mean religious symbols, what we call religious; as men stood in this stage of culture or the other, and could worse or better body forth the Godlike—some symbols with a transient intrinsic worth; many with only an extrinsic. If thou ask to what height man has carried it in this matter, look on our divinest symbols; on Jesus of Nazareth, and his life, and his biography, and what followed therefrom. Higher has the human thought not yet reached; this is Christianity and Christendom; a symbol of quite perennial, infinite character, whose significance will ever demand to be anew inquired into and anew made manifest.”

CHAPTER XXII.

PHILOSOPHY OF SYMBOLS, SIGNS, AND MYSTERIES.

IN a former chapter, we spoke of that skeptical, material, and utilitarian spirit, which repudiates all *rites, forms, badges of distinction, and symbolic language*. "Where is the *utility* of these things?" men are constantly inquiring. There are many among us, who pretend to see no reason in ceremonies and decorations which do not confer an immediate and *material* benefit. They do not seem to know that the spiritual is incarnated in the *material*—that the reason can *never be disembodied*—that truth never makes so deep an impression, as when it is proclaimed by solemn ceremonies, or shadowed forth by appropriate representation, or embodied by art in beautiful forms.

Free-Masonry is often opposed by many who approve of its general objects, because its instructions are ritual, and it employs decorations and solemnities, as *instruments* by which it may accomplish its purpose. But this, instead of marring the beauty of Masonry, in our opinion, surrounds it with additional attractions. For ourselves, we can not find language sufficiently

strong to express our deep abhorrence of this unsanctified spirit, which, could it get itself elected to the kingship of the world, would pluck from the skies the last star, and from the earth the last flower—divest life of all its embellishment, rob the universe of its beauty, because that beauty has no *material* utility—and, in a word, dry up the very fountains of spiritual life!

One of the very greatest errors of the age, is the constant employ of the naked, abstract reason, in all instruction, whether moral, scientific, or religious; the reducing all precepts to words, and the incessant addressing of the understanding, as if men were not creatures of imagination and soul, as well as of spirit or reason. By discarding the language of symbols, which through the imagination speaks to the soul, we lose the most efficient and powerful means of imparting religious and moral instruction. Mere words never make a lasting impression on the heart, nor do they ever stir up profound emotion, unless they are accompanied by some significant acts, gestures, or attitudes, on the part of the speaker, or are wrought up in a highly metaphorical and symbolical style. Words may enlighten the understanding, but *acts, ceremonies, images*, address the profoundest sentiments of the heart. That faculty, which we denominate the reason, the spirit, whose appropriate instrument of utterance is speech, is not the source of activity, nor is it the noblest element in man. It *observes, determines,*

and *judges*, but its *judgments* are generally partial, negative and selfish; never does it elevate the soul, nor fill it with a Divine enthusiasm; it creates no heroes, nor has it ever accomplished any great thing for humanity! It is the soul which acts, which makes man brave to face danger, and strong to endure fatigue; and the soul's language is not verbal, but symbolic and ritual. Not a man lives but feels, at times, that language, in its happiest combinations, is all too weak to express those burning thoughts, which oft stir up his soul into a very tempest of emotion. Hence, religion, which concerns the soul intimately, is always in its truest state associated with a ritual, the more imposing, sublime, and beautiful, the better.

“I observe,”* says an earnest and eloquent writer, “that, in modern times, men are swayed chiefly by force and interest, whereas the ancients acted, and were moved, more by persuasion, and by the affections of the soul, because they did not neglect the language of signs.” — “Before force was established, the gods were the magistrates of the human race” — as, indeed, they ought to be now — “before them all men made their covenants, and pronounced their promises; and the face of the earth was the Book, where their records were preserved. Rocks, trees, piles of stones, consecrated by their acts, and rendered respectable to those rude men, were the leaves of that book, open for ever

* J. J. Rousseau.

to the inspection of all. The faith of men was more certainly secured by these dumb witnesses—these gross yet august monuments of the sanctity of contracts, than it is to-day, by all the vain rigor of the laws.”

It seems to us, that this thought is founded in a true philosophy, and is the result of a wide and profound study of the nature of man. It can not be doubted that the chief reason why the church of Rome has continued to maintain so powerful an empire over the consciences of men, is that she has been true to the wants of human nature in preserving a worship, sublime, symbolical, and poetical, which always must and will command the reverence of sensible and imaginative beings. There never was a government more efficient, more wisely and justly administered, than that of Rome in the happier days of the republic. With the Romans all was ceremony, representation, and show. Garments were varied according to age or condition; heroes were crowned with diadems of gold, or wreaths of flowers or of leaves; and all this made a deep impression on the heart of every citizen. On the other hand, a government must be weak, which lays aside all official decorations and public ceremonies; because in doing thus, it refuses to address all the faculties of the human soul, and does not respond to all the desires of the heart.

Neither could any religious sect extend itself very

widely, unless in some way or other it provided for this want. Nor could the benevolent order of Freemasonry, grand and beautiful its central idea, and excellent as are confessedly its objects, make any considerable progress, or maintain its influence and efficiency, divested of its rites, symbols, and mysteries.

The truest and most expressive and useful of teaching has far less of words than of *action*. Moral ideas, expressed by signs, have infinitely more power than when uttered by words. When Alexander the Great applied his seal to the lips of his favorite minister, he enjoined on him secrecy and silence far more effectually than he could have done in a long discourse. The priest of Rome making the sign of the cross on the brow of the new-born child, says infinitely more than does the protestant clergyman, in his dedicatory formulary, let it consist of ever so many *words*! Signs, being the indices of absolute truth, often have an influence, which, if we consider it well, will be found to be quite magical. We walk, for example, at midnight, along the streets of one of our large country-towns. Before us stands a storehouse, filled with valuable merchandise. Its windows are unguarded, and a light tap, with the end of a staff, will be sufficient to break a pane of the glass, making an entrance through which a man may pass with ease. The doors, it is true, are closed and locked. Now, why is it that the thief, in his predatory excursions, does not enter

there, and despoil the slumbering merchant of his money and goods? There is no *physical force* sufficient to prevent it. A blow of the fist will open a passage through the window, and a few well-directed strokes of the arm, with the proper instrument, would shiver the bolt into fragments. Yet year in and year out, it all stands there safe. Why is this? It is because there is, upon that door, a sign—a sign of power! Yet that lock, as so much steel or iron, as a mere physical force, can give no real security; for, as we have said, a few blows of the arm would destroy it. It is the moral idea there enshrined, and which, day and night, stands sentinel in its iron watch-tower, and says to each passer-by, “Thou shalt not steal!”

From these facts, and what we observe of life, we infer that all the arrangements of our order—our symbols, signs, mysteries—are in harmony with nature, and have a relation with what is divinest and best in the human soul. Life, we have remarked before, is, at the present time, too prosaic; we are too material—too skeptical! We foolishly think that what does not add to the store of our material wealth—what does not literally clothe us, feed us, or warm us—has no useful end. We have too little faith in spiritual influences; whereas, nothing can be more certain, than that this prodigality of decoration we discover in the universe, is most intimately associated with the very highest interests of the soul. It is through the

symbolic language of the universe that the Grand-Master of all speaks to his children, and whence come those spiritual influences, which disengage the soul from the trammels of matter, and exalt it to a oneness with God. Were the beauty which shines in the universe—beauty, which has no perceivable connection with our physical utility or temporal interest—extinguished, the medium of communication between God and the soul would be closed up, the soul would perish, and man would fall to the level of the brutes. But, thanks to the wise Creator, he has not only made the world, and richly replenished it with what is necessary for our temporal convenience, he has also created it *beautiful*, and thus provided for the soul's wants.

Probably all of one half of our moral growth—one half certainly of whatever perfection we possess, may be attributed to that wonderful influence—scarcely recognised, because so uniform and quiet—which Nature, through her beauty, exercises upon all men. No man can give himself up to a communion with the beautiful, without feeling himself wonderfully moved by a mysterious attraction, and hurried away, as it were, from the visible and material universe, toward some invisible centre—some diviner sphere. His heart beats in sympathy with the soul of Nature; all that is particular, individual, selfish, vanishes, and the current of universal being sweeps through his soul; he is conscious of the presence of a Purity, a

beauty superior to his. The most fortunate of the English poets expresses the same sentiment in the following beautiful lines :—

“ How often we forget all time, when lone,
 Admiring Nature's universal throne,
 Her woods, her wilds, her waters, the intense
 Reply of hers, to our intelligence.
 Live not the stars, and mountains ! Are the waves
 Without a spirit ! Are the dropping caves
 Without a feeling, in their silent tears !
 No, no, they woo and clasp us to their spheres,
 Dissolve this clod and clog of clay before
 Its hour, and merge the soul in the great shore !
 Strip off this fond and false identity —
 Who thinks of self, when gazing on the sky !”

So long, therefore, as the Creator is so prodigal of decoration, let not the partisans of utility accuse us of folly, for employing regalia, and other decorations, as instrumentalities of good ! The world itself goes in regalia, and does not disdain a collar and apron ;— a collar of silver clouds, gemmed with stars, and brodered with rainbows ; an apron curiously wrought with symbolic devices in flowers and foliage !—and thus sets us an example worthy of imitation.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WHAT THE INITIATION TEACHES.

It teaches the neophyte, that he is to labor unceasingly to perfect his nature, and employing the faculties God has given him, to accomplish well the mission he is sent into this world to achieve. As the human body is nourished by those physical elements, which, by a law of nature, become a part of its own substance, so the soul is expanded, it is perfected and glorified, by inspiring those divine influences, which God—the source of all science, art, beauty, wisdom, goodness—is perpetually communicating to his intelligent creatures. At each step which man advances in knowledge and goodness, a new and higher revelation of truth and beauty is made to his soul. It is the capacity for improvement, the power to aspire to what is beyond and above him, that is to say, to the infinite, which give to man the exalted rank he holds in the universe. Hence the duty which is imposed upon him, of approaching, unceasingly, nearer to the divine perfection, through the right exercise of all his faculties.

We can not but perceive the wisdom of this arrangement, and its eminent adaptation to the nature of man, and to the conditions of his existence. He commences his career on earth feeble, helpless, and ignorant. Blind, in darkness and in chains, he wanders through many a gloomy way. He is bound to the world, and to his fellow-men, by a multitude of relations, all which require an enlightened judgment, and a well-disciplined mind. He is born, too, to a heritage of sorrow and grief, liable to disappointments and misfortunes. Hence the necessity of seeking that wisdom, those comforts and supports, and of cultivating those affections, which will raise him above the vicissitudes of time, enable him to master the storm, and overcome the world, and bind him in strong and close alliance with the invisible and eternal.

Life's chief work, or duty, is to sacrifice the brief interests of time and self to immortality and God. And to disengage the soul from the trammels of sense, to exalt it, to perfect it by making it at one with God, is the end which religion proposes, and should be the object of all science, literature, and art. For these are but parts of one vast, universal religion, which speaks not to one of our sentiments only, but to the entire of our faculties; that is, to the Soul, which is the centre and source of all.

To labor to achieve one's destiny in the earth, is to labor for wisdom, goodness, truth. It is to cultivate

generous affections, holy and trustful thought, and heavenly aspirations. And you will observe, that all this implies, labor, struggle, combat. It is plain, that a being who is created for a perpetual progress upward, must be subjected to the necessity of toil. Born weak, and ignorant, but with the infinite heavens shining above him, he must advance, do battle with the foes which obstruct his way, and overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, which seek to oppose his heavenward march. Thought can fix no limits to the possible progress of the soul, nor calculate the measure of its perfection.

The first step to be taken in this great work, is to overthrow all selfishness, and subjugate the passions and senses to the dominion of the soul. In their appropriate sphere, and under a wise direction, the passions give a charm to existence, and are the ministers of incalculable good. But they are prone to rebel, and often bind the soul with an iron chain. They are useful as domestics, but when they usurp the mastery, are the most pitiless of tyrants. In the one case they are like a gently-flowing river, which gives beauty to the landscape and fertility to the soil. In the other, they are like the sweeping storm or the crushing avalanche, the ministers of desolation and wo. Overborne by their clamors, man is hurled to earth, and sees no more the sunny heavens which arch above him, and invite him to soar. Truth, wisdom, virtue, charm him not;

he sacrifices ALL to the transient interests, and empty vanities of time. He labors but it is for the meat which perishes. He struggles for wealth and that fame with which the world rewards its slaves, and obtains them, but death and leanness are sent into his soul.

A glorious victory is that which man gains over the powers and elements of nature, and by which he compels the earth to provide for his wants and pleasures: it is glorious to subdue the invaders of one's homes and rights; but more glorious, oh, incomparably more glorious, is it to gain the victory over one's self—to break the domains of the passions—to free the soul of selfishness, and earthly affections; to subdue the enemy within the heart.

In our labors for spiritual freedom; in our struggles after wisdom, holiness, peace, we shall be aided by invoking the virtues and perfections of the wise and holy of the past time. Whatever victories have been won over the world and sin—over the selfishness and thrall of life; whatever perfection and glory have been acquired, by any saint, may again be achieved by *him* who, caring little for what earth can give, is ambitious of a heavenly crown. Whatever degree of excellence or wisdom, be it never so high, which the mind resolutely fixes upon, and earnestly strives for, it may reach.

The good and the honored of other times have left

a thousand brilliant traces upon the earth, a thousand memories, which are to us a perpetual ministry of love, and life, and light. They are so many Pharoses which a kind Providence has kindled on the sea of time, not only to show us the evils we are to shun, but also to direct us to the haven of security and repose.

He who has subdued himself, exercised selfishness, that demon of the heart, aspired to, and made his own, the virtues and wisdom of the good and the wise, and struggled, by art and science, to seize the secret of the universe, and lay open all its mysteries, has worthily labored to fulfil his destiny in the earth. He has secured a peace which the world can not take away. For, who so happy as he, who has trained his mind to habits of reflection, and stored it with useful knowledge, and adorned it with beautiful conceptions, and holy and peaceful thoughts? Is any one so independent as he? so well prepared for life, or for death? so strongly fortified against the reverses of fortune? Whatever may be his lot in the world, be he high or low, rich or poor, the world's favorite or the child of reproach, he has an unspeakable joy in his communion with nature and with God.

