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THE
ODD FELLOWS' AMULET.



By
D. W. P. ...

AMBUAN,

DEBRY, HOLLER & CO.

THE
ODD FELLOWS' AMULET:

OR,

THE PRINCIPLES OF ODD FELLOWSHIP DEFINED;
THE OBJECTIONS TO THE ORDER ANSWERED;
AND ITS ADVANTAGES MAINTAINED.

WITH AN

A D D R E S S

TO THE PUBLIC, THE LADIES, AND THE ORDER.

BY

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AT AUBURN, N. Y.

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TO THE FRIENDS OF HUMANITY,
WHO WOULD SEE
WRETCHEDNESS AND SORROW BANISHED
FROM OUR WORLD,
AND WHO ARE STRIVING TO GIVE
UNIVERSAL PREVALENCE
TO THE DIVINE LAW,

“Do unto others as ye would have them do unto you,”

THIS WORK IS
RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
BY
THE AUTHOR.

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INTRODUCTORY.

THE Institution of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows has arisen out of the force of circumstances. In all ages of the world, and in all countries, there have been reverses of fortune, poverty, oppression, and a carelessness on the part of those in easy or affluent circumstances in attending to the wants of the needy, and the absence of those social feelings which are so important to the harmony and comfort of the great whole. Under such circumstances, nothing is more natural than that those who are thus exposed to what all instinctively dread, should resort to some means to avoid the unhappy fate which has overtaken others. To do this, wealth is sought by all, as the most certain antidote, as the surest protection. In its pursuit, multitudes fall through its open

meshes into the dark whirlpool they were endeavoring to avoid ; while others, who are so fortunate as to attain the goal of their fondest wishes, arrive there with seared and calloused sensibilities, often without health or friends, or a disposition to employ their means for their own or others' happiness. That such is the present state of society, under all the improvements and advantages of the present age, few, we apprehend, will be prepared to deny.

It is this spirit, not the want of means, but a fear and an interest for self, for self alone, which has allowed want to gloat itself to surfeit on its countless victims, and fill the annals of the day with the shocking details of misery, suffering, and crime, which exists in the very midst of affluence, and with good laws, too, for the relief of those who are in need. Impressed with these facts, men have endeavored to devise means by which they might avoid a catastrophe so much to be dreaded, and at the same time remedy those other social evils which exist in society.

They have seen one and another means fail which had this object in view. The parts composing these social structures have been so imperfectly joined as to be easily loosened, and the whole, one structure

after another, has fallen into decay. This has suggested the necessity of a closer compact, a firmer union of materials, to give solidity and permanence to the body. As the result, we have the present organization of Odd Fellowship, which so far has admirably answered the end for which it was formed ; and we trust it will continue to do so, until more powerful influences shall assert their proper dominion over the world at large. It is a striking fact, that those who most frequently suffer from poverty, are not those who were born in indigence, and have thus remained from a kind of choice of their own ; but they have been either in what is termed comfortable, or affluent circumstances in life, and by some sudden shift of fortune, or some unlooked for reverse in the ever-changing affairs around them, have been precipitated from their elevation, and immured in the dark obscurity of poverty. Such feel more keenly the degradation, which, by common consent, attaches to indigence, than those who never knew the comforts of competence.

Hence, they have an aversion to make known their actual wants ; they put on the appearance of cheerfulness, while, as was the case with the young Spartan, the fox is eating through the living flesh to their

very vitals. This class of poor, above all others, are worthy of commiseration and the support of friends; and they need these, to guard them, on the one hand against despair, and on the other against that misanthropy which so often sports with the best feelings of man when in adversity. For such have to contend against the power of a double affliction; they must bear up under the oppressive weight of poverty, while, at the same time, the recollections of the past, and of disappointed hopes, help to fill up their cup with unmingled bitterness. To those acquainted with the history of the poor in our great cities and large towns, the above remarks will not appear as speculation, since they are well aware that many who compose this class, are those who have been reduced to what they are, either by a long course of sickness, or the more cruel treachery of supposed friends, or by Providential occurrences entirely beyond their control. Such, with broken health and broken spirits, are painfully toiling on to obtain a scanty subsistence, or else submit to the agony of contending with famine and starvation themselves, or what is more cruel, see those dearer to them than their own lives, gradually wasting away before their eyes. One great design of this institution is to prevent to some extent these evils from falling on this class of our great

family, by furnishing, in the time of need, the means which shall secure them from the abjectness of want, and thus save them from sinking into despair, when all their worldly prospects are darkened.

