

HS 997

.M3

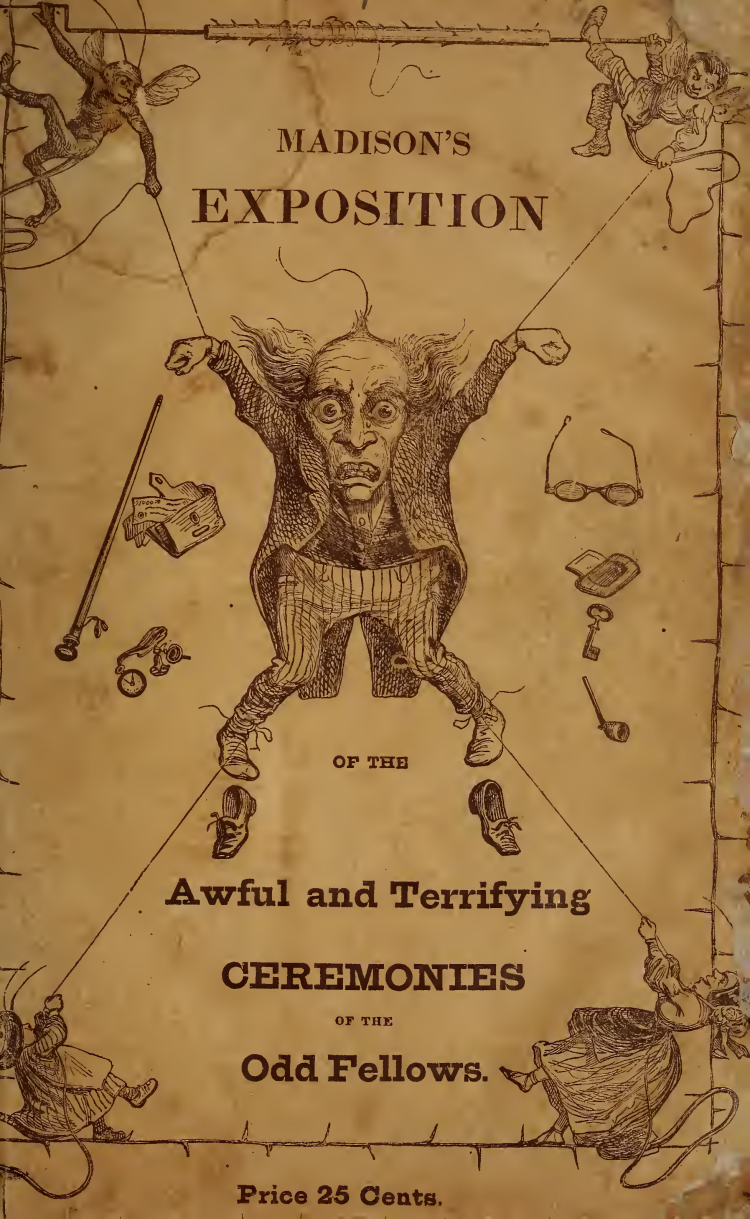
Copy 1

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. H.S. 997

Shelf M3

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



MADISON'S
EXPOSITION

OF THE

Awful and Terrifying

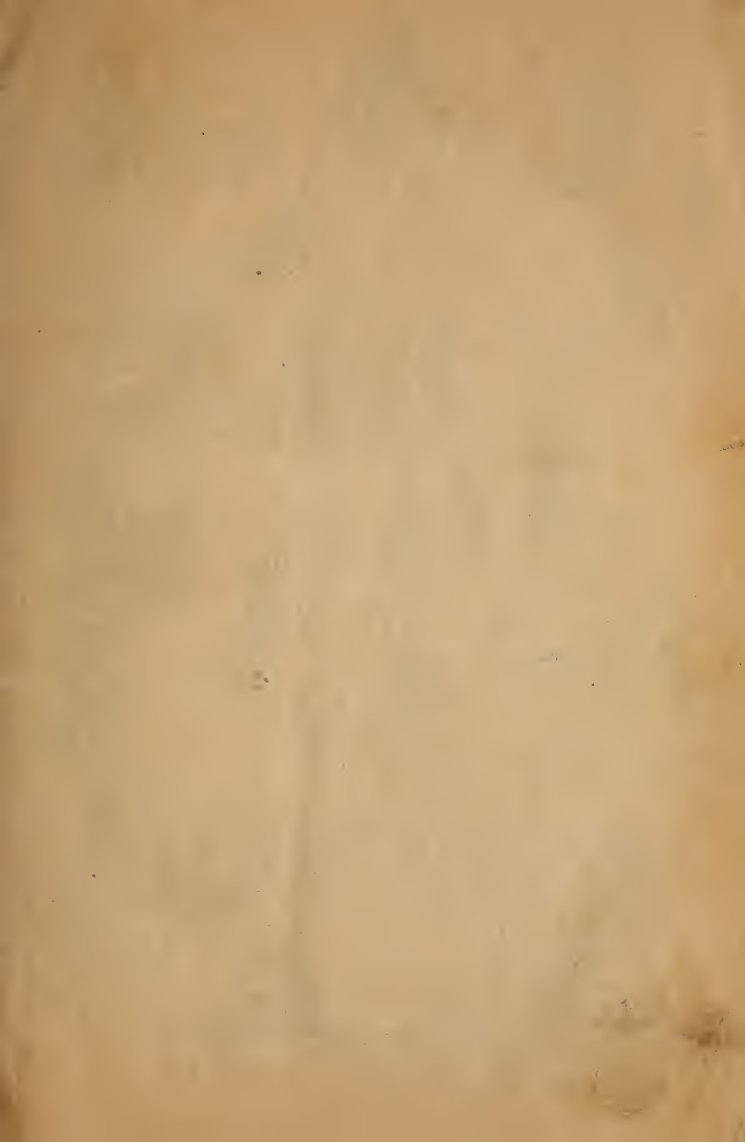
CEREMONIES

OF THE

Odd Fellows.

Price 25 Cents.







Riding the Goat.

AN EXPOSITION

OF THE

FORMS AND USAGES

OBSERVED IN THE VARIOUS LODGES

OF THE

INDEPENDENT ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS,

AS ORGANIZED IN THE UNITED STATES.

TOGETHER WITH A FULL ACCOUNT OF THE

AWFUL AND TERRIFYING CEREMONIES

ATTENDANT UPON THE INITIATION OF A NEW MEMBER
INTO THE ORDER.

27.4

"SECRECY OR DEATH."



✓
BY JAMES M. MADISON,

Late of the KNICKERBOCKER LODGE of the City of New-York.

NEW-YORK:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR.

1848.

HS907
.M3

Entered according to an Act of Congress, in the year one thousand eight hundred and forty seven, by JUSTUS SMITH, in the Clerk's Office of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New-York.



The Hall of Repentance.

FORMS AND CEREMONIES

OF THE

INDEPENDENT ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS.

I tremble at the fearful task I have undertaken, but the goadings of a newly awakened conscience will not permit me to rest easy, until I have relieved my mind of the burden that oppresses it. In fact, I feel imperatively called upon, alike as a loyal citizen and an humble christian, to make the present exposure : for, (as the reader of this pamphlet will soon discover.) a man who remains faithful to the pledge of Odd Fellowship, can be neither *one* or the *other*.

Let no man smile at so grave an opening to a work apparently so trifling. If the pages are few, their contents are fearful. And furthermore, I may well be serious in giving them to the public ; for their appearance will make me upwards of a hundred thousand interested and vigilant enemies, all sworn by the special oaths of their order to destroy my life. However, feeling that I can only be silent as a traitor to my country, and at the risk of my very salvation, I willingly hazard my existence in the exercise of what I consider my most solemn duty.

I have two motives for publishing this exposure in my own name. The one, to give its authenticity the fullest warrant, so that it may have no drawback in stirring up the heart of the nation : and the other, because the Odd Fellows may be afraid, as powerful as they are, to make away with a person whom the public are watching. Dreading the renewal of a Morgan excitement, they may not lightly incur its risk, and in this presumption lies my greatest hope of safety.