Knowledge, wisdom, holiness, cheerful thoughts, gentle dispositions, devout affections, bright hopes, and a world-subduing faith, are the treasure for which we should strive—the heavenly nourishment which gives to our souls an eternal life. And these are the

great facts which underlie many of the secret rites and symbolic arrangements of our order! And these alone will endure! All else will pass away! Riches, glory, the pomp and splendor of time, the world's vanity, all will vanish as a wreath of smoke! But the soul will live, with whatever it has gained of knowledge, wisdom, virtue: every idea it has acquired in time; every discovery it has made in the works of God; and every holy thought it has cherished, will go with it into eternity. Its progress in this world is the prophecy of a progress which is never to end. What encouragement is this, for us to toil for wisdom and goodness! Every upward step we take, is a gain for eternity! Joshua may cause the sun to stay on Gibeon, and the moon to rest over Ajalon. But no magician can arrest the SOUL in its sublime flight along the heavens. Infinity is its capacity, eternity is its life, and progress its everlasting privilege!

Such are the important moral ideas which are symbolized in our sublime and beautiful ceremonies, and which every mason should strive to comprehend.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OBLIGATIONS TO EACH OTHER, AND TO THE WORLD.

ONE of the most beautiful features of our order is its social character and influences. Its peculiar obligations and duties, its lessons of fraternity and love, open a wide and rich field for exploration, study, and meditation. Our association, in the midst of a dark and selfish world—in the midst of corruption, penury, and social imperfection—marches forth, scattering everywhere a healing influence, and proclaims a broader charity, and more active benevolence. She descends into the humblest places of human society, among artisans and laborers, and comforts and encourages and soothes them. She ascends also into the highest places of the earth, and steps with authority in the executive hall and senatorial chamber, preaches to the rich and great the duty of fraternity, equality, and humanity. Under her influence, social inequality disappears, prejudice is disarmed, evil passions are subdued, and Love, Friendship, and Virtue, are installed among our objects of reverence and worship. The widow is encouraged

by her voice of hope, and is made strong, and enters bravely the great battle of life, knowing that ever near and around her and her little ones, is an ever-present and efficient friend.

Brotherly love, next to temperance, is one of the leading thoughts of the order, from which it derives great vitality and force. It is this which gives a charm to our lodge-meetings—which makes the members diligent and prompt in their fraternal offices, and willing to bear one another's burdens.

But the sentiment of brotherly love involves other duties, and among them is that of *forbearance*. Brothers will not be hasty and passionate in their dealings or intercourse with each other. If a member is offended, or esteems himself injured, by a brother, he will not hastily condemn, nor allow himself to exercise a spirit of revenge. He will remember that a soft answer turneth away wrath, and that reconciliation and love are better than revenge and hate. "Be kind to each other," "children, love one another," is the earnest and gentle command of our association to her members.

Should we have reason to think that a brother is losing the sense of his obligations, and is falling from honor and rectitude, it is our duty to treat him with charity and forbearance. We know not what unfortunate circumstance may have pressed upon him—we know not what unseen causes may have forced

him into a course of seeming dishonesty. We say, seeming dishonesty, for, on investigation, it may appear that nothing dishonorable or mean was ever intended. Even if the brother really offend against good morals and virtue, we are still to be forbearing and charitable, until all efforts to reclaim him prove unavailing.

When a brother sins, the first thing to be done is to expostulate with him, move him, entreat him, and, if possible, save him. It is the office of the Gospel association to heal and restore, and we are false to our obligations if we allow a brother to fall into vice, and to be cut off from our communion without making an attempt to save him.

Let us then, brethren, exercise forbearance toward each other, and remember that Charity is the brightest of all the graces, as it is the first and most imperative of all the duties of our society.

But it is not only toward each other that we are to exercise the virtues of charity and forbearance, but to all mankind—to all who need our sympathy, our kindness, and our assistance. And in a world so full of suffering as this, we are never at a loss to find an ample field for the exercise of those graces. In every corner of our cities, towns, and villages, do we see honest poverty struggling with the most adverse circumstances—everywhere do we tread in the midst of indescribable misery, everywhere open before us the

dwellings of hungry poverty, where oppressed and suffering Virtue hides herself and weeps. Here is a field, brethren, for the exercise of our charities. And let us not stop to inquire whether these objects of charity have legal claims upon us. It is enough for us to know that they are suffering and needy. We have no patience with a man, who, calling himself a Christian, can look with indifference upon suffering in any quarter.

It belongs to Masons especially to show the world how charity may be so organized and dispensed, that it may go direct to its object, with a sure benediction.

Our age is not destitute of the sentiment of charity, but it is unwise in the exercise of the virtue. It is a habit with many to shed storms of tears over sufferings that are far off, and exaggerated no doubt by distance, while they pass by, without note or pity, the real misery that meets them every step. Thousands and tens of thousands of dollars are expended annually to carry forward some cause of questionable utility, on the other side of the world, when the same sum judiciously expended at home would reform half our social abuses, make every home bright and happy, and transform this dark and gloomy world of misery, which rolls in our midst, into a celestial sphere, environed with flowers of paradisian beauty, and glorified by the living presence of an infinite love. Consider, my brethren, what a life of wretchedness and vice stretches

through the heart of the mighty city—wretchedness, real, present. Think how many thousands of virtuous females are suffering all the torments and temptations of penury; how many widowed mothers and orphan children walk the streets in the filthy garb of poverty, or shrink away from the public gaze into dismal dens and alleys, where a well-bred dog would disdain to enter! See that group of little children, sleeping in the chill night upon the marble steps of that splendid mansion, with nothing over them but the cold stars, nor around them but the awful selfishness of society. Consider this dreadful spectacle of woe! stand face to face for a moment with that terrible misery which stalks like a huge spectre through our streets by both day and night, and say if all this does not open a vast field for your labors—if there is not yet a great work for our order to do? Your mission is beautiful, divine, and holy. You form a part of that great army of industrials who are laboring to reconstruct the tabernacle of Humanity. Silently and invisibly you work, but not the less effectually. The coral insect labors beneath the surface of the sea, where no mortal eye can penetrate. The smiles of a hundred summers, and the frowns of a hundred winters, alternately darken or illumine its bosom, and yet the work of the wondrous insect is hidden and unrevealed. But the day of revelation comes, and a new island, beautiful, green, and fresh—the result of this invisible working—ap-

pears, and takes its place with its sister isles on the bosom of the sea. So with us, my brethren; our working is secret, but the monuments of our victories are strewn over the earth, visible to all. Our last and greatest task is to re-establish virtue on the throne of the world. A great and Divine task, and not to be won without unwearied toil, and perhaps suffering and sacrifice. But be not discouraged. The day of toil will pass by, the hour of victory will come; the storm and cloud will roll away, and the everlasting stars, clear and serene, will look out upon you from the smiling heavens, and a voice, sweeter than "the music of the spheres," will speak from their brilliant heights, saying: "Ye weary, toil-worn, battle-soiled sons of earth, ascend to your reward, among the flame-crowned hosts above."

CHAPTER XXV.

FREE-MASONRY IMMORTAL.

WE have seen how high and divine the mission of Free-Masonry is, and it should fill us with gladness, that all the aspects of the times are so encouraging, and give us room to hope, that vast and beneficent as that mission is, it will be triumphantly achieved. The world shall be redeemed from the thrall of selfishness. The principles of union and love, which we wish to diffuse, are already slumbering in the bosom of this age. Love is not dead! These great Christian ideas, Union and Love, ideas so sweet and gentle, yet so lofty, sublime, and poetical, which if actualized in life, would elevate us to the rank of seraphs, can not die. If the coldness and individualism of the world deny them an expression in acts and words, they will still live in the heart as a sentiment, like the smouldering fires on a priestless altar! Driven out from the abodes of luxury and opulence, repudiated by the *soi-disant* great, and banished from our social institutions, they will take refuge in some humble vale, and murmur in the ears of the poor and oppressed, the myste-

rious words of Friendship, Sympathy, and Truth! No, love can not die! Even in this age, saturated as it is with the unchristian morality of Helvetius and Bentham—the doctrine of absolute selfishness—a doctrine which is armed against what is purest and loveliest in the human heart, there are some disinterested spirits who worship at the shrine of virtue, and assert that Truth and Right are from Everlasting to Everlasting, and sooner or later will and *must* be revered. These are solitary voices of hope, which rising ever higher and swelling ever louder above the precepts of a soul-killing egoism, will, at length, baptize the world in the refrain of a heavenly hymn of charity.

Love still lives! but how fantastic the forms of its existence! One carries it in his pocket in the shape of glittering coin; or locks it up in the vaults of a bank, that thieves may not steal it away. Others pursue it under the form of fame, in the bloody pathway of war; and others worship it as a civic crown! But, thank God, it still lives! The world's heart still throbs with its divine pulsations! The Orphic-Heart-Lyre, of which we made mention a little while since, is still unbroken, and the celestial earth-moving symphonies are yet slumbering in its voiceless chords. It is the high office of Free-Masonry, to re-tune the mystic harp of life, to the sublimer melodies of love! to breathe upon the smouldering spark of charity, and expand it

to a world-embracing flame! to cement again the broken links of the golden chain of harmony, and thus reestablish the unity of man.

Be faithful, then, brethren, to the idea of your order. See that ye live the principles that ye teach. See that ye labor to extend the mystic tie of sympathy, till, as a chain of light, it shall encircle the entire of Humanity: Who can say, that through your influence and labors love will not be, in a higher form than has yet been realized, the presiding genius of the future? Who can say, that in that future, the cold calculations of selfishness will not be branded as the blackest of crimes, while disinterested friendship, and confiding faith in man, admiration of virtue, will be rewarded as the loftiest of graces? Labor, then, at your exalted work. Be valiant in your holy warfare against misfortune, penury, and vice. The world is full of sweet voices, and soothing songs, which encourage your labors.—And when the great ideal of Masonry shall be realized in universal life, and Christ's divine heart—beating in the bosom of humanity—shall be the source of its activity, for ever more, then shall be fulfilled the prophetic dream of a golden Age. Then shall the human race march forward and upward, engirdled by the rosy hours, and baptized in the chorus of a heavenly psalm of love. Then shall Astrea and Saturn descend again from heaven to earth bringing to man the divinest gifts of the Gods, and **"THE AGE OF GOLD OVER ALL THE WORLD ARISE."**

CHAPTER XXVI.

THOMAS PAINE'S ESSAY ON FREE-MASONRY.*

It is always understood that Free-Masons have a secret which they carefully conceal; but from everything that can be collected from their own accounts of Masonry, their real secret is no other than their origin, which but few of them understand; and those who do, envelop it in mystery.†

The society of Masons is distinguished into three classes, or degrees: 1st, the entered apprentice; 2d, the fellow-craft; 3d, the master-Mason.‡

The entered apprentice knows but little more of Masonry, than the use of signs and tokens, and certain

* We insert this curious dissertation of Thomas Paine for two reasons; 1st, because while it is the production of one opposed to Free-Masonry, and is intended to be a refutation of its claims, it singularly confirms all that Free-Masons contend for; and 2d, because it contains assertions that need to be corrected. Our comments on Mr. Paine's theory will be found in the marginal notes.

† Had Mr. Paine been a member of the brotherhood, he would not have narrowed the mysteries of Free-Masonry down to so small a compass. The "SECRET" of Masonry would be a small affair, indeed, if it were only an historical fact regarding the origin of the order.

‡ It appears the author of the Essay was entirely ignorant of the higher degrees of Masonry.

steps and words by which Masons can recognise each other, without being discovered by a person who is not a Mason. The fellow-craft is not much better instructed in Masonry than the entered apprentice. It is only in the master-Mason's lodge, that whatever knowledge remains of the origin of Masonry is preserved and concealed.

In 1730, Samuel Pritchard, member of a constituted lodge in England, published a treatise, entitled "Masonry Dissected;" and made oath before the lord-mayor of London that it was a true copy.

"Samuel Pritchard maketh oath that the copy hereunto annexed, is a true and genuine copy in every particular."

In his work, he has given the catechism, or examination, in question and answer, of the apprentice, the fellow-craft, and the master-Mason. There was no difficulty in doing this, as it is mere form.

In his introduction he says, "The original institution of Masonry consisted in the foundation of the liberal arts and sciences, but more especially on geometry, for, at the building of the tower of Babel, the art and mystery* of Masonry was first introduced, and

* Undoubtedly there is an anachronism in this assertion of Pritchard. But the only real error in his statement lies in the order of the facts he relates. He means simply to give it as his opinion that the tower of Babel and Solomon's temple were constructed by a society of builders, like the old Roman corporations.

thence handed down by Euclid, a worthy and excellent mathematician of the Egyptians; and he communicated it to Hiram, the master-Mason concerned in building Solomon's temple in Jerusalem."

Besides the absurdity of deriving Masonry from the building of Babel, where, according to the story, the confusion of languages prevented builders understanding each other, and consequently of communicating any knowledge they had, there is a glaring contradiction in point of chronology in the account he gives.

Solomon's temple was built and dedicated 1004 years before the Christian era; and Euclid, as may be seen in the tables of chronology, lived 277 years before the same era. It was therefore impossible that Euclid could communicate anything to Hiram, since Euclid did not live till 700 years after the time of Hiram.

In 1783, Captain George Smith, inspector of the Royal Artillery academy at Woolwich, in England, and provincial grand-master of Masonry for the county of Kent, published a treatise, entitled "The Use and Abuse of Free-Masonry."

In his chapter of the antiquity of Masonry, he makes it to be coeval with creation. "When," says he, "the Sovereign raised on masonic principles, the beautiful globe, and commanded that master-science, geometry, to lay the planetary world, and to regulate by its laws the whole stupendous system in just, unerring proportion, rolling around the central sun."

“But,” continues he, “I am not at liberty publicly to undraw the curtain, and thereby to descant on this head; it is sacred, and ever will remain so; those who are honored with the trust will not reveal it, and those who are ignorant of it can not betray it.” By this last part of the phrase, Smith means the two inferior classes, the fellow-craft, and the entered apprentice; for he says, in the next page of his work, “It is not every one that is barely initiated into Free-Masonry that is intrusted with all the mysteries thereto belonging; they are not attainable as things of course, nor by every capacity.”

The learned but unfortunate Doctor Dodd, grand-chaplain of Masonry, in his oration at the dedication of Free-Mason's hall, London, traces Masonry through a variety of stages. “Masons,” says he, “are well informed from their own private and interior records, that the building of Solomon's temple is an important era, whence they derive many mysteries of their art. Now,” says he, “be it remembered that this great event took place about a thousand years before the Christian era, and consequently more than a century before Homer, the first of the Grecian poets, wrote, and above five centuries before Pythagoras brought from the east his sublime system of truly masonic instruction to illuminate our western world.