Not only does it bring relief of a pecuniary nature, but it brings what is still more valuable—it holds the unfortunate in his place in society, and by the intercourse of friends, causes him to feel that misfortune is not a crime. Of course, we cannot expect this institution to do every thing which ought to be done in the world; but should it succeed in banishing only a small amount of the physical affliction incident to this life, it will have performed a worthy office for our race; or should it succeed in preventing only one human being from falling into moral crime, it would deserve the praise of having saved an incalculable amount of suffering.

It is, perhaps, the case, that we are unable to appreciate the value of that which remedies an evil, until we shall have actually tasted the bitter cup ourselves; then we shall be able to appreciate the office which would have saved us the misery we are called to endure. It may be so here. He who goes about the world administering to wants which already have

a being, is regarded and praised as a philanthropist. Such an one is indeed worthy of all honor. But he who employs his time and means to prevent evil and wrong, is seldom or perhaps never thought of in this world, as being the instrument of good to man. It remains for the world to come, to reveal which has really been of the greatest use to his race. There we may learn that to save from evil, is a greater virtue than to remedy it. This last is more particularly the office of this society, and it is for this reason, doubtless, many have been led to suppose that it was doing but little in the sphere which it had selected as its field of labor. Indeed, it is one great design of this institution, to protect from those enemies of our peace those associated with us, and thereby save a vast amount of mental and physical suffering, as well as moral degradation.

It may have been expected that we should say something respecting the antiquity of the Order. This we have not done in the body of this work for two reasons, the first is, it did not come properly into our plan, and secondly, we regard that as a subject of no importance whatever to the institution itself. When or where the Society commenced, is matter of small moment ; whether in the first or the fifteenth cen-

ture, whether at Rome or among the hills of Scotland, whether among the early persecuted Christians, or among those of a later day, it matters not. These considerations can add nothing to its weight or real value. It must be taken for the intrinsic worth which it now possesses. Could we prove Odd Fellowship, in its present form, to be as old as the pyramids, it could make it no better; while, if we show it to be good and useful, it detracts nothing from its real worth, though it should be conclusively shown to have been originated but yesterday. The great question to be settled is, its *principles*. These we have no hesitancy in saying, are not only good, but ancient, as old as the Bible, from which they are taken.

As to the propriety or impropriety, the utility or inutility of such institutions, there is, doubtless, as is the case with a multitude of other subjects, a great variety of opinion. While there will be some who will consider them useless, and even dangerous, there will be others of equal judgment, who will consider them useful, and even essential to the public weal. And as in nearly all countries, men are allowed to think and act according to their own inclinations on such subjects, we suppose they will continue to do so on this. This Society will live, and

men will continue to unite with, and love it, while others will suspect and oppose it. Each class will use their own legitimate privilege as citizens, being responsible civilly to the government under which they live, for what they do and say, and morally to God, the sovereign Judge of all men.

We have no hard things to say of our opposers, no censure to cast on them; and should anything be found in the following pages, which can be construed that way, no one will regret it more than the author. It is certain two wrongs can never make one right. If those who oppose us are pleased to censure us unjustly, we are not in the least disposed to add to the amount of evil by retaliation.

We have endeavored to set before the world our principles, and the reasons which govern us in the course we have elected. This we have endeavored to do with candor and fairness. We may not have succeeded to the satisfaction of all. Nor is it probable all will be led to embrace our views, or be convinced by the reasons we have given. Indeed, it would be a miracle if they should, since men differ with reference to the most obvious truths, on other subjects. It has also been our aim to furnish members

of the order with the means of their own defence, when attacked by those who do not understand the principles of the institution, or who through prejudice oppose them in what they conscientiously believe to be a work of duty and humanity.

How far we have succeeded in this, they must judge. In doing this, we have endeavored to adhere to facts, as they actually exist, philosophically and morally. We may have erred; if so, it has been in all honesty, and after much study and thought to avoid error. Our impression has been from the first, and is now, that this is the cause of humanity — one which will bring to the suffering aid, and to those participating in its active duties much present profitable enjoyment, and ultimately many blessings from those who were ready to perish.

AUBURN, N. Y., 1848.

PART I.

THE

Principles of Odd Fellowship Defined.



THE association of men, for mutual improvement and protection, is as ancient as human society.