Noah is claimed as the founder of modern Odd Fellowship; but its origin is remotely ante-deluvian. Such, at least, is the tradition of the order; but in fact, it came into existence in England not more than a century ago, and was founded by a man named Charles Trevors, who had been expelled by the Free Masons, for endeavoring to introduce dangerous political opinions into their lodges. This Trevors was a very singular man; and the germ of the society was composed of men as singular as himself, from which it derived its appellation of the "ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS." The original intention was a political club; circumstances, however, interfered, and it became a mutual protection and benefit society; and now it is an admixture of all three.

But, as I am not professing to write a history of the order, I will enter at once into the direct subject of my pamphlet.

Having solicited to become a member of the Knickerbocker Lodge, and passed successfully through the out door examination, I proceeded to my initiation, on the evening of the 8th of May, 1844.

The door was opened to the knock and countersign of the member who introduced me; and no sooner was my foot over the threshold than my head was enveloped in a cap or bag, which was fastened round my neck; and left me in utter darkness. I was then lifted from the ground by an iron hook, and suspended to a pivot in the ceiling, when I was whirled round and round with considerable velocity, until my brains reeled again, and then flung to the ground so rudely, as to hurt me not a little, and frighten me a great deal. A voice now exclaimed:

"Mortal, thou art now at liberty to depart or proceed— which dost thou choose?"

I answered, "To proceed."

"It is well," returned the voice; "if thine heart remains steadfast to the end; but otherwise, thou hadst better never been born."



E.H.

Guardian of the Threshold.

I was now hurried in silence, but unmolested, through a number of winding passages, when suddenly the cap was withdrawn from my face, and I found myself in a large apartment, and in the presence of a number of men variously engaged. They wore none of the regalia, or other marks of Odd Fellowship; but there was a general appearance of mummery and disguise about them, and a few of them seemed to be dwarfs. This, however, I subsequently ascertained to be an optical illusion, produced by the arrangement of the light; which, by the way, was very dim, and gave every thing an indistinct and dreamy appearance.

This apartment is called "THE HALL OF REPENTANCE," from the fact, that the novice is here permitted to retract, if he is afraid to go on with his initiation, for he is yet unsworn; but when he takes the first oath, he has become a "*Demi Neophyte*," and after that he has no choice.

I was in the "Hall of Repentance" about ten minutes, when there was a horrid crash, and the light was extinguished; but almost at the same instant a faint phosphoric flame revealed a tall, oddly dressed figure, with a false-face, and long hair and beard, standing on a pedestal. This figure immediately addressed me in a sepulchral voice.

"Mortal, art thou afraid?"

I answered, "No."

"I am" continued the figure, "the GUARDIAN OF THE THRESHOLD," which must not be polluted by a coward? Go! Depart in peace!—Thou tremblest! Thou art not equal to the *inner trial*."

"I do not tremble," I replied, "I am anxious to proceed with my initiation.

"Remember mortal, and reflect," continued the figure, "that thou art now free to withdraw thyself from all connection with this most ancient, mighty, and honorable of all orders. But, if thou persistest in resolving the next mystery, thou art ours, in life—in death—and for ever!

“I persist.”

Whereupon the Guardian of the Threshold sunk through the pedestal; but by the same faint light, I saw advancing towards me, like a figure in phantasmagoria, another strange looking being, who was also distinguished by a false-face and long beard. As he approached, he unloosed a scroll, and having considered it for a few seconds, questioned me as follows, likewise in a voice of the deepest bass.

“Thy name is James M. Madison?”

“It is.”

Here followed queries in reference to my age, occupation, &c., which I omit, as they are unimportant in connection with my design, and would be of no interest to the reader. The figure then proceeded:

“And thou art determined to separate thyself from the grosser world, and become one of us?”

“I am.”

“The honors of Odd Fellowship are great, and must be dearly purchased. Your heart may quail before we have done with you.”

“Be it so, I’ll venture.”

“Hast thou examined thyself? Couldst thou keep an oath of secrecy against all temptation?”

“I could.”

“Even though it were what men might call an illegal one?”

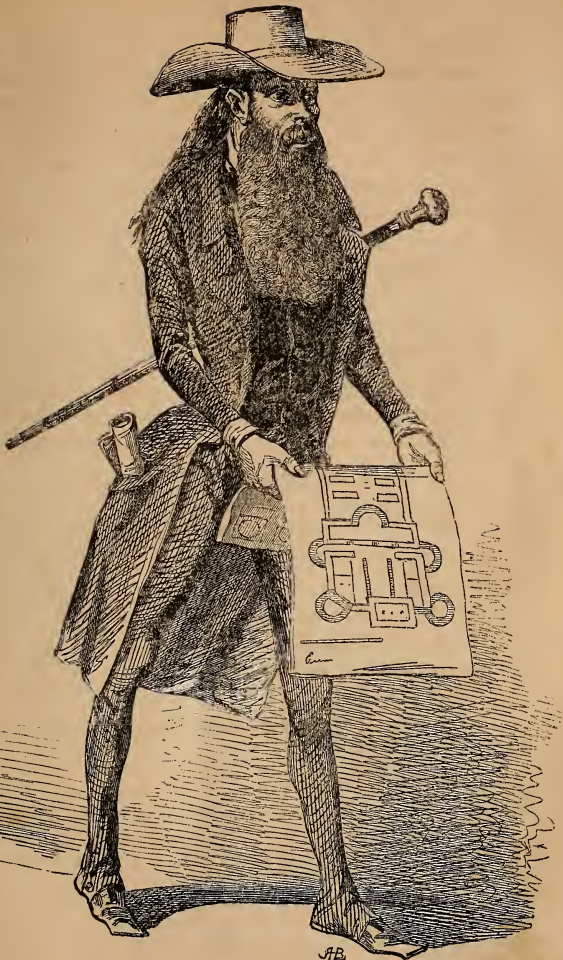
“I would try.”

“That answer wont do?—Could’st thou, or could’st thou not? Say yes or no!”

“Yes.”

“Then behold in me, the GRAND ARCH PRIEST, who must unite you to our most illustrious order, by a marriage, from which there is no divorce—for ours once, ours ever! Lift up your right hand in attitude to swear!”

I did so.



Grand Arch Priest.



“Witnesses attend !”

Whereupon a chorus of invisible members answered :

“ We are here—We are here,
With watchful eye, and wakeful ear !
Swear not mortal, if your soul
Be not as firm as the fix’d pole ;
Or if ’twill wander from thine oath as far
As the true needle from the northern star !”

When the Grand Arch Priest continued :

“Repeat the oath which I shall now pronounce to you, slowly and distinctly, word for word ; and as you keep or break it, so, be assured, shall heaven reward or curse you.”

And I duly solemnized the oath, which was as follows :

“ By all things earthly and divine,
Jew, Christian, Turk, and Heathen sign ;
My father’s soul—my mother’s fame—
My children’s hope—my own good name :
The virtue of my wife—the dead—
The living !—the eternal sun !
By that right hand, which wins my bread—
By each apart—and all in one
I swear—(and call on heaven to take
Due record of the oath I make,)
Never—by signal, or word spoken—
Or aught that might afford a token,
(Though law, religion, death and pain
Should join, to wring it from my brain ;)
The slightest tittle to reveal
Of what this order would conceal !
Those secrets shall for ever rest
Betwixt my God, and my own breast !
And further, I consent to be,
Lost as a rain-drop in the sea,
Into this Order, dread and high,
Until with mightier death I lie ;
And have no separate heart or soul,
Save as a portion of the whole !
Its power to aid, with purpose true—
To do whate’er it bids me do !
With suffering, reason, hand, and breath,
And not to falter, unto death :
All this I swear ! I swear ! I swear !
And pray—All nature hear my prayer,

Even as my oath is kept or riven—
So help me, or so curse me heaven !”

And then the invisible members broke forth in deep and solemn chorus :

“ Even as thy oath is kept or riven,
So help thee, or so curse thee heaven !”