“But remote as this period is, we date not thence the commencement of our art. For though it might

owe to the wise and glorious king of Israel, some of its many mystic forms and hieroglyphic ceremonies, yet certainly the art itself is coeval with man, the great subject of it.

“We trace,” continues he, “its footsteps in the most distant, the most remote ages and nations of the world. We find it among the first and most celebrated civiliz^{ers} of the east. We deduce it regularly from the first astronomers on the plains of Chaldea, to the wise and mystic kings and priests of Egypt, the sages of Greece, and the philosophers of Rome.”

From these reports and declarations of Masons of the highest order in the institution, we see that Masonry, without publicly declaring so, lays claim to some divine communication from the Creator, in a manner different from and unconnected with the book which the Christians call the Bible; and the natural result from this, is that Masonry is derived from some very ancient religion wholly independent of and unconnected with that book.*

To come, then, at once to the point, Masonry (as I shall show from the customs, ceremonies, hieroglyph-

* Of course as Free-Masonry does not claim to be a religion, but a society for the cultivation of fraternal sentiments, and an elevated morality, and as it embraces professors of all forms of religion, it insists only on “the universal religion of Nature,” which, of necessity, is anterior to the Jewish or Christian revelation. But the religion of Nature unquestionably reveals the supernatural—and is itself a “divine communication.”

ics, and chronology of Masonry) is derived, and is the remains of the religion of the ancient Druids, who like the magi of Persia, and the priests of Heliopolis in Egypt, were priests of the sun.* They paid worship to this great luminary, as the great visible agent of a great invisible first cause, whom they styled, Time without limits.

In Masonry, many of the ceremonies of the Druids are preserved in their original state. With them the sun is still the sun; and his image in the form of the sun, is the great emblematical ornament of masonic lodges and masonic dresses. It is the central figure on their aprons, and they wear it also pendent on the breast in their lodges, and in their processions. It has the figure of a man, as at the head of the sun.

At what period of antiquity, or in what nation, this religion was first established, is lost in the labyrinth of unrecorded times. It is generally ascribed to the ancient Egyptians, the Babylonians, and Chaldeans, and reduced afterward to a system regulated by the apparent progress of the sun through the twelve signs of

* Nowhere does Mr. Paine show himself less a philosopher, than when he is treating of subjects akin to religion; and his statement that Free-Masonry is a remnant of Druidism, is on a par with his preposterous theory of the genesis of Christianity. Masonry is older than the Druids. But why does Paine conclude that it is Druidism? Because of its ceremonies, hieroglyphics, symbols, etc. But he admits that, at least, a thousand years before, the same symbols were in use in the Egyptian mysteries. It would be far more philosophical to conclude that the masonic symbols were derived from Egypt.

the zodiac, by Zoroaster the lawgiver of Persia, whence Pythagoras brought it into Greece. It is to these matters Dr. Dodd refers in the passage already quoted from his oration.

The worship of the sun as the great visible agent of a great invisible first cause, time without limits, spread itself over a considerable part of Asia and Africa, thence to Greece and Rome, through all ancient Gaul, and into Britain and Ireland.

Smith, in his chapter on the Antiquity of Masonry in Britain, says, that "notwithstanding the obscurity which envelops masonic history in that country, various circumstances contribute to prove that Free-Masonry was introduced into Britain about 1030 years before Christ."

It can not be Masonry in its present state that Smith here alludes to. The Druids flourished in Britain at the period he speaks of, and it is from them that Masonry is descended.* Smith has put the child in the place of the parent.

It sometimes happens as well in writing as in conversation, that a person lets slip an expression that serves to unravel what he intends to conceal, and this is the case with Smith, for in the same chapter he says: "The Druids, when they committed anything to writing, used the Greek alphabet, and I am bold to assert

* There is not the least shadow of evidence that Druidism prevailed in Britain at that early period.

that the most perfect remains of the Druids' rites and ceremonies are preserved in the customs and ceremonies of the Masons that are to be found existing among mankind.* My brethren," says he, "may be able to trace them with greater exactness than I am at liberty to explain to the public."

This is a confession from a master-Mason, without intending it to be so understood by the public, that masonry is the remains of the religion of the Druids. The reasons for the Masons keeping this a secret I shall explain in the course of this work.

As the study and contemplation of the Creator in the works of the creation, of which the sun, as the great visible agent of that Being, was the visible object of the adoration of the Druids, all their religious rites and ceremonies had reference to the apparent progress of the sun through the twelve signs of the zodiac, and his influence upon the earth. The Masons adopt the same practices. The roof of their temples or lodges is ornamented with a sun, and the floor is a representation of the variegated face of the earth, either by carpeting or mosaic work.

Free-Masons' hall, in Great Queen street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, is a magnificent building, and cost upward of twelve thousand pounds sterling. Smith, in

* It is quite probable the Druidical mysteries had some symbols in common with other ancient rites, and may have derived them from older societies.

speaking of this building, says (page 152): "The roof of this magnificent hall is, in all probability, the highest piece of finished architecture in Europe. In the centre of this roof, a most resplendent sun is represented in burnished gold, surrounded with the twelve signs of the zodiac, with their respective characters:—

♈ Aries,	♎ Libra,
♉ Taurus,	♏ Scorpio,
♊ Gemini,	♐ Sagittarius,
♋ Cancer,	♑ Capricornus,
♌ Leo,	♒ Aquarius,
♍ Virgo,	♓ Pisces."

After giving the description, he says: "The emblematical meaning of the sun is well known to the enlightened and inquisitive Free-Mason; and as the real sun is situated in the centre of the universe, so the emblematical sun is the centre of real masonry. We all know," continues he, "that the sun is the fountain of light, the source of the seasons, the cause of the vicissitudes of day and night, the parent of vegetation, the friend of man; hence the scientific Free-Mason only knows the reason why the sun is placed in the centre of this beautiful hall."

The Masons in order to protect themselves from the persecution of the Christian church, have always spoken in a mystical manner of the figure of the sun in their lodges or, like the astronomer of Lalande, who is a Mason, been silent on the subject. It is their secret,

especially in catholic countries, because the figure of the sun is the expressive criterion that denotes they are descended from the Druids, and was that wise, elegant, philosophical religion, the faith opposite to the faith of the gloomy Christian church.*

The high festival of the Masons is on the day they call St. John's day; but every enlightened Mason must know that holding their festival on this day has no reference to the person called St. John; and that it is only to disguise the true cause of holding it on this day, that they call the day by that name. As there were Masons, or at least Druids, many centuries before the time of St. John, if such person ever existed, the holding their festival on this day, must refer to some cause totally unconnected with John.†

* The habitual skepticism of Paine does not allow him to let any opportunity to throw reproach on Christianity, pass without making free use of it. In our opinion, Druidism was the most flinty, gloomy, soulless system of religion, that ever claimed the reverence of man, while Christianity is the exact reverse. The emblem of the sun was used in the Collegia Fabrorum of Ancient Rome, and in the Masonic Society of Pythagoras, not idolatrously, but because the sun regulated the hours of labor.

† What Mr. Paine evidently regards as an objection to the truth of Christianity, and a reproach to Free-Masonry, we regard as one of the most conspicuous proofs of the divineness of our holy faith, and of the antiquity and usefulness of Free-Masonry. We are free to admit all that Mr. Paine asserts above, but we draw therefrom quite opposite conclusions. Most of the great religious festivals, honored in the Christian church, existed long before the advent of Christ. And the gospel proved its divineness, by rescuing them from profane, and it may be immoral uses, and consecrating them to sacred purposes. Man

The case is, that the day called St. John's day is the 24th of June, and is what is called midsummer-day. The sun is then arrived at the summer solstice; and with respect to his meridional altitude, or height at high noon, appears for some days to be of the same height. The astronomical longest day, like the shortest day, is not every year, on account of leap year, on the same numerical day, and therefore the 24th of June is always taken for midsummer-day; and it is in honor of the sun, which has then arrived at its greatest height in our hemisphere, and not anything with respect to St. John, that this annual festival of the Masons, taken from the Druids, is celebrated on midsummer-day.

Customs will often outlive the remembrance of their origin, and this is the case with respect to a custom still practised in Ireland, where the Druids flourished at the time they flourished in Britain. On the eve of St. John's day, that is on the eve of midsummer-day, the Irish light fires on the tops of the hills. This can have no reference to St. John; but it has emblematical reference to the sun which on that day is at his highest summer elevation, and might in common language be said to have arrived at the top of the hill.

always worshipped, but not always worthy objects. Christianity never pretended to abrogate worship, but only to change the objects of man's adoration. And this is the great glory of the gospel, that it seizes on everything, and infuses therein a new element of virtue, or transforms it, into an instrument of divinest use. It matters not, therefore, if the grand and majestic figure of St. John has been substituted, for some pagan symbol now forgotten.

As to what Masons, and books of Masonry tell us of Solomon's temple of Jerusalem, it is nowise improbable that some masonic ceremonies may have been derived from the building of the temple, for the worship of the sun was in practice many centuries before that temple existed, or before the Israelites came out of Egypt. And we learn from the history of the Jewish kings (2d Kings, chap. xxii., xxxiii.), that the worship of the sun was performed by the Jews in that temple. It is, however, much to be doubted, if it was done with the same scientific purity and religious morality with which it was performed by the Druids, who, by all accounts that historically remain of them, were a wise, learned, and moral class of men. The Jews, on the contrary, were ignorant of astronomy, and of science in general, and if a religion founded on astronomy, fell into their hands, it is almost certain it would be corrupted. We do not read in the history of the Jews, whether in the Bible or elsewhere, that they were the inventors or the improvers of any sort of science. Even in the building of this temple, the Jews did not know how to square and frame the timber for beginning and carrying on the work, and Solomon was obliged to send to Hiram, king of Tyre (Zidon), to procure workmen: "For thou knowest [says Solomon to Hiram, 1st Kings, chap. v., ver. 6] that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Zidonians." This temple was

more properly Hiram's temple than Solomon's, and if the masons derive anything from the building of it, they owe it to the Zidonians and not to the Jews. But to return to the worship of the sun in this temple.

It is said (2d Kings, chap. xxiii., ver. 8): "And King Josiah put down all the idolatrous priests that burned incense unto the sun, the moon, the planets, and to all the host of heaven." And it is said at the 11th verse: "And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering of the house of the Lord, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire." Ver. 13: "And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon, the king of Israel, had builded for Ashtoreth, the abomination of the Zidonians [the very people that built the temple], did the king defile."

Besides these things, the description that Josephus gives of the decorations of this temple, resembles, on a large scale, those of a Masons' lodge. He says that the distribution of the several parts of the temple of the Jews represented all nature, particularly the parts most apparent of it, as the sun, the moon, the planets, the zodiac, the earth, the elements, and that the system of the world was retraced there by numerous ingenious emblems. These in all probability, are what Josiah calls the abominations of the Zidonians.*

* Smith, in speaking of a lodge, says: "When the lodge is revealed to an entering Mason, it discovers to him a *representation of the*

Everything, however, drawn from this temple, and applied to Masonry, still refers to the worship of the sun, however corrupted or misunderstood by the Jews, and, consequently, to the religion of the Druids.

Another circumstance which shows that Masonry is derived from some ancient system, prior to, and unconnected with the Christian religion, is the chronology, or method of counting time, used by the Masons in the records of their lodges. They make no use of what is called the Christian era; and they reckon their months numerically, as the ancient Egyptians did, and as the quakers do now. I have by me a record of a French lodge, at the time the late duke of Orleans, then duke de Chartres, was grand-master of Masonry in France.

It begins as follows: "*Le trentième jour du sixième mois de l'an de la V. L., cinq mil sept cent soixante et treize*"—that is, the thirtieth day of the sixth month of the year of the venerable lodge, five thousand seven hundred and seventy-three. By what I observe in English books of Masonry, the English Masons use the initials A. L., and not V. L. By A. L. they mean in the year of the lodge, as the Christians by A. D. mean by the year of the Lord. But A. L. like V. L.

world; in which from the wonders of Nature, we are led to contemplate her great Original, and to worship him from his mighty works; and we are thereby also moved to exercise those moral and social virtues which become mankind as the servants of the great Architect of the world."

refers to the same chronological era, that is, to the supposed time of the creation. The V. L. of the French, and A. L. of the English Mason, answer to the A. M. anno mundi, or year of the world.

Though the Masons have taken many of their ceremonies and hieroglyphics from the ancient Egyptians, it is certain that they have not taken their chronology thence. If they had, the church would soon have sent them to the stake; as the chronology of the Egyptians, like that of the Chinese, goes many thousand years beyond the Bible chronology.

The religion of the Druids, as before said, was the same as the religion of the ancient Egyptians. The priests of Egypt were the professors and teachers of science, and were styled priests of Heliopolis, that is of the *city of the sun*. The Druids in Europe, who were the same order of men, have their name from the Teutonic or ancient German language; the Germans being anciently called Teutones. The word druid signifies a wise man. In Persia they were called magi, which signifies the same thing.

“Egypt,” says Smith, “whence we derive many of our mysteries, hath always borne a distinguished rank in history, and was once celebrated above all others for its antiquities, learning, opulence, and fertility. In their system, their principal hero-gods, Osiris and Isis, theologically represented the Supreme Being and universal nature; and physically, the two great celes-

tial luminaries, the sun and the moon, by whose influence all nature was actuated. The experienced brethren of the society," says Smith, in a note to this passage, "are well informed what affinity these symbols bear to Masonry, and why they are used in all masonic lodges."

In speaking of the apparel of the Masons in their lodges, part of which, as we see in their public processions, is a white leather apron, he says: "The Druids were apparelled in white at the time of their sacrifices and solemn offices. The Egyptian priests of Osiris wore snow-white garments. The Grecian and most other priests wore white garments. As Masons, we regard the principles of those *who were the worshippers of the true God*, imitate their apparel, and assume the badge of innocence."

"The Egyptians," continues Smith, "in the earliest ages, constituted a great number of lodges, but with assiduous care kept their secrets of Masonry from all strangers. These secrets have been imperfectly handed down to us by tradition only, and ought to be kept undiscovered to the laborers, craftsmen, and apprentices, till by good behavior, and long study, they become better acquainted in geometry and the liberal arts, and thereby qualified for masters and wardens, which is seldom or never the case with English Masons."