Anterior to the flood, when Nature was in its early infancy, and men were few, they banded in union, for entertainment, instruction, for profit, and safety. Hence, at this early day, cities rose, girded with walls for their defence, and arms were forged, to

give success to martial enterprises, or to repel invasion. In the Patriarchal age, the same features of society are exhibited to us, and the lines of demarkation are more distinctly drawn; for here each family is united as a little state, with its laws, and Parent as its Priest and Prince. At one time, these appear singly in carrying forward their immediate interests; but when the necessity is great, and the foe numerous, they form confederacies to secure their purpose and to defend their rights. Abraham and the confederate kings, who marched out in defence of Lot, the kinsman of the Patriarch, is a beautiful illustration of the use they made of this law of union. Under what may be termed the Prophetic period, we have a still more perfect delineation of the same law of union. The families of God's ancient people were in the land of their bondage kept distinct, not only from the Egyptians, their oppressors, but from each other, and this, not as the result of

caprice on their part, but by an actual requirement of the Author of their peculiar national and religious existence. When they left the place of their oppression, they were required to do so by families, and by tribes; when they passed the highway through the sea, they did it by the same rules; their journeyings for forty years in the desert, were governed by the same law; and it was under the same requirements that they entered the land of promise, and received, by lot, their appropriate place in the long-looked-for rest; the lines bounding their appointed inheritance being accurately defined.

Nor is the Christian era less characterized by the same distinguishing marks. It has been, and is now, distinguished by its churches, each having a noble end in view, but separated into a great variety of departments, few of which act as a unit, though all are contemplating the achievement of the world's good.

It is the same in the world of morals. Each worthy object has been, from time to time, singled out, and elevated to such prominence as to commend itself to the support of the community at large, and rally around its standard the good and virtuous for its support. Such is the case in the cultivation of letters, the morality of the temperance cause, the circulation of the Holy Scriptures and religious reading, with nameless other good and worthy objects which distinguish the present age. Indeed, so universally does this feature of society prevail, that we are justified in the conclusion that it is founded in a law of our nature; for it is exhibited not only in civilized society, but among the semi-barbarous, and barbarous tribes of our world.

In the palmy days of Egypt, Phœnicia, Greece, Rome, and even among the wild, but noble race who roam our own wide wilderness, we trace the same union for mutual protection and advantage. We look in vain

for the spot in our world where this feature does not obtain. Nor is it the result of study, or contact with civilized men; but it arises spontaneously out of the necessities which cluster around man when first he breathes in the world.

The wild man of the tropics, and he who is clad in the skins of beasts at the poles, he who roams among the Himmalehs, and he of the Andes, as well as the polished European, is controlled by the same imperative conventional rule, which arises out of a law of his own existence.

It is this feature in society which, we conceive, justifies, if it does not proclaim the necessity for, the existence among men of an institution like that of Odd Fellowship: the design of which we shall now proceed to consider.

If in any employment or enterprise, those engaged in it are unable to show some worthy object which is contemplated by them, they have but small claim on the in-

dulgence of the world, to which they appeal for countenance and support; but in so far as the object they have in view is worthy and important, by so much may they look for sympathy from those to whom they make their appeal. Such, we are aware, is the case with the cause of which we now speak. It has been the misfortune of this institution, that it has been considered secret — to what extent, those without have not been agreed; yet this notion has prevailed so widely, that comparatively few have taken the trouble to examine whether the allegation was founded in fact, or how far the society felt itself at liberty to make public its principles, its objects, or its operations. That there are some things connected with this institution which are necessarily secret, we do not pretend to deny; but they are only those things which relate to the immediate interests of the order, and they have not the most remote bearing on the least interest of any one not

connected with it. But the idea of secrecy has led some to suppose, innocently, no doubt, that all search would be in vain; and hence, they have either never made the attempt, or have received what they may have casually met with, respecting the order, with dark suspicion, or with cold distrust. Such may be surprised to learn that the principles and objects of the order have never been veiled in the least, but have been published and scattered as widely through the land as our circumstances would admit; yea, more, that the reports of the state of its membership and its finances, with its constitution and by-laws, have ever been given to the world.

Having said thus much, in this place, of the *past*, and of secrecy, we are now prepared to speak more fully of the design of the institution of Odd Fellowship.

The first advantage arising from this society, of which we shall speak, is the practical knowledge it gives its members in

the manner and art of doing business in deliberative bodies. Those acquainted with the embarrassments of one unpracticed in this art, can at once appreciate the advantages of a school where he can practice, and study the art of speaking and action, in the enjoyment of respect, and free from fear and embarrassment.