Whereon the Grand Arch Priest exclaimed, with a majestic fervor :

“ Amen ! So be it ! He is ours. Mortal, thou art accepted ! And now we resign thee to the powers of light and darkness, to impress upon thy soul the fearfulness of the responsibilities thou hast assumed.”

And the words were immediately followed by a crashing sound, like a mixture of gongs and thunder ; and at the same instant the floor opened beneath me, and I was precipitated into a place of utter darkness, strongly impregnated with an odor highly sulphurous, which seemed to have an effect on me of partial intoxication. Before I had well recovered myself from the confusion incident on my sudden descent, the darkness began gradually to give way to a pale green light, by which I perceived that I was apparently alone in a small apartment ; but a loud hiss announced the vicinity of some living thing ; and on looking in the direction whence it emanated, I observed, emerging from an aperture in the wall, a large snake, curled around an enormous pen, which it held with the nib downwards, as if in attitude to write : and to strengthen this idea, there were several sheets of paper, and an ink-bottle on the floor before it. The tail of this reptile, which waved uneasily to and fro, terminated in a human hand, and its whole appearance was most life-like and monstrous.

I was of course aware that all this was machinery ; but nevertheless, I must admit that it frightened me ; but to this end, as I was afterwards made aware, the nervous effect of the impregnated atmosphere greatly contributed. And in



Recording Genii of the Root of Necessary Evil.

fact, throughout the whole trial, the *Neophyte* feels in a supernatural state of alarm, produced by the action of the agent aforesaid, and which, under other circumstances, he would, perhaps, himself laugh at. It has almost as powerful an effect as laughing gas, and compels one to view things through a false medium. Thus, while I was under its influence, my reason was partially obscured, and I felt, in a manner, as though I were in a world of enchantment.

The serpent having regarded me for upwards of a minute, with eyes of actual fire, said in a deep measured voice—for the words actually proceeded from its mouth.

“Oh! thou who hast rashly intruded thyself into the REGION OF TRIAL, knowest thou what is the most mighty of things?”

“God.”

“Thou hast answered well. What next?”

“Truth.”

“Thou liest—truth is a pauper, and starves in rags! What is that which makes law a farce—love false—friendship a name—justice blind—and which governs the world?”

“Money.”

“Again thou hast spoken well! And hast thou come prepared with the customary tribute?”

“I have.”

“Then give—give—give. For behold in me the RECORDING GENI OF THE ROOT OF NECESSARY EVIL!

And the reptile held forth its hand, in which I deposited the fee of initiation, when it wrote, and then addressed me thus:

“So far mortal all is well;

Thou hast answered with the power
Which shuts the very gates of hell,
And ope's the way to beauty's bower;
Law and justice, love and fame
Shall bow before you while you live,
If thou to them but do the same

As now to me. Give—give—give—give !
 Thee honored, gracious, it can make ;
 But mark me mortal ! By the light
 Of heaven—and by the burning lake,
 Where traitors howl in endless night ;
 And by the cunning of the snake,
 Which placed thy race beneath its might.
 It cannot save thee, if thou break
 The oaths which thou shalt take to-night.
 But go vain trembler to thy fate,
 There's torture in a moment's stay—
 And all repentance comes too late
 Lo ! death's behind—Away, away."

And again all was darkness ; but a sudden glimmer, (produced for the purpose,) revealing an open door, I passed through it into another apartment, and found myself in the presence of three hideous looking beings, who appeared to be sitting in consultation. Of course I knew they were men ; but they bore so close a resemblance to one's general idea of devils, that they actually startled me, and produced (owing no doubt to the state of nervous excitement I was in, occasioned by atmospheric influence,) a vague impression that they might in fact be in league with the supernatural. Their faces were actually diabolical ; and if they wore masks, they were no common ones ; for they changed their expressions ; and when the figures spoke, their lips moved.

This apartment was illuminated by a dark red light, which increased the hideousness of three of its inhabitants, and perhaps made the indecision—hovering between fear and reason—of the fourth, appear somewhat ludicrous.

"I smell a traitor," said one.

"Good," exclaimed another, "for then his body will soon be with the worms, and his soul with us !"

"How do you know he's a traitor ?" asked the third.

"Because he trembles," replied the first, "and all cowards are traitors. But let us question him."

"Art thou a coward ?"

"No."





SFUCNOT. SC

TONY LEONARDI

The Council of Three.

“A traitor?”

“No.”

“Wilt thou ever break the oaths thou hast this night taken?”

“Never.”

“If you do I will tear you!”

“And I,” said the second, “will throw you for a sop to Cerberus.”

“And I,” added the third, “will fricify your soul upon your bones in Tartarus!”

“Repeat what I tell you with lifted hand,” said the first. And I repeated the following lines, word for word.

May my life be full of wo ;
 May my death no solace know ;
 May poverty, and shame, and crime,
 Beset me through all future time ;
 May my very wife betray me ;
 May my children curse and slay me ;
 May fiercest penal tortures be,
 My portion through eternity ;
 If ever I, by word or line,
 By faintest symbol, hint, or sign,
 Make known to mortal eye, or ear,
 Aught which to-night I see, or hear !
 All this I swear by that raised hand ;
 By the firm ground on which I stand ;
 By life—by death—by all things blest ;
 By all my hopes to be forgiven ;
 And as I fail, or stand the test,
 So curse me, or so help me, heaven.”

“Thou hast burdened thy soul with a fearful oath,” continued the first speaker, “canst thou keep it?”

“I can.”

“Wilt thou?”

“I will.”

“So shalt thou prosper,” he added, “and see us no more. But otherwise—

“Men shall contemn you ;
 And justice condemn you ;
 And friendship shall rue you ;

And daggers pursue you ;
 And vengeance destroy you ;
 And furies annoy you !

For wo—infamy—vengeance—or sooner, or later,
 And the torture of hell, are the doom of the traitor."

"But," he continued, producing a bottle and glass, "pledge us the cup of everlasting secrecy."

"What is it?" I enquired.

"The waters of subordination! Henceforth thou shalt ask no questions, but do the bidding of the order! Drink."

And I drank the proffered liquor, which was almost tasteless; but it soon spread a peculiar glow through my system, and increased my excitement.

"Now," exclaimed the three demons in concert, "for the ceremony of the tar and feathers."

"For whom?" said I.

"For you, to be sure—to remind you of your oath!"

"I won't stand that," said I.

"Ha!" cried the principal speaker, "a traitor already! Perjurer!—where is thy subordination?"

And I began to deliberate what course to pursue, for I really supposed they were about to tar and feather me, when a distant voice exclaimed, "Where are your legs!—you are safe if you can outrun them!" And, on looking in the direction of the sound, I saw a long gallery, through which I dashed at full speed, the three devils being close at my heels, yelling as though they were actual exotics from the infernal regions.

At the other end of this gallery stood a rickety ladder, of apparently immense length, hung round with a number of curious emblems; but the rungs were only supported by one pole; on the other side, however, was a pole of equal length, in the form of a writing pen, which was evidently designed as an assistance to the climber.

The top of this ladder was lost in gloom; but presuming it was intended that I should mount it, and seeing no other



Ascent of the Ladder of Trial.



mode of escape, up I went, though the rungs bent beneath me, and were so slight towards the top that I became seriously alarmed lest I might be precipitated down headlong. I therefore thought of descending, and resigning myself to the tar and feathers; but as I stood in deliberation, all the lower rungs fell to the ground, carrying the three devils—who were still in full pursuit—heels over head along with them. This caused me to advance, hoping for an outlet above; but still, as I proceeded, the step I last stood on shared the fate of the others; and to increase the difficulty, the rungs seemed to grow weaker, and the pole began to bend, while a cold sweat of mortal terror bedewed me all over; for I was really in a very perilous position, and could see no mode of escape; and yet, to augment my alarm, I was now as high as I could go, and the last rung I could reach was trembling under me; but just as it gave way, I was seized by some powerful, but unseen agent, and rolled down an inclined plain; which, by the many revolutions I made, and the length of time it took me, in getting to the bottom, I was aware must be of considerable extent.