Under the head of Free-Masonry, written by the

astronomer. Lalande, in the French Encyclopedia, I expected from his great knowledge in astronomy, to have found much information on the origin of Masonry; for what connection can there be between any institution and the sun and twelve signs of the zodiac, if there be not something in that institution, or in its origin, that has reference to astronomy. Everything used as an hieroglyphic, has reference to the subject and purpose for which it is used; and we are not to suppose the Free-Masons, among whom are many very learned and scientific men, to be such idiots as to make use of astronomical signs without some astronomical purpose.*

But I was much disappointed in my expectation from Lalande. In speaking of the origin of Masonry, he says: "*L'origine de la maçonnerie se perd, comme tant d'autres, dans l'obscurité des temps*"—that is, the origin of Masonry, like many others, loses itself in the obscurity of time. When I came to this expression, I supposed Lalande a Mason, and on inquiry found he was. This *passing over* saved him from the embarrassments which Masons are under respecting the disclosure of their origin, and which they are sworn to conceal. There is a society of Masons in Dublin†

* Of course ancient Free-Masonry had something to do with all the sciences, particularly with geometry.

† Mr. Paine here refers, probably, to a society, called "The Order of modern Druids," which, in his ignorance, he supposes to be a masonic association.

who take the name of Druids; these Masons must be supposed to have a reason for taking that name.

I come now to speak of the cause of secrecy used by the Masons.

The natural source of secrecy is fear. When any new religion overruns a former religion, the professors of the new become the persecutors of the old. We see this in all the instances that history brings before us. When Hilkiab the priest, and Shaphan the scribe, in the reign of King Josiah, found or pretended to find the law, called the law of Moses, a thousand years after the time of Moses—and it does not appear from the 2d book of Kings, chapters 22, 23, that such law was ever practised or known before the time of Josiah—he established that law as a national religion, and put all the priests of the sun to death. When the Christian religion overran the Jewish religion, the Jews were the continual subjects of persecution in all Christian countries. When the protestant religion in England overran the Roman catholic religion, it was made death for a catholic priest to be found in England. As this has been the case in all the instances we have any knowledge of, we are obliged to admit it with respect to the case in question,* and that when the Christian religion overran the religion of the Druids in Italy, ancient Gaul, Britain, and Ireland,

* The reason which is here given for the secrecy of the masonic institution is more than ridiculous. Mr. Paine can not comprehend the philosophy of mystery, nor the sublime use of the secret principle.

the Druids became the subjects of persecution. This would naturally and necessarily oblige such of them as remained attached to their original religion, to meet in secret and under the strongest injunctions of secrecy. Their safety depended upon it. A false brother might expose the lives of many of them to destruction; and from the remains of the religion of the Druids thus preserved, arose the institution which, to avoid the name of Druid, took that of Mason, and practised, under this new name, the rites and ceremonies of Druids.”*

* The above essay, although it was intended to bring Free-Masonry into contempt, confirms in a singular manner, the theory of secret association, which we have offered in this work. Paine repudiates Masonry and Christianity in the same breath, and for the same reasons. We thank him for the honor he has done us Masons, in bringing us into so glorious a companionship. Holding Christianity in highest reverence, we are ready to stand or fall with it.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE SECRET PRINCIPLE IN THE FIRST CHRISTIAN
CHURCH.

THE reader who has followed us through these pages must of necessity be struck with the fact, which we have sufficiently demonstrated—that nearly, if not quite all of the normal institutions of antiquity, were secret societies. The moral life and civilization of the nations were born in their secret sanctuaries, and through them communicated to the world.

We now proceed to show that Christianity—itsself the revelation of eternal truth, and wisdom, and love—sought the same agencies, and surrounded itself with the same Mysteries, the better to protect itself from the enmity of the world, and to work its way into the heart of Humanity.

Those ancient documents known as the “Apostolical Constitutions and Canons,” make frequent mention of the *disciplina arcani*, or secret discipline of the most ancient church. Irenæus, Tertullian, Clemens, Origen, and Gregory, of Nyssa, also furnish us abundant proofs that the ancient church was a secret society. Indeed, so well known was this peculiar organism,

that nearly all ancient writers, whether Christian or pagan, have noticed the fact. (Lucian of Samosata speaks of Christ as a magician who established *new mysteries*.) We learn also from Pliny that the Christians were persecuted in the reign of the Emperor Trajan, as a secret society, under a general law which prohibited all secret associations. The same writer tells us further that they celebrated their mysteries in the night, or rather in the morning, before day.

The rites* of the Christian religion were celebrated with an air of profound mystery, and were guarded from profane eyes with most scrupulous vigilance. Not only were unbelievers of every description excluded from the view of these rites; but the neophytes also, and all who were not fully initiated into, and entitled to a participation in its ordinances. From *all else, the time, and place, and manner*, of administering them were concealed, and the import of each rite, was a profound mystery, which none was at liberty to divulge or explain. To relate the manner in which it was administered, to mention the words used in the solemnity, or to describe the simple elements of which it consisted, were themes upon which the initiated were as strictly forbidden to touch, as if they had been laid under an oath of secrecy; not a hint was allowed to be given, nor a whisper breathed on the subject to

* Riddle's *Christ. Antiq.*, et Lienhart; *De Antiq. Liturg.*, et de *Disciplina Arcani*; and Coleman's *Christian Antiquities*.

the uninitiated. Even the ministers, when they were led in their public discourses to speak of the sacraments, or the higher doctrines of faith, contented themselves with remote allusions, and dismissed the subject by saying, "The initiated know what is meant." They never wrote about them except through the medium of figurative and enigmatical expressions.

The Christian Brotherhood, like that of the Essenes, comprised four circles, which the novitiate was required to traverse before he could look upon or participate in the highest and most sacred mysteries of the Church. The central light of Christianity shone in its full splendor only on those who had attained to the highest degree. These favored ones moved in its unclouded radiance, while those in the outer ring were in comparative darkness, and were allowed to approach the light, only after long and severe trial.

"The dear-bought experience of the primitive Christians had convinced them that the gross habits of idolaters were not easily and all at once, in many instances, relinquished for the pure and spiritual principles of the Gospel, and that multitudes of professed believers held their faith by so slender a tie, that the slightest temptation plunged them anew into their former sensuality, and the first alarm drove them back into the enemies' camp. To diminish, and, if possible, to prevent the occurrence of such melancholy

apostasies, which interrupted the peace and prosperity of the Christian society, and brought a stain on the Christian name, was a consummation devoutly wished for by the pious fathers of the primitive age ; and, accordingly, animated by a spirit of holy jealousy, they adopted the rule, which soon came into universal practice, of instituting a severe and protracted inquiry into the character and views of candidates for admission to the communion of the church — of not suddenly advancing them to that honorable degree, but of continuing them for a limited period in a state of probation. It was thus that the order of the catechumens arose, an order which, though unknown to the age of Peter and Paul, boasts of a very early introduction into the primitive church ; and, at whatever period its date may be fixed, its origin is to be traced to the laudable desire of more fully instructing young converts in the doctrines of the Christian faith, and at the same time affording them opportunities to give evidence of the sincerity of their profession, by the change of their lives and the holiness of their conversation.”*

Having passed through the appointed discipline, the neophytes were clothed in white, and, by solemn ceremonies, admitted to the communion of the faithful. Arrived at the centre of the sacred circle, they were no longer called *Katechomenoi*, or learners, but received one or all of the following titles :—

* Jamieson : *Manners of Prim. Christ.*, p. 132.

1. *Oi pistoi*, THE FAITHFUL. 2. *Photizomenoi*, THE ILLUMINATI, OR ENLIGHTENED. 3. *Memuemenoï*, THE INITIATED; and *Telcioumenoi*, THE PERFECT.

The appellation, Memuemenoï, or the initiated, occurs very often in the book of Secret Discipline. It denotes such as have been initiated into the secret mysteries of the Christian faith. The phrase, "the initiated know" is repeated about fifty times in Augustine and Chrysostom alone. The terms *mustai* and *musta gogetoi* are also often used, and, in short, all the phraseology which the profane writers use respecting an initiation into their mysteries. Indeed, the right of baptism, itself, has an evident relation, as Cyril of Jerusalem represents, to the initiatory rites of Eleusis, Samothrace, Phrygia, and Isis.* The foregoing titles also conveyed to those who bore them exclusively, certain rights and privileges.

"1. They were permitted to be present at all religious assemblies without exception, to take part in the *missa catechumenorum*, the first religious service of public worship, designed especially for the catechumens, as well as in the *missa fidelium*, the after-service, which was particularly designed for them, and which none but the initiated were permitted to attend. To this service neither catechumens, nor any other, were permitted to be present, not even as spectators.

* Cyril. Hierosol. Catech. Mystagog. 5, et seq.

“2. It was another special privilege of *the faithful* that they were permitted to hear and join in the rehearsal of the Lord’s Prayer. None but believers were permitted, in any case, audibly to adopt the language of this prayer and say, “Our Father who art in heaven;” though it might be used in silent prayer. In the worship of *the faithful*, on the contrary, it might be rehearsed aloud, or sung by them, or repeated in responses.

“3. As another prerogative, they were allowed to seek an explanation of all the mysteries of the Christian religion. Origen and Gregory of Nyssa often allege, in commendation of Christianity, that it has refined mysteries, *μυστήρια, ἀρόητα, ἀπόρρητα*, which no vulgar mind can comprehend. By which is understood, among other things, the rites and doctrines of the church, and the subtleties of their faith. All these were cautiously concealed from catechumens, and taught to believers only, because “by God’s gift they were made partaker of these mysteries, and therefore qualified to judge of them.” To the uninitiated, the ancient fathers discoursed only on obvious points of morality; and if, at any time, they were led to touch upon their profound mysteries, they dismissed them with the expression, *ἴσασι οἱ μεμνημένοι*, “To the initiated it is given to know these things.”*

* De moralibus quotidianum sermonem habuimus, cum vel Patriarcharum gesta, vel proverbiorum legerentur praecepta: ut his informati atque instituti assuesceretis majorum ingredi vias eorumque iter

“4. The most important religious privilege of believers, is that of partaking of the Eucharist, which has always comprehended a right to participate in all the sacred mysteries, and hence has derived the significant name of *κοινωνία, communion.*”

Besides the foregoing, the primitive organism of the church had other peculiarities, which show that it belonged to the category of secret associations.

1. ITS RITES WERE CELEBRATED IN SECRET. Baptism and the Eucharist were administered only in the presence of the initiated. Before the solemn mysteries commenced, one of the deacons made proclamation, as in the ancient mysteries: *Procul, O procul este, profani!*—far, far hence, retire ye profane. The doors were closed, and a guard set to protect the believers from profane intrusion.

2. IT USED A COSTUME OF THE ORDER, OR RE-
 carpere, ac divinis obedire mandatis, quo renovati per baptismum ejus vitæ usum teneretis, quæ ablutos deceret. Nunc *de mysteriis* dicere admonet atque ipsam sacramentorum rationem edere: quam ante baptismum si putassemus insinuandum nondum initiatis, prodidisse potius, quam edidisse, aestimaremur. AMBROS., *De his qui mysteriis initiuntur*, c. 1.—Dimissis jam catedhumenis, vos tantum ad audiendum retinuimus: quia, piaeter illa, quæ omnes Christianos convenit in commune servare, specialiter de caelestibus mysteriis locuturi sumus, quæ audire non possunt, nisi qui ea donante jam Domino perceperunt. Tanto igitur majore reverentia debetis audire quæ dicimus, quanto majore ista sunt, quæ solis baptizatis et fidelibus auditoribus committuntur, quæ illa, quæ etiam catechumeni audire consueverunt. AUGUST. *Serm. 1 ad Neoph.*—Asemos dia tous amuetous peri teon theiem dialeg ometha musterion touton de chorizomenon, saptros tous memuemenous didaskomen.—THEODORET.

GALIA. The candidates for baptism were clothed in white. At the baptism of the younger Theodosius, all the grandees of the court were dressed in white raiment: *ut existimaretur multitud esse nive repleta.* According to Clemens Alexandrinus, the *whole assembly* were required to engage even in public worship, in becoming dress.

3. **IT HAD SECRET SIGNS OF RECOGNITION.** The faithful disciple received at his initiation, a *new name*, or a baptismal name. This was engraved, together with a secret signal or mark upon a white stone,* which the possessor retained as a voucher for his membership, and fidelity among strangers. But the signal the most in use among the Christian brotherhood, was the sign of the cross.

There was no feature of their private manners more remarkable, than the frequency with which they made use of this sign. With minds filled as theirs were, with lively faith in the grand doctrine of redemption, and making it, as they did almost every moment, the subject of their meditations, and the theme of their gratitude, it is not wonderful, that they should have devised some concise mode of recalling it to their memories, or of expressing to each other by some mutual token, the principles and hopes they held in common. Accordingly, the sign of the cross naturally suggested itself as an appropriate emblem, and so

* St. John alludes to this custom. Vide Rev. ii. 17.

early was its introduction among the daily observances of the Christians, that the most ancient of the Fathers, whose writings have descended to our times, speak of it as in their days a venerable practice, which, though it would be in vain to seek any scriptural authority for its use, tradition had authorized, and faith observed. Although, however, we have no authentic account of its introduction, we can guess at its origin. It was a beautiful custom of those who lived while the ministry of Christ was recent, and who were suddenly brought from the depths of despair at his death, to indescribable joy at his resurrection, to break off in the middle of conversation, and salute one another with the words, "Christ is risen." The practice was peculiar to the contemporaries of the Savior; and it is not improbable, that when time, by removing them farther from that spirit-stirring event, had brought the interesting custom into disuse, his followers, in the next age, sought to substitute in its place that, which in every variety of time and circumstance, forms the chief subject of interest in the history and religion of Jesus, and on which, as the grand foundation, the whole superstructure of Christian doctrine rests. Accordingly, the cross was used by the primitive Christians as an epitome of all that is most interesting and important in their faith; and its sign, where the word could not be conveniently nor safely uttered, represented their reliance on that event which is at once

the most ignominious and the most glorious part of Christianity. It was used by them at all times, and to consecrate the most common actions of life—when rising out of bed, or retiring to rest—when sitting at table, lighting a lamp, or dressing themselves—on every occasion, as they wished the influence of religion to pervade the whole course of their life, they made the sign of the cross the visible emblem of their faith. The mode in which this was done was various: The most common was by drawing the hand rapidly across the forehead, or by merely tracing the sign in air; in some cases, it was worn close to the bosom, in gold, silver, or bronze medals, suspended by a concealed chain from the neck; in others, it was engraven on the arms or some other part of the body by a colored drawing, made by pricking the skin with a needle, and borne as a perpetual memorial of the love of Christ. In times of persecution, it served as the watchword of the Christian party. Hastily described by the finger, *it was the secret, but well-known signal by which Christians recognised each other in the presence of strangers and enemies, by which the persecuted sought an asylum, or strangers threw themselves on the hospitality of their brethren*; and nothing appeared to the pagan observer more strange and inexplicable, than the ready and open-hearted manner in which, by these concerted means, foreign Christians were received by those, whom they had never previously seen

or heard of and were welcomed to their homes, and entertained with the kindness usually bestowed only on relations and friends.*

4. IT WAS A CHARITABLE FRATERNITY; AN ORDER OF MUTUAL RELIEF. That the primitive Christians were bound together by a close and intimate friendship, even pagan writers are constrained to confess. A Christian brother seems to have had claims upon his brothers and the fraternity, which were always recognised. Go under any name, travel to the remotest places, among people of foreign manners and unknown tongue, the pilgrims of faith were by their *secret tokens* able to make themselves known to the faithful, and were certain of finding friends who would cherish them, and watch over them with brotherly solicitude and care.