The Lodge-room is such a place. Here all those distinctions which obtain in society without are dissolved, here all meet with equal interest, and enjoy equal respect. No matter how humble the circumstances of a member may be, or how few the advantages he has enjoyed, he is here regarded as a member and a brother; and as such, he is protected and respected, his opinions are weighed, his judgment is honored; in a word, he is made to feel that he is a man. He is not made to cower and feel abashed under some rude rebuff, or to close his lips under the unmannerly sneer of an amused and promiscuous assembly.

Under such circumstances, the most timid finds out that he can learn as well as others, and confidence in one's self gives courage for more public action, when circumstances demand it.

All business in the Lodge-room is classified and arranged in the most beautiful order, and every proceeding is forwarded with the most exact harmony; so that the least attentive member cannot fail to have more or less method incorporated into his general habits of life.

Indeed, order and regularity are among the first principles taught by the order. The rotation which is demanded by the institution in conferring its offices, cannot fail, sooner or later, to call out the talent of its members in one or another active business department of a deliberative or incorporated body. While the constant recurrence of these active business scenes, cannot fail to keep the details fresh in the mind, until they are fully and permanently im-

printed on the memory. It is in this way that this institution is noiselessly and cheaply instructing and preparing thousands of our countrymen in the first great duty of American citizenship, and instead of making them worse, is actually making them better, because more orderly and intelligent citizens.

Another object contemplated by this institution is to make men "social and humane." Who has not more than once lamented the social distinctions which have obtained in society? distinctions, not founded in moral, or intellectual worth, but which rest on the mere circumstance of property or connections! Who has not seen some that ranked high, when mind, or morals, or attainments are considered, who have been made outcasts from the very society they were fitted to adorn, because they were not rich, or had no connections who were in favor with such, to lift them into rank? How often do we find such bound with the

menial's chain, and compelled to drudge for those who, in comparison to them, are mere intellectual dwarfs, whose moral beauty bears no better comparison with that of their menials, than the present glory of the remotest star with the cloudless noonday sun. Nor can society, as it at present exists, remedy this defect in our social system. Such an order of things always has, and, perhaps, always will exist. Nor do we pretend that Odd Fellowship will prove a universal remedy for this evil, because there are some, in every community, whom its plastic hand will not be permitted to touch; but this we can assert, and without fear of successful contradiction, that within the circle of its influence this baneful contagion will meet with a prompt and successful remedy; that under its patronage, men will be taken at their true value, artificial lines will be obliterated, and society will stand together as they came from the hand of the Creator, "who has made of one blood all

nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth.”

The basis on which the institution rests, is a sufficient guarantee of this. Indeed, it cannot depart from this rule, without vitiating the whole system, because this is one of the important, we may say, most important principles on which it rests, and out of which arise many features of its beautiful details. Who will say that an office like this has no humanity connected with it? Who will not sympathize deeply with the family whose head is thus lifted above the clouds and darkness which had gathered around his social prospects, into the radiance and beauty of equal enjoyment with his fellow men, to whom he never would have been known, but for the friendly offices of this institution?

He is truly humane, who not only clothes the naked, and feeds the hungry, but who hunts out the wounds which lie festering deep in the afflicted heart, and applies

the healing ointment of consolation, by redressing the wrongs which have inflicted the hurts he would cure. And yet such is a prominent office of Odd Fellowship.

Another prominent object contemplated by this order, is to train and correct the moral feelings of men.

To those who have looked upon this institution as evil and only evil, in its tendencies, this may appear a most strange position, but it is one which is nevertheless true. While this society boasts the discovery of no new principle of action, by which to govern the lives of its members, it does claim, and that with all truth, to enforce upon them no lower standard of morals than that which is taught in the Holy Scriptures. Hence, nearly all the instruction it imparts, is drawn from that sacred fountain of right; and these great truths are enforced by all the sanctions which God has appended to his instructions to our race. Its discipline, the rules of which are

before the public, is mild and sufficiently lenient, and at the same time firm and unbending when made to bear upon the erring, should they prove incorrigible to its milder efforts at reform.

The penalties employed by the order, are moral and reformatory in their character; affording sufficient time for affectionate efforts of brethren to recall the erring from his wanderings, and save to him a character put in jeopardy by uncalled for moral eccentricities, and at the same time afford to the mass of members the opportunity to exercise that forbearance and carefulness with respect to another's reputation, which must always produce a happy influence on the heart and life of those who are its subjects. But should the exercise of these friendly attentions to the erring prove unavailing, he may be fined, reprimanded, or suspended; and should these fail of the effect they are designed to produce, the offending brother must endure the highest

penalty known to the order, he must be expelled.