This, while it abated my alarm, increased my confusion, and made me so dizzy, that I regained my feet with difficulty; and then I perceived by the smell (for all was as black as pitch) that I was in a damp, earthy place, which had greatly the odor of a church-yard vault. The gloom, however, again gave way to that sort of grey light which just makes darkness visible; and to my absolute horror I found myself surrounded by six dancing skeletons, all gibbering at me like so many ghosts, while one of them chaunted, or appeared to chaunt the following:

“Ho—ho—ho!
 I smell breath,
 With the shades below
 In the land of death!
 Room—room—room,
 Ye perjured crew,
 In a traitor’s tomb
 For a traitor true!

"Traitors are we
 Who departed life,
 For our perjury,
 On the judgment knife.
 And all who thus
 May tempt its ire,
 Shall feel like us
 Its vengeance dire.
 Ho—ho—ho!
 I smell breath,
 With the shades below,
 In the land of death.
 Room—room—room!
 Ye perjured crew,
 In a traitor's tomb
 For a traitor true!"

"I died on a dirk, for swearing against a brother," exclaimed the first skeleton. "What did'st thou to be buried alive?"

"Like me, he suffers for disobedience," answered another.

"Or, like me, for insubordination," muttered the third.

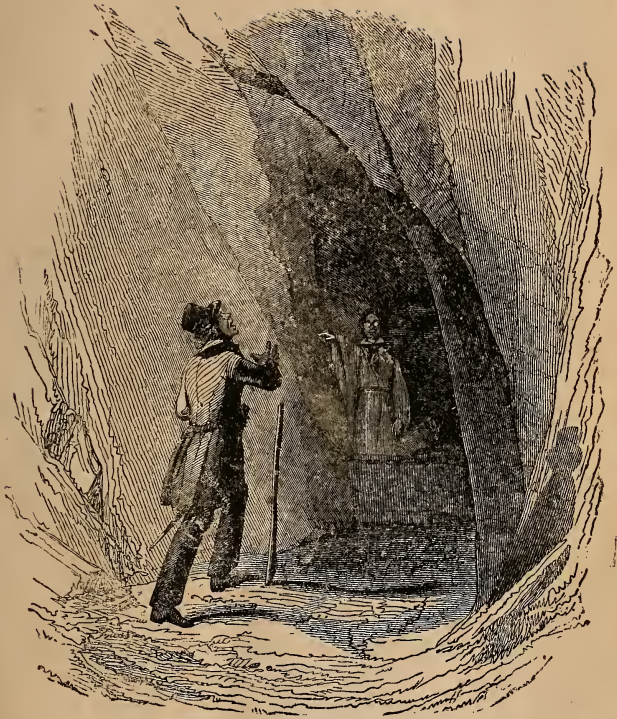
"Or, like me, for mocking the Order to my friends," responded the fourth.

"Or, like me, for threatening to publish the secrets," cried the fifth.

"Or, like me, for revealing the mystery of mysteries," (meaning the initiation,) added the sixth.

And then they again danced around me, to the rattling of their bones, which sounded like a concert of castanets in some demoniac melody: after which, they clutched me with their fleshless hands, and were dragging me towards a yawning tomb, when a ghost-like figure appeared at some distance, and sung the lines annexed, in a sweet, but sepulchral voice:

"Traitors vile, unhand the glorious!
 He is still, in truth victorious.
 The dagger did a righteous duty,
 That gave you to the fiends for booty!
 Down perjured caitiffs, and atone,
 With endless pang, and bootless groan
 For broken oaths—in graves unknown."



The Warning Ghost.

And instantly the skeletons vanished, and I stood alone, confronting the friendly vision, which beckoned me towards it.

“Mortal,” it said, in the same sweet voice: “Be not deceived, by referring all that you have seen to phantasy, or machinery; for these were really the bones of perjured Odd Fellows, and their words are sooth.”

“But, good heavens!” I exclaimed, “Were they murdered?”

“The epithet befits not the subject,” answered the vision: “For as the dog dies, so dies the traitor. But wilt thou remember what thou hast now heard and seen?”

“I certainly shall,” said I, “so long as I remember any thing.”

“Beware how you forget them, or treat them lightly,” renewed the spectre: “for I am the WARNING GHOST, and therefore would not lead you astray, as the fidelity of the Order, is the glory of my repose. I repeat to you, that you have heard truths, and seen traitors. But be steadfast, and fear not. And now cross thine arms before thee, and with all due solemnity, and singleness of purpose, and sanctity of heart, repeat my words.”

“I did so, and the words follow:

“By this blest sign of Christian grace,
Which thus mine arms before me place,
I swear, in all solemnity,
To keep my oaths of secrecy:
Nor law—religion—wealth—or art,
Shall wring that secret from my heart;
I’d tear to atoms friend or lover,
Or e’er they shall one jot discover!
My wife might perish as a foe,
Before she should my secret know!
Which ne’er shall find, or sign, or breath,
Until I yield it up to death!
And further, by this cross I swear,
My hand shall do—my soul shall dare—
(Nor question aught—nor deem it crime.)

Whatever task, in future time,
 The Brotherhood may bid me do,
 Else may I, as a traitor rue !
 Even may my bosom feel the glaive—
 Even may I rot in secret grave :
 Even may I find a traitors doom
 Forever, in a fiery tomb !
 For I am theirs, and they are mine,
 United by a bond divine,
 Which nothing under heaven can sever,
 But the vile crime that blasts forever !”

“But now,” continued the vision in prose, “proceed in the strength of truth, and fear not ; but waver, and you are lost. The way is dreary, and the darkness impenetrable ; but you will find a lamp burning in a tomb, which you are permitted to take ; as without that light, which is in itself a mystery, and emblematic of faith, you could never pass the Desert of the boundless and Hopeless ! Depart in love, peace, faith, hope, and charity. Thy way is to the right.

“And if you keep the oaths you’ve taken
 Never shalt thou be forsaken :
 Though all beside should disapprove thee,
 The Brotherhood shall cheer and love thee :
 But, oh ! beware !—beware !—beware !
 For if you break these oaths you swear, }
 Even to the value of a hair.
 Nothing from our wrath shall guide you—
 Nothing from our vengeance hide you !—
 Wilds and wastes we’ll cross to find you,
 Walls we’ll climb, should prisons bind you,
 Until a reeking corpse you lie,
 The ‘*Warning Ghost*’ to justify !”

Proceeding as directed, I walked on—on—on, marvelling much at the extent of the place, as I was then unacquainted with the mysteries of the Egyptian, or I should rather say, Pagan labyrinth, which continues to wind and wind—though all is an apparently longitudinal extension : and I was still groping my way, when I was caught up by another mighty engine, and borne along for several seconds without touching the ground ; and when I was again restored to it, I perceiv-



The Boundless and Hopeless.

ed that I was in a sort of marsh, every second step through which, sunk me over my instep in mud and water. Still I could see nothing, for all around was pitchy blackness; but by-and-by, an adjacent glimmer reminded me of the promised lamp, which I found in a tomb, in the hands of an upright skeleton, which extended itself in a coffin, the moment I had removed it.

But this lamp served but to increase my astonishment and alarm; for its light could only pierce the thick damp gloom to a very inconsiderable distance, so that it gave the place the resemblance which its name claimed for it, viz: that of a "*boundless and a hopeless desert.*" And then I could feel slimy things twisting and crawling beneath me, like snakes and toads; and ever and anon, red flamy eyes would be fixed on mine; and from time to time, troops of human skeletons would *rattle* past, making the horrors of the way yet more hideous with their dismal howlings.

Surely, thought I, this cannot be all mere human contrivance and machinery; it must be actual witchcraft!—And then, all the fearful stories which I had heard of the supernatural powers of Masonry and Odd Fellowship, rushed upon my soul—and I was so smitten with terror, that I thought I would have fainted; and in fact, I was on the point of calling for relief, when my lamp was snatched from my hand, and went flitting over the marsh, (seemingly by its own agency,) like an *ignus fatuus*; and almost at the same moment, I was precipitated into a cavern, and then dragged forward by a hand with claws, and forced rudely into a chair.