This fact early excited the suspicions of the heathen, that Christianity was a secret society; but unable to appreciate the lofty and divine sentiments of the gospel, they saw in this mystical friendship and those secret tokens, only the indications of a wide-spread conspiracy; especially was this the case, when they saw the hand of fellowship given, and the rites of hospitality performed by such people to foreigners, whose person and character had been previously unknown to them. The heathen knew nothing of those inward feelings, that brotherly love, that fellowship of the

* Vid. Jamieson. *Manners of Prim. Christ.*

spirit, which created between the Christians spiritual ties, independent alike of the natural and political boundaries of the earth, and one manifestation of which was their pleasure and their readiness to open their doors, and render every hospitable attention to those of the same faith from all quarters of the world. The way was for a traveller, on arriving at any town, to seek out the church, in or about which liberal accommodation was always provided, for both the temporal and spiritual comforts of the wayfaring man. But it was seldom that the burden of lodging him was allowed to be borne by the common funds of the church—for no sooner was the news of his arrival spread abroad, than the members vied with each other, which should have the privilege of entertaining the Christian stranger at their homes; and whatever was his rank or calling, he soon found himself domiciled with brethren, whose circumstances were similar to his own. A minister was entertained by one of his own order; a mechanic by one of the same craft or station; and even the poorest would have been readier, and have counted it a greater honor, to share his hut and his crust with a disciple like himself, than to have sat at table with the emperor of Rome. In course of time, however, this generous and open-hearted hospitality was abused. Persons unworthy to enjoy it—spies and impostors, under the assumed name of Christians—introduced themselves to the

brethren in distant places, and by misrepresenting afterward what had been told them in the unsuspecting confidence of brotherhood, and circulating calumnies prejudicial both to individuals and to the body of Christians at large, threatened to bring on the church a variety of evils—not the least of which would have been, that of putting an end to the ancient kindly intercourse with Christian strangers—had not a plan been happily devised, and introduced into universal practice, by which travellers were known at once to be good men and true. The plan was this: every one on setting out on a journey, was furnished by the minister of the church to which he belonged with a letter of credence to the spiritual rulers of the place where he meant to sojourn, the presentation of which having satisfied them as to his Christian character, was instantly followed by a welcome invitation to partake of the hospitality of the church or the brethren. To prevent forgeries, these letters were folded in a particular form, which procured them the name of *literæ formatae*, besides containing some secret marks within, by which the Christians of foreign parts knew them to be genuine. By these testimonials, slightly varied in external appearance according to their several purposes—such, for instance, as their certifying the bearer's claim merely to the common entertainment of Christians, or his right to participate in all the privileges of the church, or his being sent on some embassy

pertaining to the common faith, Christians were admitted to the fellowship of their brethren in all parts of the world—were treated by the family that received them as one of themselves, had their feet washed by the wife on their first arrival, and at their departure were anxiously and tenderly committed to the divine care, in a prayer by the master of the house. This last was a never-failing part of the hospitality of the times; and to have betrayed any symptoms of preferring the temporal good cheer of the friendly host to his parting benediction, would have been a death-blow to the further credit of the stranger.

In the general intercourse of society, the primitive Christians, acting according to the rules of Scripture, were careful to render to all their dues; honor to whom honor is due, tribute to whom tribute, and to practise everything that is just, honest, and of good report. Their salutations to one another were made by imprinting on each other's cheek a kiss—the token of love—the emblem of brotherhood; and this, except in times of trouble and persecution, when they hastily recognised each other by the secret sign of the cross, was the constant, and the only form observed by Christians when they met together. It was practised in their private houses, at their public meetings, and, indeed, on all suitable occasions, though it was considered better and more prudent to dispense with it on the public streets, to avoid giving unnecessary

offence to their heathen fellow-citizens. Whenever they met their pastor, they were accustomed, from the earliest times, to bow their heads to receive his blessing—a ceremony which, in later times, when increased respect was paid to the clerical order, was accompanied with kissing his hands and embracing his feet.

5. IT AIMED TO REFORM SOCIETY, AND REBUILD THE TABERNACLE OF HUMANITY ON THE DIVINE IDEA OF CHARITY AND MUTUAL LOVE. All the details transmitted to us, of the secret brotherhood, of the Christians, of their social intercourse, and of their public conduct, bespeak the lively operation of this Christian spirit. And when we read of the delightful harmony and concord that reigned in their assemblies, their ready disposition to render to every one his due—the high condescending to those of low degree—the poor giving the tribute of their respect to those whom Providence had placed in a more exalted station—and all vying, with amiable rivalry, to promote each other's happiness and welfare, we perceive the strong grounds of the proverbial observation of the heathen, "Behold how these Christians love one another!" Not only when they were small in numbers, and, meeting together almost daily, were well known to each other, did this admirable affection prevail among them, but, how widely soever they might be separated, the ardor of their love suffered no diminu-

tion ; and, forgetting every other distinction in that of being the followers and friends of the Savior, they sympathized in each other's joys and sorrows. Whatever blessing one of their number had received, was a subject of lively gratitude to all ; and whatever calamity had befallen a single member, spread a gloom over the whole community. Bound to each other by ties infinitely holier and dearer than any that belong to the world, they looked upon themselves as members of the same common family. Every time that they met, either in their own houses or in their public assemblies, they interchanged the kiss, as a badge of fellowship, and token of the warmest affection. Though totally unconnected by ties of consanguinity, they addressed each other according to their respective age and sex, by the name of father, mother, brother, sister. Though naturally separated by distinction of rank and diversity of color, nothing could cool the ardor or prevent the reciprocities of their mutual love. The knowledge of the simple fact, that any one was a follower of Jesus, changed him at once from a stranger into a friend ; creating a union between them not to be described by the cold selfish friendship of the world ; and to them belongs the peculiar distinction of realizing a state of society which many philosophers had often delighted to picture to their fancy, and wished for in vain—the idea of a commu-

nity united by no other bond than the golden chain of universal love.

By the foregoing, it appears to be demonstrated beyond a doubt, that Christianity, at its birth enveloped itself in secrecy and mystery. Divine, and unspeakably important, as its idea was, it did not disdain these human agencies, which, in all the institutions of antiquity, were found so useful in winning the attachment and training the thoughts of the people. While Christianity was unquestionably the highest and divinest revelation of eternal truth, and brought to man the means of solicitation from sin, it sought in its material organism, to provide for many of the wants, and to alleviate many of the distresses of the outward life, which all human institutions had overlooked. The Christian Brotherhood was based on a new social idea, and the only one that can ever renovate society, and that idea could in no way be so well illustrated, as in that secret order in which it was first enshrined. Protected by its mysterious veils from the assaults of its enemies, the gospel worked its way in the world, and finally gained the material dominion thereof, and promises in the end, to subdue all things to itself.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE SECRET SOCIETY OF THE ESSEN.

WHEN Solomon had matured his magnificent design of a Temple to be consecrated to the Most High, he found it impossible to carry that design into execution without foreign assistance. The Hebrew nation, constantly struggling for its material existence, and just rising to the condition of a civilized people, had made little proficiency in science and architecture, and, especially the ornamental arts. There were few artificers, and, probably, no architects in Judea.

Impelled, we know not by what motives, Hiram, king of Tyre and Sidon, sent to Solomon a society of architects, under the presidency of Hiram, the Sidonian, to assist him in building the Temple, or rather to superintend the construction of that magnificent edifice.* These builders, like the Collegia Fabrorum of ancient Rome and the Grecian orders, were, without doubt, a secret society. And it is very reasonable to suppose, that after the Temple was completed, a branch of so useful a society would be planted permanently in Judea. This conjecture is confirmed by

* 2 Chron. ii, 3-15.

the fact, that many years afterward some of the Hebrew Prophets condemn the secret mysteries of the Sidonians, probably through a misapprehension of their real import, or because they had really degenerated, and been perverted to evil uses.

The secret principle, thus introduced among the Jews, would not be likely soon to die out. But in the absence of all historical records regarding the particular forms it might have assumed, it would be presumption to propose any theory thereon. All that is certainly known is, that the secret mysteries of the Cabiri were celebrated in Syria from the remotest times, and were carried to Jerusalem by Hiram, the chief of the Sidonian architects, who built the Temple of Solomon. After this period, through the long lapse of centuries, although secret societies must have existed in Judea, we have no account of them, only in a few remote allusions by some of the Hebrew writers.

In the time of the Maccabees, when Philosophy came to be cultivated by the Jews, and a taste for learning began to manifest itself, schools and sects were undoubtedly formed, modelled after the Grecian societies. To this epoch, some writers refer the rise of the SOCIETY OF THE ESSEN,* or the Essenes. This may, or may not be true. What is true, however, is, that very early in the beginning of the Chris-

* Essen is the name of the jewelled plate containing twelve precious stones which the High Priest wore upon his breast.

tian era such a society did exist, and was a well-known order among the Jews. It is much to be regretted that more ample materials have not been preserved out of which to construct the history of this extraordinary association. All our information is derived from Josephus and Philo, the former claiming to have been a member of the brotherhood; although, if this be true, it is certain he never advanced beyond the first degree. As his account is important, and comprises everything that can be known, we give it entire in his own words.*

“And now Archelaus’s part of Judea was reduced into a province: and Coponius, one of the equestrian order among the Romans, was sent as a procurator, having the power of [life and death] put into his hands by Cæsar. Under his administration it was, that a certain Galilean, whose name was Judas, prevailed with his countrymen to revolt, and said they were cowards if they would endure to pay a tax to the Romans, and would, after God, submit to mortal men as their lords. This man was a teacher of a peculiar sect of his own, and was not at all like the rest of those their leaders.

“For there are three philosophical sects among the Jews: The followers of the first of which are the Pharisees, of the second the Sadducees, and the third sect, which pretends to a severer discipline, are called

* Vide Joseph. Antiq., b. ii. c. viii.

Essenes. These last are Jews by birth, and seem to have a greater affection for one another than the other sects have. These Essenes reject pleasures as an evil, but esteem continence, and the conquest over our passions, to be virtue. They neglect wedlock, but choose out other persons' children while they are pliable and fit for learning, and esteem them to be of their kindred, and form them according to their own manners. They do not absolutely deny the fitness of marriage, and the succession of mankind thereby continued; but they guard against the lascivious behavior of women, and are persuaded that none of them preserve their fidelity to one man.

“ These men are despisers of riches, and so very communicative as raises our admiration. Nor is there any one to be found among them who hath more than another; for it is a law among them, that those who come to them must let what they have be common to the whole order, insomuch that among them all there is no appearance of poverty, or excess of riches, but every one's possessions are intermingled with every other's possessions, and so there is, as it were, one patrimony among all the brethren. They think that oil is a defilement; and if any one of them be anointed, without his own approbation, it is wiped off his body; for they think to be sweaty is a good thing, as they do also to be clothed in white garments. They also have stewards appointed to take care of their com-

mon affairs, who, every one of them, have no separate business for any, but what is for the use of them all.

“They have no one certain city, but many of them dwell in every city; and if any of their sect come from other places, what they have lies open for them, just as if it were their own, and they go into such as they never knew before, as if they had been ever so long acquainted with them. For which reason they carry nothing at all with them when they travel into remote parts, though still they take their weapons with them, for fear of thieves. Accordingly, there is in every city where they live, one appointed particularly to take care of strangers, and to provide garments and other necessaries for them. But the habit and management of their bodies is such as children use who are in the fear of their masters. Nor do they allow of the change of garments or of shoes, till they first be entirely torn to pieces, or worn out by time. Nor do they either buy or sell anything to one another, but every one of them gives what he hath to him that wanteth it, and receives from him again in lieu of it what may be convenient for himself; and although there be no requital made, they are fully allowed to take what they want of whomsoever they please.

“And as for their piety toward God, it is very extraordinary; for, before sun-rising, they speak not a word about profane matters, but put up certain prayers which they have received from their forefathers, as

if they made a supplication for its rising. After this, every one of them is sent away by their curators to exercise some of those arts wherein they are skilled, in which they labor with great diligence till the fifth hour. After which they assemble themselves together again into one place, and when they have clothed themselves in white veils, they bathe their bodies in cold water. And after this purification is over, they every one meet together in an apartment of their own into which it is not permitted to any of another sect to enter; while they go, after a pure manner, into the dining-room, as into a certain holy temple, and quietly set themselves down: upon which the baker lays them loaves in order; the cook also brings a single plate of one sort of food, and sets it before every one of them; but a priest says grace before meat, and it is unlawful for any one to taste of the food before grace be said. The same priest, when he hath dined, says grace again after meat, and when they begin, and when they end, they praise God, as he that bestows their food upon them; after which they lay aside their [white] garments, and betake themselves to their labors again till the evening; then they return home to supper, after the same manner, and if there be any strangers there, they sit down with them. Nor is there ever any clamor or disturbance to pollute their house, but they give every one leave to speak in their turn; which silence thus kept in their house, appears

to foreigners like some tremendous mystery ; the cause of which is that perpetual sobriety they exercise, and the same settled measure of meat and drink that is allotted them, and that such as is abundantly sufficient for them.