The chamber of sickness, and the house of mourning, to which every member of this society must sooner or later be called, not as idle spectators of distress, but as those immediately interested in the scenes which are transpiring before them, cannot fail to have their influence on the heart, though it were iron. There they visit not a neighbor merely, but a partner who is in distress. But their partnership is not of that gross nature, as some have supposed, which relates to commerce and to gold, but one which is founded in view of the certain but dreaded hour which to one of their number has now arrived. They have been cultivating affections and sympathies for months, it may be years, which should fit them for the delicate and tender offices demanded by this time of trial; and now the fearful hour has come, which makes one the subject of suffering, the others his inter-

ested attendants. Under such circumstances, can the hardest heart be unaffected by the approach of those lofty moral sentiments which live and breathe in the chamber of adversity? Can the hand called to administer there be reached out, and the red heart, big with sympathy and affection, not be pulsating in its palm? Can the eye, though unused to weep, now fail to be moistened with the dew of generous sympathy? It cannot be; these are circumstances which reduce the lion of our nature to the mildness of the lamb. Yet scenes like this are addressing the heart and the conscience of members of this institution daily. Nor do they cease with the hours of sickness, but speak from the low, narrow house appointed to all the living, to admonish survivors of their certain end; they live and move in the faces and swelling bosoms of the wife and children, left behind by the departed. The moral they teach dies not away with the sound of the falling clods on

the coffin of him who is at rest, but prolong their echo with the memory of his name.

Such is the eloquence which appeals directly to our moral nature, in the designs and operations of this institution, and if they fail to impress the heart with proper sentiments, and commend to the life proper habits, we are at a loss to determine what means are within our reach, which can be more effectual.

Nearly allied to the object named above there is another. It is to relieve the wants of the needy; not as many have supposed, the wants of those connected with this institution only, but want wherever found, and we have the ability to extend to its subject aid, without distressing our families or ourselves. It is true, the funds of this institution are accumulated for a specific end, and they are to be religiously devoted to that end; but this does not alter the principle, nor the extent of its application, as they are only the instrument, not the

end had in view. The practice to which this principle is reduced, is evidence that the principle enforced, and the object avowed, is not an empty pretence, but that it is interwoven, as far as possible, with the life of all connected with this society. For each has an amount which he is to contribute each week, for a given purpose, as the price of his continuance with the establishment; so that when the evidence of a tide of beneficence flowing from his soul ceases, he also ceases to be numbered among its members; as it is then evident that his heart is barren of those sentiments the society strives to inculcate; and that, as a consequence, he is unfit for those kindly offices which are expected at his hands.

We have already seen how the members of this order are found with the afflicted and the distressed. They never meet without inquiry, if "any one knows of a sick brother, or a brother in distress." And when relief is demanded, it is controlled by

a most perfect system. It is not the case that to-day the afflicted is overwhelmed by a tide of attentions, and to-morrow be allowed to suffer a perfect dearth; but, as regular as the succession of day and night, the countenances of his friends beam on him, with inquiries for his welfare, and the kindest offices for his comfort. Care and anxiety for attendants comes not down like corroding rust on the hearts of his friends; rule appoints them, and law and affection secure their attendance. Nor does the office of such terminate with the member who suffers, but it is extended to the wants of his family; should death strike down their prop, the members of this order interpose, to hold up those who were dependent on him for support. The widow and the children of the departed member are attended, relieved, and protected, by the father's friends, when he is no more. In this society the widow finds a friend, and the orphan a guardian, who will defend him

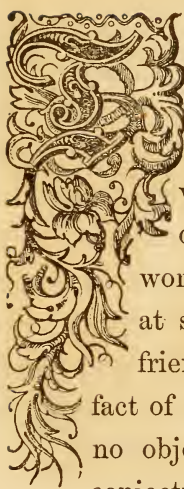
in the inexperience and the waywardness of youth, one to protect him when vice and immorality lurk in ambush for their early victim.

Such are the objects contemplated by the Independent Order of Odd Fellows — such the principles which govern them in their intercourse with each other. None have ever appeared to controvert the lawfulness or worthiness of the avowed objects of the institution. They are of a nature too high, and of a character too sacred, for any to presume to invade them. Yet, while all acknowledge the excellence of the objects, and even confess their paramount claims on society, they have not been wanting who question, in all honesty, no doubt, the propriety of the means used for the attainment of the end contemplated. And some, doubtless, have even felt that the means were not only questionable but actually criminal. Such, of course, while they have cherished objections, have not been

backward in expressing them. Believing such objections to have been cherished in honesty and candor, we shall proceed to answer them kindly, and we hope, to the mind enquiring after truth, conclusively.