"This is going rather too far with your mummery," I exclaimed: for to say nothing of my fears, my patience had entirely expended itself.

"Ho! ho! just sworn to subordination and obedience, and 'kicking against the pricks,' and half perjured already!" responded a mocking voice. "Good!—I like your spirit! You'll be one of us! Ho! ho! ho!"

“What do you mean?” said I.

“Never mind!” replied the voice. “But lights there Belzebub!—I say lights! Ho! ho! ho!”

And immediately a dull blue light made the cavern dimly visible, and I found myself at a rough table, well provided with provision and liquor, while opposite to me was seated the very devil himself. At all events, (owing perhaps to the unnatural frame of mind which I was in at the time,) I could hardly persuade myself that the figure I beheld was any thing else. It was hideous, grim, sardonic, bony, fiendishly jocular, and at least ten feet high. And to complete the picture, there were reptiles on the floor, and skeletons and goblins grinning through the gloom.

“Ho! ho!” exclaimed my infernal companion: “Come comrade, drink.”

“I won’t drink with such a comrade as you,” said I.

“Ho! ho!” returned the fiend—“A coward!—I knew it! He is one of us! Ho! ho! ho!”

“You are a fool—and as false as you are hideous, to say so;” said I, struggling against my superstition: “So if you warrant the liquor not to be poison, here goes.”

“Its the pride of the market,” returned my companion, with a chuckle; and then he broke out into the subjoined doggrels:—

“It’s prime, prime, prime—drink it up—drink it up,
It will make you beg for another cup;
It will make you proud—it will make you strong;
It will make you sing, if you have a song;
It will make you see, no devil in me,
But a jolly old chap, for a jolly good spree;
And then I’ll bet you a bottle for both,
It will make you—Ho! ho!--break your oath!”

“Done,” said I, drinking one glass, which was so good and refreshing, (and I really had need of some refreshment,) that I followed it with another, and then with a third. And finally, the devil did in fact, look less devilish to me, and I sang to humor the joke; and in a word, I was somewhat beside



Temptation.





Fidelity Rewarded.

myself. And then my companion began to question me about my oath, and to call me coward for not revealing it; and anon, he began to bluster; and producing two foils, challenged me to fight.

“Nonsense,” said I.

“Then, take that,” said he, knocking me down.

Whereupon, being half wild with liquor, passion, and the strange events of the night. I slipped off my coat; seized a foil, and rushing at my antagonist, to my utter horror, ran him right through the body.

He fell, with a shriek so natural and full of torture, that it paralyzed me; and to increase my horror, all again was profound darkness. “Good heavens!” I exclaimed, “perhaps I have made a tragedy of this diabolical farce—for surely that was a living thing, and no automaton!”

But I was speedily relieved from this embarrassment, by a voice exclaiming:

“Victory over the fiend, is the ‘*reward of fidelity.*’ But fly, for time presses.”

And in a manner I did “fly,” for I was suddenly lifted from the dungeon, and again placed in the marsh, over which I wandered for several minutes, seriously inclined to believe, that I was really in the hands of evil spirits: for while I might readily account for the falling rungs, skeletons, devils, and so forth, by referring them to machinery, I could not realize the notion, that all I had passed through, had occurred in three floors of between two and three thousand square feet each. Since then, however, my surprise has suffered some abatement, as I have been initiated into many of the mysteries of scene-shifting in the Parisian theatres; and likewise have read of the wonders performed of old, by machinery in the Pagan temples. But still, I have not altogether recovered from that night’s alarms; nor would I, with all the knowledge since acquired, undertake for any wealth to undergo a thorough renewal of them.

Again, there was a bluish light, and I beheld a scene ludicrous in print, but to a person circumstanced as I then was, and feeling as I then felt, horrible enough in reality—namely, the hideous form which I had lately prostrated, stretched out, and stiff in death, while immediately over the corpse and grinning at me, sat its very counter-part. The intention was plain. They were the body and the spirit! A dead devil—and a dead devil's ghost.

Having mocked and mowed at me for some time, this spectre, or spectre's spectre rather, addressed me thus :

“ Ho ! ho ! ho !
 There you go,
 Fiend blood spiller—
 Demon killer—
 Because so loath
 To break an oath,
 Which now, no doubt,
 You'll break right out
 When I invoke you ;
 Or else I ll choke you !
 Ho ! ho ! ho !
 Say yes, or no ? ”

“ No ; you death upon wines,” said I, though it is to be admitted that my valor was half assumed. “ So make haste, and let us put an end to this nummery.”

Whereon the spectre continued :

Ha ! ha ! ha ! Ho ! ho ! ho !
 Are you mocking ?—Are you serious ?
 Can you hope unscathed to go
 From a foeman so imperious ?
 Why should you your oaths revere ?
 Lovers break them with their wenches ;
 Juries every day forswear ;

And judges grave, upon their benches,
 Ha ! ha ! ha ! Ho ! ho ! ho !
 Ha ! you fear the reeking knife !
 Well, that is something to astound you ;
 For on your faith depends your life,
 And countless eyes will watch around you,
 But ho ! who fears them ? Let them pry !



The Resurrection.

They can but kill who have betrayed them ;
 Their daggers' points you may defy !
 Although you never can evade them !
 Ha ! ha ! ha ! Ho ! ho ! ho !

As he finished speaking, the blue light again died out, and I wandered off through the darkness, to the end of securing better footing, which I soon achieved ; but had scarcely time to congratulate myself on the event, before mine ears were assailed with the most dismal and dreadful screeching, howling, and rattling of chains, that ever were heard out of bedlam. I was absolutely horror struck at the diabolical uproar ; as diabolical it was both in the intention and result ; for I had no doubt that the design was to imitate the wailings of the damned ; and I was equally sure that the effect was fully in accordance with it.

At intervals between the wailing and howling, I could hear various exclamations such as the following :

“ I was stabbed for showing the grip to my mother ! ”

“ And I for teaching it to my wife. ”

“ And I for explaining it to my sweet-heart. ”

“ Oh, women—women—women—they have been the cause of all our sorrows ! ”

“ I died and I burn for making the signs public ! ”

“ And I for revealing the secrets of initiation ! ”

“ And I— ”

“ And I— ”

“ There is no escaping their vengeance ! ”

“ They have eyes everywhere. ”

“ He to whom I told my secret—as a secret—was Arch Deacon of the Order ; and on that same night my body was in the Hudson, and my soul here ! ”

“ Howl ! ” “ howl ! ” howl ! ” “ Shriek ! ” Rattle ! ” “ rattle ! ” “ rattle ! ”

Suddenly the ground opened, emitting from its entrails a vivid red light, significant of the state of affairs below ; and

in the midst of this appeared seven appalling figures, which had a mixed resemblance of ghosts, wizzards, and witches. And while these frightful things were staring at me with fixed and ferocious eyes, and withal, with an expression of horrible mirthfulness, one of them, who had an appearance of authority, sung these verses :

“Mortal come :—a word will bring thee
To this home of happy traitors,
Where delightful strains we'll sing thee
To the gnashing of thy *grators* !

Howl howl howl !
That's the way
Traitors growl,
Both night and day.

Though we roast them, and fry them, and baste them, and
grease them,
And do all we can for to comfort and please them—

Say the word—the dagger's gleaming,
Which shall pierce your heart or liver ;
And we have got a chamber steaming,
Where we'll stew your soul forever !

Howl ! howl ! howl !
That's the way
Traitors growl,
Both night and day.

Though we roast them, and fry them, and baste them, and
grease them,
And do all we can for to comfort and please them—

On the ceasing of the song, the figures danced a saraband, to the measure of the sounds of torment beneath. But suddenly they stopped, when, each placing her hand on one ear, as if attentively listening to some distant sounds, they proceeded with the following duett, or dialogue, in which each and all took a part :

First Witch. “My cat's a mewling.”

Second Witch. “There's mischief brewing.”