“ And truly, as for other things, they do nothing but according to the injunctions of their curators ; only these two things are done among them at every one’s own free-will, which are, to assist those that want it, and to show mercy ; for they are permitted of their own accord to afford succor to such as deserve it, when they stand in need of it, and to bestow food on those that are in distress ; but they can not give any thing to their kindred without the curators. They dispense their anger after a just manner, and restrain their passion. They are eminent for fidelity, and are the ministers of peace ; whatsoever they say, also, is firmer than an oath ; but swearing is avoided by them, and they esteem it worse than perjury ;* for they say

* This practice of the Essenes, in refusing to *swear*, and esteeming *swearing* on ordinary occasions worse than *perjury*, is delivered here in general words, as are the parallel injunctions of our Savior, Matt. v. 35 ; xxiii. 16 ; and of St. James, v. 12 ; but all admit of particular exceptions for solemn causes, and on great and necessary occasions. Thus, these very Essenes, who here do so zealously avoid swearing, are related, in the very next section, to admit none till they take *tremendous oaths* to perform their several duties to God and to their neighbor, without supposing they thereby break this rule not to swear at all. The case is the same in Christianity, as we learn from the Apostolical Constitutions, which although they agree with Christ and St. James in forbidding to swear in general—ch. v., 12 ; ch. vi., 23—

that he who can not be believed without [swearing by] God is already condemned. They also take great pains in studying the writings of the ancients, and choose out of them what is most for the advantage of their soul and body, and they inquire after such roots and medicinal stones as may cure their distempers.

“But now, if any one hath a mind to come over to their sect, he is not immediately admitted, but he is prescribed the same method of living which they use, for a year, while he continues excluded, and they give him also a small hatchet, and the forementioned girdle, and the white garment. And when he hath given evidence, during that time, that he can observe their continence, he approaches nearer to their way of living, and is made a partaker of the waters of purification; yet is he not even now admitted to live with them; for after this demonstration of his fortitude, his temper is tried two more years, and if he appear to be worthy, they then admit him into their society. And before he is allowed to touch their common food, *he is obliged to take tremendous oaths, that in the first place he will exercise piety toward God, and then that he will observe justice toward men, and that he will do no harm to any one, either of his*

yet they do explain it elsewhere, by avoiding to *swear falsely, and to swear often and in vain*, chap. ii., 36; and again, *by not swearing at all*, but withal adding, that *if that can not be avoided, to swear truly*, ch. vii., 3, which abundantly explain to us the nature of the measures of this general injunction.

own accord, or by the command of others; that he will always hate the wicked, and be assistant to the righteous; that he will ever show fidelity to all men, and especially to those in authority; because no one obtains the government without God's assistance; and that, if he be in authority, he will at no time whatever abuse his authority, nor endeavor to outshine his subjects, either in his garments or any other finery; that he will be perpetually a lover of truth, and propose to himself to reprove those that tell lies; that he will keep his hands clear from theft, and his soul from unlawful gains; and that he will neither conceal anything from those of his own sect, nor discover any of their doctrines to others; no, not though any one should compel him so to do at the hazard of his life. Moreover, he swears to communicate their doctrines to no one any other wise than, as he received them himself: that he will abstain from robbery, and will equally preserve the books belonging to their sect, and the names of the angels* [or messengers]. These are the oaths by which they secure their proselytes to themselves.

* This mention of the *names of angels*, so particularly preserved by the Essenes (if it means more than those *messengers* which were employed to bring them the peculiar books of their sect), looks like a prelude to that *worshipping of angels* blamed by St. Paul as superstitious, and unlawful in some such sort of people as these Essenes were, Col. ii., 8; as is the prayer to or toward the sun for his rising every morning, mentioned before, sect. 5, very like those not much

“But for those that are caught in any heinous sins, they cast them out of their society, and he who is thus separated from them, does often die after a miserable manner; for as he is bound by the oath he hath taken, and by the customs he hath been engaged in, he is not at liberty to partake of that food that he meets with elsewhere, but is forced to eat grass, and to famish his body with hunger till he perish; for which reason they receive many of them again, when they are at their last gasp, out of compassion to them, as thinking the miseries they have endured till they came to the very brink of death, to be a sufficient punishment for the sins they had been guilty of.

“But, in the judgments they exercise, they are most accurate and just, nor do they pass sentence by the votes of a court that is fewer than a hundred. And as to what is once determined by that number, it is unalterable. What they most of all honor, after God himself, is the name of their legislator [Moses], whom if any one blaspheme, he is punished capitally. They also think it a good thing to obey their elders and the major part. Accordingly, if ten of them be sitting

later observances made mention of in the preaching of Peter, Authent. Rec., part ii., p. 669; and regarding a kind of worship of angels, of the month, and of the moon, and not celebrating the new moon or other festivals, unless the moon appeared; which, indeed, seems to me the earliest mention of any regard to the moon's phases in fixing the Jewish calendar: of which the Talmud and later rabbins talk so much, and upon so very little ancient foundation.

together, no one of them will speak while the other nine are against it. They also avoid spitting in the midst of them, or on the right side. Moreover, they are stricter than any other of the Jews in resting from their labors on the seventh day; for they not only get their food ready the day before, that they may not be obliged to kindle a fire on that day, but they will not remove any vessel out of its place, nor go to stool thereon. Nay, on other days they dig a small pit, a foot deep, with a paddle (which kind of hatchet is given them when they are first admitted among them); and covering themselves round with their garment, that they may not affront the divine rays of light, they ease themselves into that pit, after which they put the earth that was dug out again into the pit, and even this they do only in the more lonely places, which they choose out for this purpose; and although this easement of the body be natural; yet it is a rule with them to wash themselves after it, as if it were a defilement to them.

“Now, after the time of their preparatory trial is over, they are parted into four classes; and so far are the juniors inferior to the seniors, that if the seniors should be touched by the juniors, they must wash themselves, as if they had intermixed themselves with the company of a foreigner. They are longlived also, insomuch that many of them live above a hundred years, by means of the simplicity of their diet; nay, as I think, by means of the regular course of life they

observe also. They contemn the miseries of life, and are above pain, by the generosity of their mind. And as for death, if it will be for their glory, they esteem it better than living always; and indeed our war with the Romans gave abundant evidence what great souls they had in their trials, wherein, although they were tortured and distorted, burnt and torn to pieces, and went through all kinds of instruments of torment, that they might be forced either to blaspheme their legislator, or to eat what was forbidden them, yet could they not be made to do either of them, no, nor once to flatter their tormentors, or to shed a tear; but they smiled in their very pains, and laughed those to scorn who inflicted the torments upon them, and resigned up their souls with great alacrity, as expecting to receive them again.

“For their doctrine is this: That bodies are corruptible, and that the matter they are made of is not permanent; but that the souls are immortal, and continue for ever, and that they come out of the most subtile air, and are united to their bodies as to prisons, into which they are drawn by a certain natural enticement; but that when they are set free from the bonds of the flesh, they then, as released from a long bondage, rejoice and mount upward. And this is like the opinions of the Greeks, that good souls have their habitations beyond the ocean, in a region that is neither oppressed with storms of rain or snow, or

with intense heat, but that this place is such as is refreshed by the gentle breathing of a west wind, that is perpetually blowing from the ocean; while they allot to bad souls a dark and tempestuous den, full of never-ceasing punishments. And indeed the Greeks seem to me to have followed the same notion, when they allot the islands of the blessed to their brave men, whom they call heroes and demigods; and to the souls of the wicked, the region of the ungodly, in Hades, where their fables relate that certain persons—such as Sisyphus, and Tantalus, and Ixion, and Tityus—are punished; which is built on this first supposition, that souls are immortal; and thence are those exhortations to virtue and dehortations from wickedness collected, whereby good men are bettered in the conduct of their life, by the hope they have of reward after their death, and whereby the vehement inclinations of bad men to vice are restrained; by the fear and expectation they are in, that, although they should lie concealed in this life, they should suffer immortal punishment after their death. These are the divine doctrines of the Essenes about the soul, which lay an unavoidable bait for such as have once had a taste of their philosophy.

“There are also those among them who undertake to foretell things to come,* by reading the holy books,

* Dean Aldrich reckons up three examples of this gift of prophecy in several of these Essenes out of Josephus himself, viz.: in the His-

and using several sorts of purifications, and being perpetually conversant in the discourses of the prophets : and it is but seldom that they miss in their predictions.

“ Moreover, there is another order of Essenes, who agree with the rest as to their way of living, and customs, and laws ; but differ from them in the point of marriage, as thinking that by not marrying they cut off the principal part of human life, which is the prospect of succession ; nay, rather, that if all men should be of the same opinion, the whole race of mankind would fail. However, they try their spouses for three years ; and if they find that they have their natural purgations thrice, as trials that they are likely to be fruitful, they then actually marry them. But they do not use to accompany with their wives when they are with child, as a demonstration that they do not marry out of regard to pleasure, but for the sake of posterity. Now the women go into the baths with some of their garments on, as the men do with somewhat girded about them. And these are the customs of this order of Essenes.”*

tory of the War, B. i. ch. iii. sect. 5, Judas foretold the death of Antigonus at Strato's Tower ; B. ii. ch. vii. sect. 3, Simon foretold that Archelaus should reign but nine or ten years ; and Antiq. B. xv. ch. x. sect. 4, 5, Manasse foretold that Herod should be king, and should reign tyrannically, and that for more than twenty or even thirty years. All which came to pass accordingly.

* There is so much more here about the Essenes than is cited from Josephus in Porphyry and Eusebius, and yet so much less about the Pharisees and Sadducees, the two other Jewish sects, than would nat-

Such is Josephus's account of this very remarkable order which he designates as "one of the philosophical sects among the Jews." As to the origin of this society, it is not material to our present purpose whether it took its rise in remote antiquity, as some authors suppose, or whether it came into being during the first century of the Christian dispensation. The fact is indisputable, that such a society existed in Judea, in the time of Josephus, and seems to have sustained about the same relations to the ancient fraternity of Sidonian architects, and the Cabirian or Syrian mys-

usually be expected in proportion to the Essenes or third sect, nay, than seems to be referred to by himself elsewhere, that one is tempted to suppose Josephus had at first written less of the one and more of the two others than his present copies afford us; as also that, by some unknown accident, our present copies are here made up of the larger edition in the first case, and the smaller in the second. See the note in Havercamp's edition. However, what Josephus says in the name of the Pharisees, that only the souls of good men go out of one body into another, although all souls be immortal, and still the souls of the bad are liable to eternal punishment; as also what he says afterward, Antiq. B. xviii, ch. i. sect. 3, that the soul's vigor is immortal; and that under the earth they receive rewards or punishments according as their lives have been virtuous or vicious in the present world; that to the bad is allotted an eternal prison, but that the good are permitted to live again in this world, are nearly agreeable to the doctrines of Christianity. Only Josephus's rejection of the return of the wicked into other bodies, or into this world, which he grants to the good, looks somewhat like a contradiction to St. Paul's account of the doctrine of the Jews, that *they themselves allowed that there should be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.* Acts xxiv. 15. Yet because Josephus's account is that of the Pharisees, and St. Paul's that of the Jews in general, and of himself, the contradiction is not very certain.

teries, as modern Free, or Philosophical (speculative) Masonry does to the Collegia Fabrorum of the Romans, or the corporations of artificers, or operative masons of the middle ages.

The society of the Essen, or breastplate, retained the Cabirian form, symbols and rites, but its ideal was far more exalted and beautiful, gleaming, indeed, from the highest altitude of heaven with celestial splendors. Even Josephus describes the members of this brotherhood as possessed of every virtue, and aspiring to a life of goodness so pure and divine, as to excite the admiration of all men. And what makes this society still more extraordinary is the fact, that they realized among themselves the sublime morality of the gospel. Their ethical system was, in everything, accordant with the moral sentiment of the Sermon on the Mount, and their actual lives fell in nothing below the most exalted standard of Christianity.

This circumstance—most remarkable, considered in any light—added to another, viz., that while Christ frequently speaks of, and denounces severely the Pharisees and Sadducees, he never once mentions the Essenes, which, according to Josephus, ought to be quite as well known,—has led some writers to conclude that this mysterious Order had no existence in the time of Christ, but arose after the crucifixion, and that the Essenes were the Christians in disguise, hiding themselves under a mask from the persecution

of their enemies. A distinguished British essayist* has adopted this theory, and, although we do not adopt all his conclusions, we can not resist the temptation to embody the substance of his views in this chapter.

The sect may have existed for ages before the Christian era, and yet nearly all that the author alluded to contends for, be true. But let him speak in his own words:† —

“ — ‘ The *third* sect,’ Josephus says (*i. e.*, third in relation to the Pharisees, who ranked as the *first*, and the Sadducees, who are ranked as the *second*) ‘ are called Essenes. These last are Jews by birth, and seem to have a greater affection for one another than the other sects have.’

“ We need not point out the strong conformity in this point to the distinguishing features of the new-born Christians, as they would be likely to impress the eye of a stranger. There was obviously a double reason for a stricter cohesion among the Christians internally, than could by possibility belong to any other sect — 1st, in the essential tendency of the whole Christian faith to a far more intense love than the world could comprehend, as well as in the express charge to love one another; 2dly, in the strong com-

* Thomas De Quincey, author of “ Confessions of an English Opium-Eater,” Biographical Essays, etc., etc.

† See Historical and Critical Essays, article “ Essenes,” p. 39, et seq.

pressing power of external-affliction, and of persecution too certainly anticipated. The little flock, turned out to face a wide world of storms, naturally drew close together. Over and above the indefeasible hostility of the world to a spiritual morality, there was the bigotry of Judaical superstition on the one hand, and the bigotry of Paganism on the other. All this would move in mass against nascent Christianity, so soon as that moved; and well, therefore, might the instincts of the early Christians instruct them to act in the very closest concert and communion.

“ ‘These men are despisers of riches, and so very communicative as raises our admiration. Nor is there any one to be found among them who hath more than another; every one’s possessions are intermingled with every other’s possessions, and so there is, as it were, one patrimony among the brethren.’

“In this account of the ‘communicativeness,’ as to temporal wealth of the third sect, it is hardly necessary that we should point out the mirror which it holds up to the habits of the very first Christians in Jerusalem, as we see them recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. This, the primary record of Christian history, (for even the disciples were not in any full sense Christians until after the resurrection and the Divine afflatus,) is echoed afterward in various stages of primitive Christianity. But all these subsequent acts and monuments of early Christian faith were derived

by imitation and by sympathy from the Apostolic precedent in Jerusalem; as that again was derived from the 'common purse' carried by the Twelve Disciples.

“ ‘They have no certain city, but many of them dwell in every city; and if any of their sect come from other places, what they find lies open for them just as if it were their own: and they go in to such as they never knew before, as if they had been ever so long acquainted with them.’