PART II.

Objections Answered.

HAT there are those who object to this institution, is not to be urged as an objection to the institution itself, since we know of no society, or law, or general arrangement in the world, which has not now, or had at some time those who were unfriendly to it. So that the mere fact of there being objections, can be no objection in itself; it is merely conjecture, which only exists in the mind of the objector, independent of all specific data, and may or may not naturally



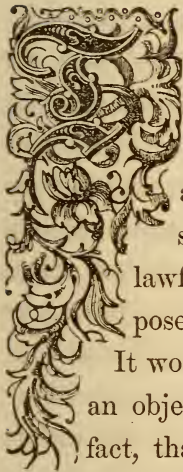
The Family Reunion

arise out of the subject, as a consequence of some one or more of its laws or principles of action; the whole is only conjectural, and can pass only as private opinion, without tangible or apparent evidence; and yet we have heard this gravely urged as a good reason against this society. But, were we to admit this as a conclusive reason here, and thence adopt the principle, then by our own precedent we must relinquish our hold on the most firmly established and venerable truths, and allow, not only our own just opinions, but all truth, to be scattered to the winds, since there is not one, either law, custom, or organization, against which objections have not, at some time, been urged. The mere fact, therefore, of their being objections, should have no weight with any one, until they are drawn out in detail, and shown to arise legitimately out of the subject under consideration, and to lie certainly and truthfully against it.

With these remarks on the nature and weight of objections, when urged in opposition to subjects, we will proceed to take up the specified objections usually urged in opposition to this institution, as far as they occur to us, and apply to each the test which truth will justify.

II.

“It may be used for Political Purposes.”



THE first tangible objection we meet, as we present this subject to the public, is, “It may be used for political purposes, and it may thus endanger the state, or affect unfavorably the lawful interests of those who compose it.”

It would be a sufficient reply to such an objection, merely to announce the fact, that the institution is composed of individuals of all political parties. Were they all of one of the great political divisions of the day, there might be some ground for the objection. But, it will be remembered, they are composed of men of every shade of political views. and who has ever

known the instance of an individual who has sacrificed his political relations to those of an ordinary character? So far from being capable of political uses is this institution, that the thing is utterly impossible. Those who differ in political views, hold a mutual watch over each other, so that any movement of the kind would be like an endeavor to raise an insurrection in the face of day, while surrounded with superior forces, who were placed to prevent the very thing the few were endeavoring to accomplish. Were we even to admit that there are those now in this society, so base as to desire an achievement of the kind the objector supposes, or that there ever will be, still there will ever be found in the society itself, two classes, who would not only defeat, but expose the attempt.

The first class would be those who are their political opponents. These could never be so blinded as to succumb to any intrigue on the part of those to whom

they were opposed in views not lawfully connected with the institution itself. The second class are those who have the good of the institution at heart, and who would never submit to see it used for any other than the great and worthy purposes for which it was established. One, if not both of these classes must exist in every Lodge; for it certainly would involve greater credulity to suppose that all could be brought to a uniform way of thinking, where men are so decidedly opposed as in politics, and at the same time be corrupted and drawn off from their avowed object, than to suppose that a conservative principle has a place, in the form we name above, in the institution itself. But there is still another view, which sets the objection aside at once. It is this: the whole compact would dissolve by its own law, the moment it is given up to political or sectarian interests; for that moment those who do it have invaded the charter under which they live, and have cut

every bond which unites and holds them in fellowship, and by that act have absolved every member from his obligations to their jurisdiction; while the powers of such a lodge revert to the authority which at first granted them. And so sacred are these views, that no meeting for business is ever opened, without a caution to members to shun this rock, while heavy fines keep sentinel, to guard the enclosure against the entrance of those agents which, by their power, have shivered society into so many atoms, and rained upon it such bitterness and discord. The very elements, therefore, of which this great body is composed, utterly refute the objection opposed to it by the objector; for his fears can never be realized until a radical change can be effected in the mental and moral constitution of men, and that change such an one as has, up to this time, in the history of the world, baffled all attempts of the most powerful cunning and designing of our race; for the history of man

does not afford us an instance of success, where such an attempt has been made, even where the bonds which have united parties have been of the most terrible and binding character. Where the penalty visited upon the betrayer of his trust, has been death in its most terrible forms, the mind and the conscience have refused to be held captive by them. How, then, can it for a moment be supposed, that an institution holding its members together only by moral ties, can attempt the wide-spread mischief contemplated by the objection, and not be detected at the very outset? The very idea must be its own refutation.