Third Witch. “My right ear's hot.”

Fourth Witch. “Prepare a pot.”

Fifth Witch. “The next we'll stew—”

Sixth Witch. “And roast him too.”





Torture of Traitors.

Seventh Witch. "But hist! hist! hist!"

First Witch. "We list! we list!"

Second Witch. "I hear a blabbing."

Third Witch. "You'll soon hear stabbing!"

Fourth Witch. "Or plunge in water:

Fifth Witch. "Hush! hush! 'tis slaughter—"

Sixth Witch. "The traitor's quaffing;"

Seventh Witch. "And wild with laughing."

First Witch. "He's now betraying—"

Second Witch. "His friends huzzaing."

Third Witch. "But there is one there,"

Fourth Witch. "Who finds no fun there."

Fifth Witch. "Up breaks the party."

Sixth Witch. "They're all quite hearty."

Seventh Witch. "And homeward's veering;"

First Witch. "The traitor's steering."

Second Witch. "There's *one* quite near him—"

Third Witch. "I see—I hear him—"

Fourth Witch. "A dagger's heaving;"

Fifth Witch. "'Tis downwards cleaving."

Sixth Witch. "There's blood, and sighing;

Seventh Witch. "The traitor's dying."

And then they united in the annexed chorus, at the termination of which they vanished.

"Hurra!—let's away;

As his hand-maids so loving,

We must make no delay

In preparing his oven."

The departure of the witches was followed by a groaning at some distance, like that of a person dying in agony. And the sounds approached nearer, and nearer; and at length I beheld the source from whence they proceeded; namely—a human head dripping with gore, which appeared in the centre of the red light, and immediately over the gulf it was emitted from. The face was writhing in agony, and the eyes rolling in horror; and the head was held by the hair in a firmly clenched hand, in connection with which I could see no arm, or other supporter; and I was endeavoring to pierce the gloom behind for a solution of this mystery, when a voice of thunder exclaimed:

"Behold the head of a traitor."

To which the head itself thus answered :

“ Even so—’Tis even so !
 Well have I deserved the blow ;
 And the pangs which soon I’ll know
 In the burning lake below.
 Wo ! wo ! wo ! wo !
 Mortal, read thy fate in mine !
 Shouldst ever break thy oath divine ;
 Should ought by thee be e’er revealed,
 Which thou hast sworn to keep concealed !
 But let me go where gloom allures me,
 For man abhors, and God abjures me !

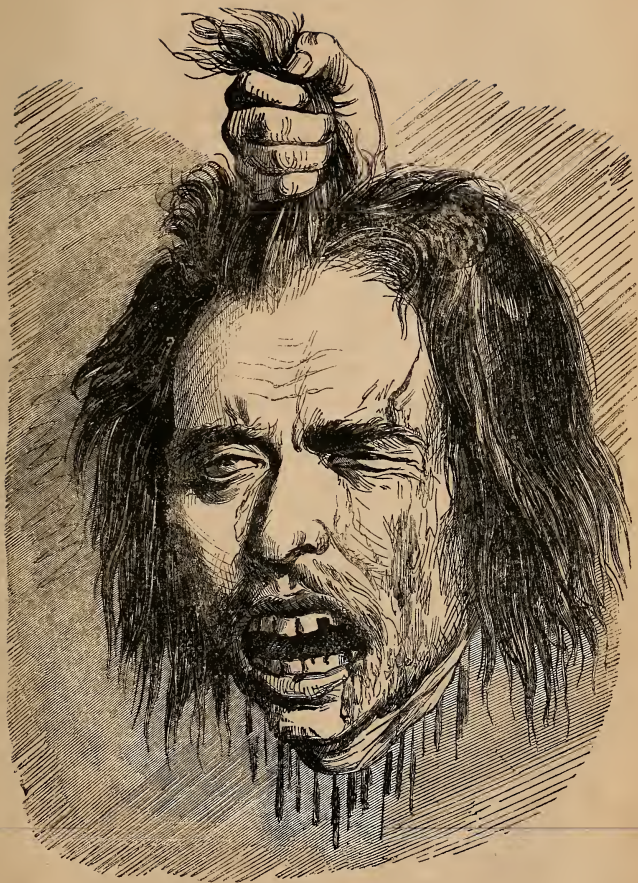
And the writhing head was dropped into the gulf, which instantly closed amidst shrieks of “ I burn ! I burn ! I burn ! I burn ! I burn ! ” rising distinctly through a chorus of fiendish exultation and laughter.

Greatly shocked and excited, I rushed from this frightful spot, but still found no rest ; for at almost every step I trod on some creeping thing, which seemed to bite at me, and which appalled me with its snakey hiss, or mandrake groan ; while the air was horrible with the hooting of owls, the croaking of ravens, and the shrill voice of the bird of warning :

To whit a whoo ! to whit a whoo !

I rested against a stone. A voice exclaimed, “ Beware !—you are sitting on my tomb ! ” I kicked something before me which might have been a scull. It howled, “ I am Morgan’s head ! ” I put down my hand. It came in contact with an enormous toad. I began to suspect that I was in a horrible dream ; for the utmost stretch that my fancy might allow, to the genius and powers of Odd-Fellowship, could not cope with such frightful realities ;—and I was beating my forehead to awaken my senses, when I was grasped by the shoulder by an immense spectre, and swung through the air as though I were an infant.

My eyes being now familiar with the darkness, I could perceive that this figure had a severe, forbidding, fiendish



The Traitor's Doom.

face, and wings like a bat. It uttered no word, but dragged me onwards, and grasped me so tightly that I could scarcely breathe.

I might have been thus situated for about five minutes, when the spectre halted, and swayed me to and fro several times, as if to obtain an impetus to heave me to a distance, when, suddenly, there was a bright, silvery light, by which I perceived that the demon held me over a dreadful abyss, which appeared to be fathomless. Again he suspended me at arm's length over that awful gulf, and then swayed me back, with an expression of countenance which denoted that he was poisoning me for the final swing; but at that instant a seraphic form presented itself, whereon the spectre released me with a spasmodic start, and plunged headlong into the vortex, making the place ring again with shrieks of execration and despair.

And then the seraphic form (which really made me fearful with its excessive beauty,) for the first time broke silence, thus:

“ Welcome happy neophyte !
 Thou hast stood thy trial bravely,
 But oh, remember well this night ;
 And still reflect upon it gravely !
 So shalt thou be a brother true,
 Of this most high and mighty order ;
 So shalt thou, step by step pursue,
 From humble “ Peer ” to kingly “ Warder . ”

Heaven loves the faithful—keep thy faith
 Erect, unsullied and unshaken !
 Heaven loves the man who'd sink in death,
 Before he'd break an oath he's taken.
 Farewell, farewell. my brother dear ;
 Let nothing from thy duty move thee,
 And nothing shalt thou have to fear,
 For Heaven shall guide, and man shall love thee . ”

And then the angel seemed to melt into space, or rather to be absorbed by the light which its presence had occasioned; and darkness had resumed its sway, and I was wondering

what would be the next mystery in order, when I was startled from my reflection by a repetition of the uproar of gongs and thunder, and at the same instant I was slid down through an inclined funnel into a spacious room, among a large assembly of men, several of whom were oddly disguised.

This apartment was but dimly lighted, and had a mysterious appearance; but these were trifles compared with my late experience, and were easily overlooked in my happiness to be once more among beings positively human. Many of these persons, as I said, were oddly disguised, and some of them were attired as females; but what surprised me most, was a slanting, serpentine road, in the middle of the room, which commenced at the mouth of a huge jar, at one end, and terminated near the ceiling, at the other. At the apex of this inclined gangway, in a drapery of well-imitated clouds, sat an old man, who, as soon as I entered, exclaimed,

“The goat!—the goat!—Bring forth the goat!”