“ ‘All Christian antiquity illustrates and bears witness to this, as a regular and avowed Christian habit. To this habit points St. Paul’s expression of ‘*given to hospitality*,’ and many passages in all the apostolical writings. Like other practices, however, that had been firmly established from the beginning, it is rather alluded to, and indirectly taken for granted and assumed, than prescribed; expressly to teach or enjoin it was as little necessary, or indeed open to a teacher, as with us it would be open to recommend marriage. What Christian could be imagined capable of neglecting such an institution?

“ ‘For which reason they carry nothing with them when they travel into remote parts.’

“ ‘This dates itself from Christ’s own directions, (St. Luke, x. 3, 3,) ‘Go your way. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes.’ And, doubtless, many other of the primitive practices among the Christians

were not adopted without a special command from Christ, traditionally retained by the Church whilst standing in the same civil circumstances, though not committed to writing among the great press of matter circumscribing the choice of the Evangelists.

“ ‘As for their piety toward God, it is very extraordinary: for before sun-rising they speak not a word about profane matters, but put up certain prayers which they have received from their forefathers.’

“ This practice of antelucan worship, possibly having reference to the ineffable mystery of the resurrection, (all the Evangelists agreeing in the awful circumstance that it was very early in the morning, and one even saying, ‘whilst it was yet dark,’) a symbolic pathos which appeals to the very depths of human passion—as if the world of sleep and the anarchy of dreams figured to our apprehension the dark worlds of sin and death—it happens remarkably enough that we find confirmed and countersigned by the testimony of the first open antagonist to our Christian faith. Pliny, in that report to Trajan so universally known to every class of readers, and so rank with everlasting dishonor to his own sense and equity, notices this point in the ritual of primitive Christianity. ‘However,’ says he, ‘they assured me that the amount of their fault, or of their error was this,—that they were wont, on a stated day, to meet together *before it was light*, and to sing a hymn to Christ,’ &c. The date

of Pliny's letter is about forty years after the siege of Jerusalem; about seventy-seven, therefore, after the crucifixion, when Joseph would be just seventy-two years old. But we may be sure from collateral records, and from the entire uniformity of early Christianity, that a much longer lapse of time would have made no change in this respect.

“‘They deny wedlock; but they do not absolutely deny the fitness of marriage.’

“This is a very noticeable article in his account of the Essenes, and powerfully illustrates the sort of acquaintance which Josephus had gained with their faith and usages. In the first place, as to the doctrine itself, it tallies remarkably with the leanings of St. Paul. He allows of marriage, overruled by his own moral prudence. But evidently his bias was the other way. And the allowance is notoriously a concession to the necessities which experience had taught him, and by way of preventing greater evils: but an evil, on the whole, it is clear that he regarded it. And naturally it was so in relation to that highest mode of spiritual life which the apostles contemplated as a fixed ideal. Moreover, we know that the apostles fell into some errors which must have affected their views in these respects. For a time, at least, they thought the end of the world close at hand: who could think otherwise that had witnessed the awful thing which they had witnessed, or had drunk out of the same

spiritual cup? Under such impressions, they reasonably pitched the key of Christian practice higher than else they would have done. So far as to the doctrine here ascribed to the Essenes. But it is observable, that in this place Josephus admits that these Essenes *did* tolerate marriage. Now, in his earlier notice of the same people, he had denied this. What do we infer from that? Why, that he came to his knowledge of the Essenes by degrees; and as would be likely to happen with regard to a sect sequestering themselves, and locking up their doctrines as secrets: which description directly applies to the earliest Christians. The instinct of self-preservation obliged them to retreat from notoriety. Their tenets could not be learned easily; they were gathered slowly, indirectly, by fragments. This accounts for the fact that people standing outside, like Josephus or Philo Judæus, got only casual glimpses of the truth, and such as were continually shifting. Hence, at different periods Josephus contradicts himself. But if he had been speaking of a sect as notorious as the Pharisees or Sadducees, no such error, and no such alteration of views, could have happened.

“ ‘They are eminent for fidelity, and are the ministers of peace.’

“ We suppose that it can not be necessary to remind any reader of such characteristic Christian doctrines as—‘Blessed are the peace-makers, &c.; still less

of the transcendent demand made by Christianity for singleness of heart, uprightness, and entire conscientiousness; without which all pretences to Christian truth are regarded as mere hollow mockeries. Here, therefore, again we read the features, too plainly for any mistake of pure Christianity. But let the reader observe keenly, had there been this pretended sect of Essenes teaching all this lofty and spiritual morality, it would have been a fair inference to ask what more or better had been taught by Christ? in which case there might still have remained the great redemptional and mediatorial functions for Christ; but, as to his divine morality, it would have been forestalled. Such would have been the inference; and it is an inference which really *has been* drawn from this romance of the Essenes adopted as true history.

“ ‘Whatsoever they say is firmer than an oath; but swearing is avoided by them, and they esteem it worse than perjury.’

“ We presume that nobody can fail to recognise in this great scrupulosity the memorable command of Christ, delivered in such unexampled majesty of language, ‘Swear not at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool,’ &c. This was said in condemnation of a practice universal among the Jews; and if any man can believe that a visionary sect, of whom no man ever heard, except through two writers, both lying under

the same very natural mistake, could have come by blind accidents into such an inheritance of spiritual truth, as is here described by Josephus, that man will find nothing beyond his credulity. For he presumes a revelation far beyond all the wisdom of the Pagan world to have been attained by some unknown Jewish philosopher, so little regarded by his followers that they have not even preserved his name from oblivion.

“Among the initiatory and probationary vows which these sectarians are required to take, is this—‘That he will ever show fidelity to all men, and especially to those in authority, because no one obtains the government without God’s assistance.’ Here, again, we see a memorable precept of St. Paul and the apostles generally—the same precept, and built on the very same reason, viz., that rulers are of God’s appointment.

“‘They are long-lived also: inasmuch, that many of them live above one hundred years, by means of the simplicity of their diet.’

“Here we are reminded of St. John the Evangelist: whilst others, no doubt, would have attained the same age, had they not been cut off by martyrdom.

“In many other points of their interior discipline, their white robes, their meals, their silence, and gravity, we see in this account of the Essenes a mere echo of the primitive economy established among the first Christians, as we find it noticed up and down the apostolical constitutions.

“ It is remarkable that Josephus notices, as belonging to the sect of the Essenes, the order of ‘angels,’ or messengers. Now, everybody must remember this order of officers as a Christian institution noticed in the Apocalypse.

“ Finally, in all that is said of the contempt which the Essenes showed for pain and death; and that, ‘although tortured and distorted, burnt and torn to pieces, yet could they not be made to flatter their tormentors, or to shed a tear, but that they smiled in their very torments,’ &c., we see the regular habit of Christian martyrs through the first three centuries. We see that principle established among them so early as that first examination of Pliny’s; for he is so well aware how useless it would be to seek for any discoveries by torture applied to the Christian *men*, that he resorts instantly to the torture of female servants. The secrecy, again, as to their opinions is another point common to the supposed Essenes and the Christians. Why the Essenes, as an orthodox Jewish sect, should have practised any secrecy, Josephus would have found it hard to say; but the Christian reasons will appear decisive to any man who reflects.

“ But first of all, let us recur to the argument we have just employed, and summon you to a review of the New Testament. Christ, during his ministry in Palestine, is brought, as if by special arrangement, into contact with all known orders of men,—Scribes and

Doctors, Pharisees and Sadducees, Herodians and followers of the Baptist, Roman officers, insolent with authority, tax-gatherers, the Pariahs of the land, Galileans, the most undervalued of the Jews, Samaritans, hostile to the very name of Jew, rich men clothed in purple, and poor men fishing for their daily bread, the happy and those that sate in darkness, wedding parties and funeral parties, solitudes among hills or seashores, and multitudes that could not be counted, mighty cities and hamlets the most obscure, golden sanhedrims, and the glorious temple, where he spoke to myriads of the worshippers, and solitary corners, where he stood in conference with a single contrite heart. Were the subject or the person different, one might ascribe a dramatic purpose and a scenical art to the vast variety of the circumstances and situations in which Christ is introduced. And yet, while all other sorts and orders of men converse with him, never do we hear of any interview between him and the Essenes. Suppose one Evangelist to have overlooked such a scene, another would not. In part, the very source of the dramatic variety in the New Testament scenes, must be looked for in the total want of collusion among the Evangelists. Each throwing himself back upon overmastering remembrances, all-glorified to his heart, had no more need to consult a fellow-witness, than a man needs, in rehearsing the circumstances of a final parting with a wife or a child,

to seek collateral vouchers for his facts. Thence it was in part left to themselves, unmodified by each other, that they attained so much variety in the midst of so much inevitable sameness. One man was impressed by one case a second by another. And thus, it must have happened among four, that at least one would have noticed the Essenes. But no one of the four gospels alludes to them. The Acts of the Apostles, again, whether by a fifth author or not, is a fifth body of remembrances, a fifth act of the memory applied to the followers of Christ. Yet neither does this notice them. The Apocalypse of St. John, reviewing the new church for a still longer period, and noticing all the great outstanding features of the state militant, then unrolling for Christianity, says not one word about them. St. Peter, St. James, utterly overlook them. Lastly, which weighs more than all the rest, St. Paul, the learned and philosophic apostle, bred up in all the learning of the most orthodox among the Jews, gives no sign that he had ever heard of such people. In short, to sum up all in one sentence, the very word *Essene* and *Essenes* is not found in the New Testament.

“Now, is it for one moment to be credited—that a body of men so truly spiritual in the eternal of their creed, whatever might be the temporals of their practice, should have won no word of praise from Christ for that by which they so far exceeded other sects—

no word of reproach for that by which they might happen to fall short of their own profession — no word of admonition, founded on the comparison between their good and their bad — their heavenly and earthly? Or, if that had been supposable, can we believe that Christ's enemies, so eager as they showed themselves to turn even the Baptist into a handle of reproach against the new teacher, would have lost the overwhelming argument derived from the Essenes? 'A new command I give unto you.' 'Not at all,' they would have retorted—'Not at all new. Everything spiritual in your ethics has been anticipated by the Essenes.' It would have been alleged, that the function of Redeemer for Israel was to be judged and tried by the event. The only *instant* touchstone for the pretensions of Christ lay in the divine character of his morality, and the spirituality of that worship which he taught. Miracles were or were not from God, according to purposes to which they ministered. That moral doctrine and that worship were those purposes. By these only they could try the soundness of all besides; and if these had been forestalled by the Essenes, what remained for any new teacher or new founder of a religion?*

In fact, were the palpable lies of this Jew-

* Mr. De Quincey's argument based upon the fact of identity of moral doctrine would be conclusive were Christianity *nothing more* than a system of moral philosophy, or a theory of society or metaphysics, and were Christ *nothing more* to us than a teacher. Undoubtedly centuries before Christ the same theory of virtue had been taught, and

traitor built on anything but delusions misinterpreted by his own ignorant heart, there would be more in that one tale of his about the Essenes to undermine Christianity, than in all the batteries of all the infidels to overthrow it. No infidel can argue away the spirituality of the Christian religion: attacks upon miracles leave *that* unaffected. But he, who (confessing the spirituality) derives it from some elder and unknown source, at one step evades what he could not master. He overthrows without opposition, and enters the citadel through ruins caused by internal explosion.

“What, then, is to be thought? If this deathlike silence of all the evangelists, and all the apostles, makes it a mere impossibility to suppose the existence of such a sect as the Essenes in the time of Christ, did such a sect arise afterward, viz., in the Epicristian generation? Or, if not, how and by what steps came up the romance we have been considering? Was there any substance in the tale? Or, if positively none, how came the fiction? Was it a conscious lie? Was it a mistake? Was it an exaggeration?

“Now, our idea is as follows:—What do we suppose the early Christians to have been called? By what name were they known among themselves and the same doctrine of a paternal God, as are presented in his teachings, and yet this does not prove that Christianity existed *before* Christ; for his mission was, not to teach men simply what was *true*, and *beautiful*, and *good*—for this they knew before—but rather to give them the *moral power* to attain to them, and realize them in their lives.

among others? *Christians*? Not at all. When it is said—‘The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch,’ we are satisfied that the meaning is not—this name, now general, was first used at Antioch; but that, whereas we followers of Christ generally call one another, and *are* called by a particular name X, in Antioch that name was not used; but from the very beginning they were called by another name viz., Christians. At all events, since this name Christian was confessedly used at Antioch before it was used anywhere else, there must have been another name elsewhere for the same people. What *was* that name? It was ‘*The Brethren*,’ [οἱ ἀδελφοί,] and at times, by way variety to prevent the awkwardness of too* monotonously repeating the same word, perhaps it was ‘*The Faithful*,’ [οἱ πιστοί.] The name *Christians* travelled, we are convinced, not immediately among themselves, but slowly among their enemies. It was a name of reproach; and the meaning was—‘We Pagans are all worshippers of gods, such as they are; but this sect worships a man, and that man a malefactor.’ For, though Christ should properly have been known by his name, which was Jesus, yet, because his crime, in the opinion of the Jews, lay in the office he had assumed—in having made himself the *Christos*, the anointed of God, therefore it happened that he was published among the Roman world by that

* See preceding chapter.

name: his offence, his '*titulus*' on the cross, (the king, or the anointed,) was made his Roman name. Accordingly Tacitus, speaking of some insurgents in Judea, says—that 'they mutinied under the excitement of Christ, (not Jesus,) their original ringleader,' (*impulsore Chresto.*) And no doubt it had become a scoffing name, until the Christians disarmed the scoff of its sting by assuming it themselves; as was done in the case of 'the Beggars' in the Netherlands, and 'the Methodists' in England.