Men who would differ on political subjects out of the lodge-room, were such subjects admitted there, would do so in it, and on the other hand, those who agreed without its doors will do the same within: but if those who thus differ, contend with such interest for a mastery of views and a majority of votes in all places, and at all times,

can it for a moment be supposed that there is a place in the universe, where one party could advance its interests in the presence, and to the detriment of the other party, and they not only hold their peace, but concur in the very measures designed for their own defeat, and, as they believed, measures which would result in detriment to their own interest? We repeat it, the idea is its own refutation.

Having, as we think, answered this objection conclusively, so far as relates to this particular society; a work which we have treated more at large than we otherwise should, lest our opponents should say we had evaded the question at issue; we wish now to enquire, what there is in the objection, after all, which can justify its claims to the importance which those who use it would seem to intimate that it possesses? on what fact can those who urge it fix, to justify their apprehensions? where in history can they point to one solitary instance, where such

an institution has ever interfered with the affairs of justice, or with civil or political administration? when have they ever figured in any revolution, or change of government? We are aware, such things have been conjectured and alleged, but where is the credible proof? Can such a circumstance be found within the wide circle of historic record? We are pointed to the Jesuits of the Papal Church, and the Jacobins of the French Revolution, but it should be remembered that these hold no parallel to the subject under consideration. One of them is professedly a purely religious institution, designed only for one sect and one purpose, which is the propagation of the faith. The other was purely political; it was formed and used only for political purposes, and hence was composed of only one political party.

The foundation of this objection is, therefore, a mere vision, a baseless conjecture; one which has been rung over the land with

the voice of a trumpet, until it is believed to be uncontrovertible, while there is not even a shadow of any thing but mere conjecture for its support. Where what are termed secret societies have done harm, has been in the hands of a corrupted, intolerant, supreme church. The evidence of their harm elsewhere remains to be found and given to the world. But, says the objector, "your society has the power, and hence may do harm." Indeed! So your son has the power, and hence he may become a murderer. What then? Why, according to this objection, and the argument which is hung upon it, you should hang him at once, of course; and thereby, by possibility, you may save the life of some valuable citizen, and your son from the actual guilt of murder. Does common sense revolt at such a premise and conclusion? Then it objects to the course pursued by the opposers of this subject on this ground, for the cases are precisely parallel in principle.

“You administer Unlawful Oaths and threaten Unlawful Penalties.”

NOTHER objection which we hear urged in opposition to this institution is, “You administer unlawful oaths, and threaten unlawful penalties.”

To one who has passed through all the grades of this society, this objection cannot be other than novel! To one who, after having passed the threshold of a lodge-room, and ascended through all the regular gradations to the highest honors of the institution, and enjoyed its beautiful moral and catholic teachings, drawn as they are from the wisdom of the inspired volume, and in his whole course has never heard of an oath, nor even been made

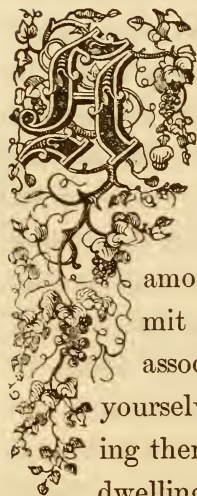
to tremble in view of a penalty more terrible than a fine, reprimand, suspension, or an expulsion! We say for such an one to hear that he is bound by the most startling oaths, and surrounded by the apparition of the most terrible penalties; it can be matter not only of deep surprise, but of unalloyed amusement; that is, if one can be amused by that absurd propensity of our nature, which is more ready to devour the most deformed absurdity, than it is to receive the truth in the spirit of true charity.

The truth is, Odd Fellowship has no oaths, and threatens no penalties other than those of a moral nature. It has fixed its principles in the true philosophy of things; that is, it founds the safety of its trusts in the value of that which is committed to the care of its members, well knowing that if their integrity will not hold the charge inviolate without, it is in vain that they bind them with the chains of oaths and deadly sanctions.

Oaths and penalties would be out of character in such an institution. They would not be in keeping with its design, they would be a strange infringement on its harmony, and a contradiction of the doctrine of mutual confidence and trust the institution is designed to promote among men.