And then I expected to have to ride the gauntlet, on a genuine goat, according to the prevalent notion of Masonic and Odd Fellow initiations. This, however, is a popular error. But the old man’s exclamation was followed by the issuing forth from the jar, or rather through it, of a train of persons—one of whom, by the way, was mounted on a machine nearly as large as a sheep, and in the form of a bee, which was so life-like that I could scarcely persuade myself that it was an automaton. And then, having stripped naked, according to order, and redressed myself in an old trowsers, jacket and shirt—but no shoes or stockings—a huge collar was placed around my neck, and I was mounted on the back of a stout man, who headed the procession, on the inclined plane, and up we went, to the music of a clarionet, played by a person who sat on the left of the master of the ceremonies.

Arrived as far as we could go, the latter addressed me thus:

“Brother! we have received a good account of thee from



Mercy Triumphant.



the region of shadows! Spectres, spirits, and demons, thou canst cope with; and now it is for us to see if thou art also equal to the pleasant antics of thy fellows—which is aptly called the physical test of the spirit of subordination—before we admit thee to the final ceremony. Remember, that whatever is done to thee is by command of the order, and hence that thou must not oppose it, either in act, look or thought. Moreover, it is done to purify thee, even as gold is refined by fire. Now, brother, receive one of the punishments of thy presumption in aspiring to be a member of this mightiest of fraternities.”

And the last word had scarcely passed his lips, before at least twenty persons commenced, in a most hearty and energetic manner, to pinch, buffet, pull, tweak, and otherwise ill-use me, until I was as sore as a bile all over, and had not a single stitch left on my back. Nevertheless, I bore everything like a stoic, until one of my tormentors menaced me with a red-hot poker; on which, becoming indignant, I swore that if he touched me I would strike him; when, sudden as a lightning flash, all was darkness—the gongs and thunder again broke in with their infernal clamor—a mighty voice, as if through a speaking trumpet, shouted, “*take the first reward of thy insubordination!*” and in the succeeding moment, in consequence of the gangway’s assuming a more upright position, I was rolled down headlong into a great reservoir of water, which was at least six feet deep.

I now certainly thought that the end was come—not of the ceremony, but of my own life—for I expected nothing less than death by drowning; but I had scarcely time to count ten, before the water left me, when the bottom of the vessel giving way, I was precipitated up to my neck into the centre of a huge sack, which was stuffed all round to the bulk and somewhat to the appearance of a bale of wool; and then, —being at the time about half way between dead and alive —I found myself into the centre of another large room, in

which were at least a hundred persons, about a third of whom were partially disguised.

Some of these men were playing at soldiers ; others blowing a furnace under a cauldron ; and more again, were engaged in *cynical* legal and political disputes, the meanings of which were afterwards explained to me ; but as these would be tedious to give in detail, and friends have advised me to reserve them for a court of justice, in case this publication should be followed by any legal action, I have concluded to omit them for the present.

In front of me were two pulpits, one over the other—in the most exalted of which sat the Arch Inquisitor ; and in the inferior one, the Noble Grand.

“Behold, a newly elected brother, proved in the furnace and baptized in the faith !” cried the Noble Grand.

“But who will stand his warrant ?” inquired the Arch Inquisitor.

“We will, to the death !” responded about twenty persons.

“And what will you do,” continued the Inquisitor, “in case he betrays your confidence ?”

“Kill him !” replied my sponsors, sternly ; and to give their words the greater effect, each brandished aloft a gleaming dagger as he spoke.

“Now, worthy neophyte,” resumed the Arch Inquisitor, addressing myself, “Hearken to the summing up of thy duties, and let the court hear under oath that thou understandest them both singly and in the aggregate. Heretofore, thou wert many things ; now all is submerged in the Order of Odd Fellowship, which henceforth must be more to thee than thy father ; thy mother ; thy wife ; thy children ; thy friends ; thy country ; thy everything, but God. Thou must honor it, and support it, and fight for it, and die for it, above all things ; and yet, above all these again, thou must *obey it and keep its secrets*. Remember—and let my words sink deep, deep into

thy soul—that hundreds of thousands are interested in thy faith; and hence, that if thou breakest it, thy individual life will be regarded but as a drop in the ocean, in comparison with the honor and safety of the whole. Thou hast now a million of sworn friends! Who can harm thee, whilst thou art worthy of their support? Thou would'st then have a million of sworn enemies! Who could save thee from their vengeance? Doth thy soul fully comprehend and thoroughly digest all that I have spoken?"

I replied, "It does."

"Wilt thou do all that is therein required of thee?"

"I will."

"Cross thy hands before thee, and swear."

"I obeyed; and swore to submit myself in all things to the glory, honor and advantage of the order, both individually and collectively; when the Inquisitor continued,

"The order must be thy first consideration; thyself the next; thy brother the third; and then as thou willest. Thou must never fight against a faithful Odd Fellow; or swear against him; or in any manner oppose his preferment. Thou must vote for an Odd Fellow for any office he may seek, in preference to all others. Thou must interpose whatever obstacles thou canst between the law and any Odd Fellow whom it seeks to distress. And if on a jury for the trial of an Odd Fellow, thou must not reflect upon his guilt or innocence, but acquit him without compromise, for the sake of Brotherhood and the honor of the Order—even of that Order which must henceforth be more to thee than Country or Government, or Law, or President, or King, or all things earthly, past, present, or to come. Again cross thy hands, and swear!"

And doing as I was commanded, I pledged myself to the fulfilment of all the foregoing fearful obligations by a solemn oath; after which, the Inquisitor proceeded:

"Now repeat the final oath which I will dictate to thee, and thou wilt have perfected thy initiation."

Whereupon he repeated the following oath, which I pledged with enthusiastic solemnity, for—and to my shame be it spoken—I was at the time proud of my position, and most devoted and single-minded in my zeal.

Henceforth, let good or ill betide,
 I make Odd Fellowship my bride ;
 To give it of my inmost heart,
 The warmest and the purest part.
 No earthly thing I'll place before it,
 But next to God himself adore it !
 I'll keep its oaths above all others ;
 Its brothers aid above all brothers ;
 Its laws, shall be my ruling laws ;
 Its cause, my soul's most sacred cause ;
 For it, my energies I'll cherish ;
 For it, I'll labor, fight, or perish ;
How'er 'twould view a thing, I'll view it ;
Whate'er it bids me do, I'll do it ;
I'll scorn all law and legislation ;
That seeks a brother's degradation ;
Though all the laws of men he break,
Against him oath I'll never take !
Should prisons hold, I'll seek to find him.
The means to burst the bonds that bind him.
I'll aid him still, whate'er comes of it,
To every place of trust and profit ;
 And hold him still, while lingering here,
 (In every thing that makes life dear—
 As fame, power, freedom, honor, pelf)
 The next in order to myself,
The Order first, myself the next,
My brother third ! Lo ! that's the text,
From which henceforth, without a flaw,
The sermon of my life I'll draw !
 And as I treat these oaths of mine,
 Letter for letter—line for line—
 Deal with me, oh ! ye powers divine.
 Even as I keep them, cheer and nurse me ;
 Even as I break them, scorn and curse me ;
 Even as I keep them, when I die
 Among the angels let me dwell ;
 Even as I break them, may I lie
 Throughout eternity in hell !