“ Well: meantime, what name did the Christians bear in their very birthplace? Were they called 'The brethren' there? No. And why not? Simply because it had become too dangerous a name. To be bold, to affront all reasonable danger, was their instinct and their duty, but not to tempt utter extinction or utter reduction to imbecility. We read amiss, if we imagine that the fiery persecution, which raged against Christ, had burned itself out in the act of the crucifixion. It slept, indeed, for a brief interval: but that was from necessity; for the small flock of scattered sheep easily secreted themselves. No sooner did they multiply a little, no sooner did their meetings again proclaim their 'whereabouts,' than the snake found them out, again raised its spiry crest among them, and again crushed them for a time. The martyrdom of St. Stephen showed that no jesting was intended. It was determined that examples should be

made. It was resolved that this revolt against the Temple (the Law and the Prophets) must be put down. The next event quickened this agency seven-fold. A great servant of the persecution, in the very agony of the storm which he was himself guiding and pointing, working the very artillery of Jerusalem upon some scent which his bloodhounds had found in Syria, suddenly, in one hour passed over to the enemy. What of that? Did that startle the persecution? Probably it did: failure from within was what they had not looked for. But the fear which it bred was sister to the wrath of hell. The snake turned round; but not for flight. It turned to fasten upon the revolver. St. Paul's authority as a leader in the Jewish councils availed him nothing after this. Orders were undoubtedly expedited from Jerusalem to Damascus, as soon as messengers could be interchanged, for his assassination. And assassinated he would have been, had he been twenty St. Pauls, but for his secret evasion, and his flight to Arabia. Idumea, probably a sort of Ireland to Judea, was the country to which he fled; where again he might have been found out, but his capture would have cost a negotiation; and in all likelihood he lay unknown among crowds. Nor did he venture to show his face again in Jerusalem for some years; and then again not till a term of fourteen years, half a generation, during which many of the burning zealots, and of those who could have

challenged him personally as the great apostate, must have gone to their last sleep.

“During the whole of this novitiate for Christianity, and in fact throughout the whole Epichristian era, there was a brooding danger over the name and prospects of Christianity. To hold up a hand, to put forth a head, in the blinding storm, was to perish. It was to solicit and tempt destruction. That could not be right. Those who were answerable for the great interest confided to them, if in their own persons they might have braved the anger of the times, were not at liberty to do so on this account—that it would have stopped effectually the expansion of the Church. Martyrdom and persecution formed the atmosphere in which it throve; but not the frost of death. What, then, did the fathers of the Church do? You read that, during a part of this Epichristian age, ‘the churches had peace.’ True, they had so. But do you know how they had it? Do you guess what they did?

“It was this: They said to each other—If we are to stand such consuming fires as we have seen, one year will finish us all. And then what will become of the succession that we are to leave behind us? We must hide ourselves effectually. And this can be done only by symbolizing. Any lesser disguise our persecutors will penetrate. But this, by its very nature, will baffle them, and yet provide fully for the nursing of an

infant Church. They proceeded, therefore, thus: 'Let there be darkness'—was the first word of command: 'let us muffle ourselves in thick clouds, which no human eye can penetrate. And toward this purpose let us immediately take a symbolic name. And, because any name that expresses or implies a secret fraternity—a fraternity bound together by any hidden tie or purpose—will instantly be challenged for the Christian brotherhood under a new masque, instantly the bloody Sanhedrim will get to their old practices—torturing our weaker members, (as afterward the cruel Pliny selected for torture the poor frail women-servants of the brethren,) and the wolf will be raging among our folds in three months—therefore two things are requisite; one, that this name which we assume should be such as to disarm suspicion, [in this they acted on the instinct of those birds, which artfully construct signs and appearances to draw away the fowler from their young ones;] the other, that in case, after all, some suspicion should arise and the enemy again break in, there must be three or four barriers to storm before he can get to the stronghold in the centre.'

“Upon this principle all was arranged. First, for the name that was to disarm suspicion—what name could do that? Why, what *was* the suspicion? A suspicion that Christian embers were sleeping under the ashes. True: but why was that suspicious? Why had it ever been suspicious? For two reasons: be-

cause the Christian faith was supposed to carry a secret hostility to the Temple and its whole ritual economy; secondly, for an earnest political reason, because it was believed to tend, by mere necessity, to such tumults or revolutions, as would furnish the Roman, on tiptoe for this excuse, with a plea for taking away the Jewish name and nation; that is, for taking away their Jewish *autonomy* (or administration by their own Mosaic code), which they still had, though otherwise in a state of dependency. Well, now, for this sort of suspicion, no name could be so admirably fitted as one drawn from the very ritual service of that very Temple which was supposed to be in danger. That Temple *was* in danger: the rocks on which it stood were already quaking beneath it. All was accomplished. Its doom had gone forth. Shadows of the coming fate were spreading thick before it. Its defenders had a dim misgiving of the storm that was gathering. But they mistook utterly the quarter from which it was to come. And they closed the great gates against an enemy that entered by the postern. However, they could not apprehend a foe in a society that professed a special interest in Israel. The name chosen, therefore, was derived from the very costume of the Jewish High Priest, the pontifical ruler of the temple. This great officer wore upon his breast a splendid piece of jewellery; twelve precious stones were inserted in the breast-plate, representing the

twelve sons of Jacob, or twelve tribes of Israel: *and this was called the Essen*. Consequently to announce themselves as *the Society of the Essen*, was to express a peculiar solicitude for the children of Israel. Under this mask nobody could suspect any hostility to Jerusalem or its temple; nobody, therefore, under the existing misconception of Christian objects and the Christian character, could suspect a Christian society.

“But was not this hypocritical disguise! Not at all. A profession was thus made of paramount regard to Judea and her children. Why not? Christians everywhere turned with love, and yearning, and thankfulness the profoundest, to that ‘Holy City’ (so called by Christ himself), which had kept alive for a thousand years the sole vestiges of pure faith, and which, for a far longer term mystically represented that people which had known the true God, ‘when all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones.’ Christians, or they would have been no Christians, everywhere prayed for her peace. And if the downfall of Jerusalem was connected with the rise of Christianity, that was not through enmity borne to Jerusalem by Christians (as the Jews falsely imagine); but because it was not suitable for the majesty of God, as the father of truth, to keep up a separation among the nations when the fullness of time in his counsels required that all separation should be at an end. At his bidding the Temple had been raised. At his bidding the Temple must be

destroyed. Nothing could have saved it but becoming Christian. The end was accomplished for which it had existed; a great river had been kept pure; that was now to expand into an ocean.

“But, as to any hypocrisy in the fathers of this indispensable scheme for keeping alive the fire that burned on the altar of Christianity, that was impossible. So far from needing to assume more love for Judaism than they had, we know that their very infirmity was to have by much too sectarian and exclusive a regard for those who were represented by the Temple. The Bible, which conceals nothing of any men’s errors, does not conceal that. And we know that all the weight of the great intellectual apostle was necessary to overrule the errors in this point, of St. Peter. The fervid apostle erred; and St. Paul ‘withstood him to his face.’ But his very error proves the more certainly his sincerity and singleness of heart in setting up a society that should profess in its name the service of Jerusalem and her children as its primary function. The name *Essen* and *Essenes* was sent before to disarm suspicion, and as a pledge of loyal fidelity.

“Next, however, this society was to be a secret society—an Eleusinian society—a Freemason society. For, if it were not, how was it to provide for the culture of Christianity? Now, if the reader pauses a moment to review the condition of Palestine and the

neighboring countries at that time, he will begin to see the opening there was for such a society. The condition of the times was agitated and tumultuous, beyond anything witnessed among men, except at the Reformation and the French Revolution. The flame on the Pagan altars was growing pale, the oracles over the earth were muttering their alarm, panic terrors were falling upon nations, murmurs were arising, whispers circulating from nobody knew whence—that out of the East, about this time, should arise some great and mysterious deliverer. This whisper had spread to Rome—was current everywhere. It was one of those awful whispers that have no author. Nobody could ever trace it. Nobody could ever guess by what path it had travelled. But observe, in that generation, at Rome and all parts of the Mediterranean to the west of Palestine, the word ‘Oriens’ had a technical and limited meaning; it was restricted to Syria, of which Palestine formed a section. This use of the word will explain itself to anybody who looks at a map of the Mediterranean as seen from Italy. But some years after the Epichristian generation, the word began to extend; and very naturally, as the Roman armies began to make permanent conquests nearer to the Euphrates. Under these remarkable circumstances, and agitated beyond measures between the oppression of the Roman armies on the one hand and the consciousness of a peculiar dependence on God

on the other, all thoughtful Jews were disturbed in mind. The more conscientious, the more they were agitated. Was it their duty to resist the Romans? God could deliver them, doubtless; but God worked oftentimes by human means. Was it his pleasure that they should resist by arms? Others again replied— If you do, then you prepare an excuse for the Romans to extirpate your nation. Many, again, turned more to religious hopes: these were they who, in scriptural language, 'waited for the consolation of Israel:' that is, they trusted in that Messiah who had been promised, and they yearned for his manifestation. They mourned over Judea; they felt that she had rebelled; but she had been afflicted, and perhaps her transgressions might now be blotted out, and her glory might now be approaching. Of this class was he who took Christ in his arms when an infant in the temple. Of this class were the two rich men, Joseph and Nicodemus, who united to bury him. But even of this class many were there who took different views of the functions properly belonging to the Messiah; and many that, either through this difference of original views, or from imperfect acquaintance with the life of Jesus, doubted whether he was indeed the promised Messiah.— Even John the Baptist doubted that, and his question upon that point addressed to Christ himself, 'Art thou he who should come, or do we look for another?' has been generally fancied singularly at

war with his own earlier testimony, 'Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world!' But it is not. The offices of mysterious change for Israel were prophetically announced as coming through a series and succession of characters—Elias, 'that prophet,' and the Messiah. The succession might even be more divided. And the Baptist, who did not know himself to be Elias, might reasonably be in doubt (and *at a time when his career was only beginning*) whether Jesus were the Messiah.

“Now, out of these mixed elements—men in every stage and gradation of belief or spiritual knowledge, but all musing, pondering, fermenting, in their minds—all tempest-shaken, sorrow-haunted, perplexed, hoping, seeking, doubting, trusting—the apostles would see abundant means for peopling the lower or initiatory ranks of their new society. Such a craving for light from above probably never existed. The land was on the brink of convulsions, and all men felt it. Even among the rulers in Jerusalem had been some who saw the truth of Christ's mission, though selfish terrors had kept back their testimony. From every rank and order of men would press in the meditative to a society where they would all receive sympathy, whatever might be their views, and many would receive light.

“This society—how was it constituted? In the innermost class were placed, no doubt, all those, and

those only, who were thoroughly Christians. The danger was from Christianity. And this danger was made operative only, by associating with the mature and perfect Christian any false brother, any half-Christian, any hypocritical Christian, any wavering Christian. To meet this danger, there must be a winnowing and a sifting of all candidates. And because the danger was awful, involving not one but many, not a human interest but a heavenly interest; therefore, these winnowings and siftings must be many, must be repeated, must be soul-searching. Nay, even that will not suffice. Oaths, pledges to God as well as to man, must be exacted. All this the apostles did: serpents by experience, in the midst of their dove-like faith, they acted as wise stewards for God. They surrounded their own central consistory with lines impassable to treachery. Josephus, the blind Jew—blind in heart, we mean, and understanding, reporting a matter of which he had no comprehension, nor could have—(for we could show to demonstration that, for a specific reason, he could not have belonged to the society)—even this man, in his utter darkness, telegraphs to us by many signals, rockets thrown up by the apostles, which come round and are visible to us, but unseen by him, what it is that the apostles were about. He tells us expressly, that a preparatory or trial period of two years was exacted of every candidate before his admission to *any* order; that, after this

probationary attendance is finished, 'they are parted into four classes;' and these classes, he tells us, are so severely separated from all intercommunion, that merely to have touched each other was a pollution that required a solemn purification. Finally, as if all this were nothing, though otherwise disallowing of oaths, yet in this, as in a service of God, oaths, which Josephus styles 'tremendous,' are exacted of each member, that he will reveal nothing of what he learns.

"Who can fail to see, in these multiplied precautions for guarding, what according to Josephus is no secret at all, nor anything approaching to a secret, that here we have a central Christian society, secret from necessity, cautious to excess from the extremity of the danger, and surrounding themselves in their outer rings by merely Jewish disciples, but those whose state of mind promised a hopeful soil for the solemn and affecting discoveries which awaited them in the higher states of their progress? Here is the true solution of this mysterious society, the Essenes, never mentioned in any one record of the Christian generation, and that because it first took its rise in the necessities of the Epichristian generation. And if any man ask how they came to be traced to so fabulous an antiquity, the account now given easily explains that. Three authors only mention them—Pliny, Philo-Judæus, and Josephus. Pliny builds upon these last two, and other Jewish romancers. The last two may

be considered as contemporaries. And all that they allege, as to the antiquity of the sect, flows naturally from the condition and circumstances of the outermost circle in the series of the classes. They were occupied exclusively with Judaism. And Judaism had in fact, as we all know, that real antiquity in its people, and its rites, and its symbols, which these then *uninitiated* authors understand and fancy to have been meant of the *Essenes* as a philosophical sect."

Without accepting all the conclusions of De Quincey, we are obliged to admit that the society of the Essen had no little influence in giving to the organism of Christianity that peculiar form which we have seen it adopt in its most primitive period. The association, no doubt, exercised a salutary power over Jewish life and manners; and we discover in it what we have found in all other similar Orders, ancient or modern, an Ideal of Virtue, of Humanity, of Charity, of Peace, and Brotherhood far above the prevailing thought of the age, and infinitely removed—we had almost said—from the practical life of the debased people among whom it flourished. Indeed the world has not yet risen to the height of its morality, nor accepted in its thoughts its sublime symbol of Peace. Coming into notice at the time it did, it served undoubtedly to prepare the way for the coming of HIM who alone could work out the redemption of man, make clear as noon the problem of human destiny,

resolve all social and moral questions, and bring everlasting Peace to Man's suffering heart.

THE FINAL QUESTION.

THE facts presented in the foregoing pages are not without their importance or significance. It seems to us the utility of Secret Orders has been vindicated. Their prevalence in all ages and among all peoples, their influence always for good, their connection with the progressive development of our race, their relations with Science, Art, Letters, and Philosophy, demonstrate their utility, if there be anything susceptible of demonstration within the circle of human experience or observation. That these Institutions have ever wrought their great labors in secret, will not appear strange when we consider that all Life and Beauty are elaborated in Night and Mystery. As, low down in the unseen depths of Nature's bosom, the ever-active spirit of order weaves the beautiful and magnificent network of foliage, fruits, and flowers, which clothes the world with unspeakable splendors;— as the divine grace and redolence of the Rose are wrought out in the invisible realm of Beauty,— so the secret Brotherhood have labored “in the secret Pavilion,” to throw over the waste and barren places of human life, the beautiful flowers of Friendship and Love, and the fragrance of a heavenly virtue.

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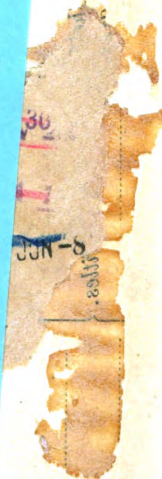
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