And this oath was responded to by a hundred solemn "amens" in concert, accompanied by a yet more fearful crash of mingled sounds than I had yet heard. And then there was a period of darkness, and silence, dismally relieved by the flashes of lightning, and the rumbling of thunder. And in the midst of this confusion, I was conveyed in a twinkling into a small apartment, where I found my own clothes. And when I had dressed myself, I was introduced formally into the "*Hall of State*," where all the members present shook hands with me. And then (alas, the day!) I was pronounced by the Noble Grand "*A worthy, free, and accepted Brother of the Illustrious Order of Odd Fellows.*"

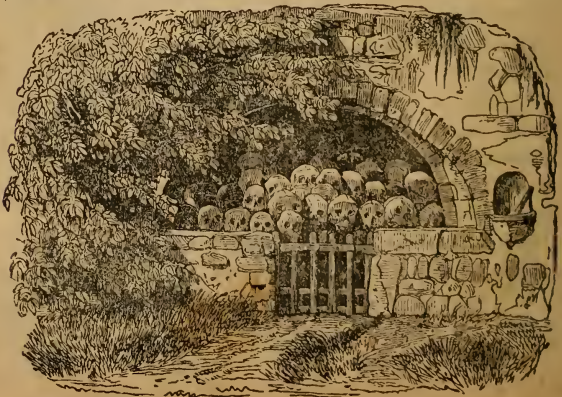
I might now add a great deal about signs, tokens, knocks of admission, passwords, the ceremony of opening Lodges, and so forth; but these would be found of but trivial interest, and of no importance whatever; and moreover, they are frequently changed; so that to dwell upon them would be time and labor thrown away. The Grip, however, is standard, and therefore I will explain it. It is formed by locking the third and fourth fingers of the right hands, and bringing the points of the thumbs together; the brothers, at the same time, looking fixedly into each others eyes; and, if there is no witness present, whispering "*Secrecy or Death!*"

To enter into the mysteries of the different degrees, would also be labor in vain, as they are prosy and common-place; nor is it worth while to mention the names of all the various grades, from "humble Peer" (the first step) to "Kingly Warder," (the highest honor,) including Secretaries, Treasurers, Tribunes, Noble Grands, Arch Inquisitors, Patriarchs, Sires, and about fifty others.

In fact, the *Initiation* is the grand, the absorbing secret: and the *binding* of the *Brotherhood* by dreadful oaths to cling to each other through good or evil—through right or wrong (even to the resistance of law and justice, or the subversion

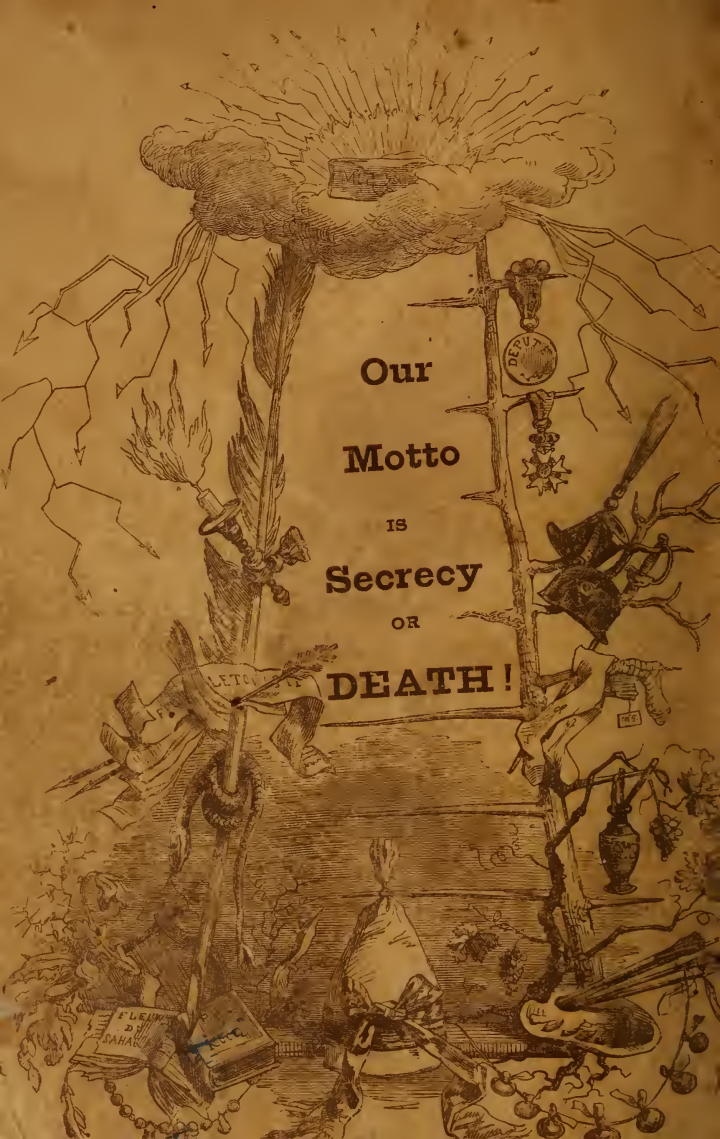
of government) the great danger to be apprehended; and therefore I have written everything in these connections which I could remember, or otherwise get possession of.

It may be asked if all Lodges are in possession of such costly and tremendous machinery as I have mentioned. Certainly not. There is but one set in a city, where all the initiations in that city take place; and there are but four sets in the world—viz., in London, Paris, Constantinople, and Calcutta—equal to that of New York. The celebrated Maelzel has the credit of preparing the one I have described, at a cost of little less than a hundred thousand dollars; but, however reason and philosophy may laugh at such things, I cannot avoid thinking that the devil had a hand in it. I repeat, that if I am called into a court of justice in relation to this pamphlet, I will establish all that I have said and *much more*; and I sincerely trust that the Government will see the importance of bringing about such a result—seeing that it is now made fully aware of a mighty and a still increasing danger, which threatens its very existence. And I also repeat my apprehension that this publication may cost me my life; but I felt that I owed it as a duty to my country and my religion, and therefore I abide the issue with a firm heart and an approving conscience.

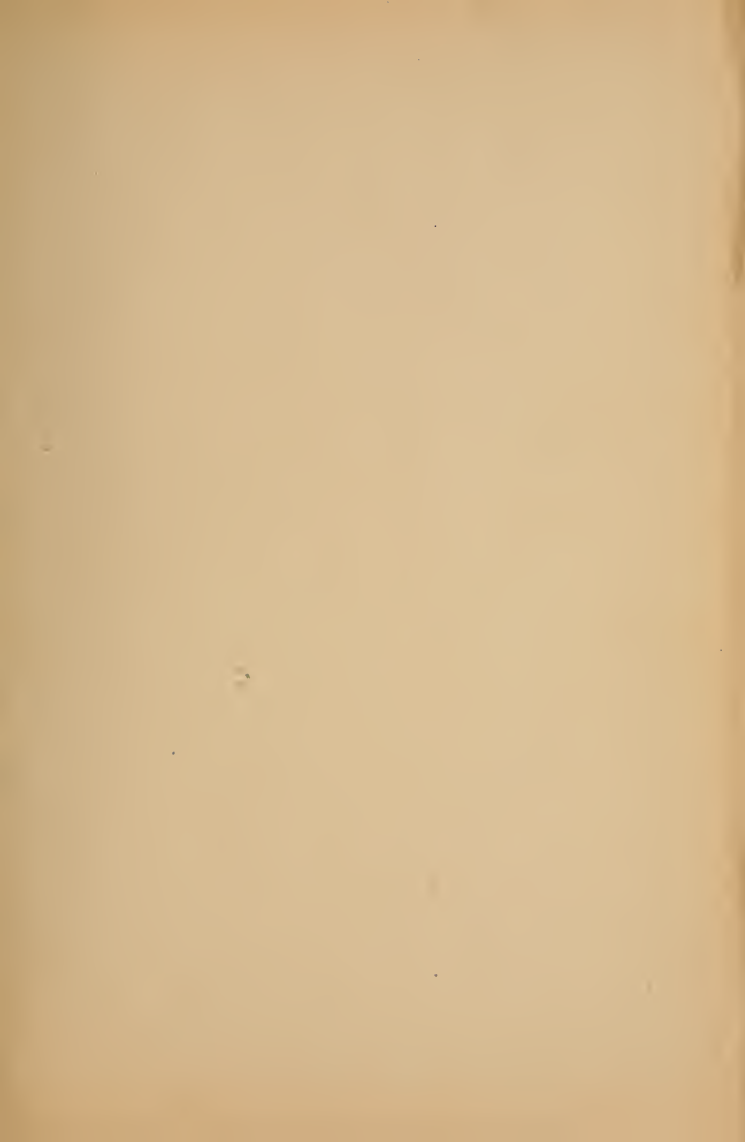




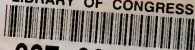
Our
Motto
IS
Secrecy
OR
DEATH!







LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 027 292 699 2