They could not, therefore, be introduced, without altering the complexion of the whole fabric, and essentially changing its design. We have already seen that moral culture is one great design of this association, and mutual trust and confidence is one of the means it has selected by which to promote the virtues of trustworthiness and integrity. So much for this objection; one which, though strenuously urged, is without foundation, and without application when made to the Independent Order of Odd Fellows.

“The Poor cannot become Members of it.”



ANOTHER objection which is often urged in opposition to this institution is, “The poor cannot become members of it.” Such an objection, when rendered into good English, amounts to this: You do not admit persons gratuitously to your association, and then take upon yourselves the obligation of supporting them when want shall visit their dwelling, or sickness invade their person; or, in other words, you do not propose to take all the poor in the land, and by your associated charity make them comfortable, by discharging a duty equally binding on the whole community! If this be a proper objection, where in the wide world is the

association to which it does not apply? If the force of this objection should be sufficient to overturn every fabric to which it applies with equal strength as to Odd Fellowship, where, in the whole compass of society, is one which could exist an hour? "Your society is bad because the poor cannot join it!" That is, every institution which is not open to the poor man is bad, at least, is not good; and therefore ought to fall! But where have we ever heard of a stock company which has made a dividend to the poor, of an amount equal to those who had made investments for its success? What banks, manufacturing companies, or stockholders in railroads, or insurance companies have ever done this? What mercantile house has invited the whole or a part of any community, from which they have made their profits, to become equal sharers with the proprietors, in the avails of their labor, foresight, and frugality? We doubt if such a thing was ever thought of, only in

connection with objections to Odd Fellowship; a society, which, odd enough, and unlike any of these when any of their class become poor or fall into distress, proposes to look after its own members in the hour of adversity. It is perfectly well known, that the associations which are named above, are formed for the sole purpose of making money. Other advantages may arise out of their existence incidentally, and doubtless do, but money is the avowed object which gives them being: and yet such associations are not only considered laudable but praiseworthy; notwithstanding, not one poor man in the whole community owns a share in one of them, or ever receives a shilling of their profits, only as he renders an equivalent in labor, yet these associations are not only tolerated, but nursed in the bosom of every community; and no note of objection is ever heard against them; but when an association awakes in society, which contemplates the alleviation of dis-

tress, the promotion of the social virtues, and the cultivation of those benevolent feelings so much needed in the world, then all is wrong, every motive is sinister, and the whole field of thought is ransacked for objections to overthrow it. But is this objection founded in truth? Is it the case that poor men cannot become Odd Fellows? Where is the man who knows the instance where a single individual has ever been rejected, because he was poor? So far from this being the case, is it not a glorious truth, that the great proportion of Odd Fellows are poor men? A majority through the United States and Great Britain, it may be found, on investigation, are laborers. It is true, the institution is represented among statesmen, and all the professions, and among capitalists. Indeed, every class in community is represented in its halls; and still we hazard nothing in saying, the mass of the society is made up of laboring men. What, then, becomes of the assertion, that

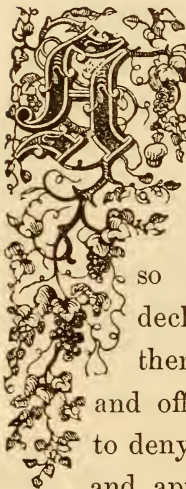
“the poor cannot become members.” That paupers cannot, we freely admit; but that able-bodied, moral, industrious men cannot, we strenuously deny, and we challenge the world to produce one such instance.

“But he cannot procure the means which will enable him to become a member!” Indeed, and can he procure land, or even the necessaries of life without the means? Is he in want of no means to procure even the most ordinary articles which his existence demands? Can he attain to even the common privileges of society without means? And why make this institution an exception to all others, even to the one to which the objector belongs? Why bind upon it burdens which neither it nor any other society could bear for an hour? No society which makes pledges can redeem those pledges without the means; hence every association has a price, which is to enable it to respond to those calls which, according to its constitution, may be made upon it; and he

who has no stock in a partnership, has no claim on the appropriation of its avails. He, therefore, who has done nothing for this institution, has no claim on it, more than he who never paid a shilling for land, has a claim on the possessions of a neighbor; or he who has no policy, and never had, has a right to look to an insurance company for indemnity for loss by fire.

II V.

“Odd Fellowship is limited in its Operations.”



ANOTHER objector comes forward and very gravely tells us, that “Odd Fellowship is limited in its operations.”— We hardly know what to make of this objection, it is so broad and sweeping in its declaration. If it means that there is partiality in its offices and offerings, then we are prepared to deny the allegation unequivocally, and appeal to the published constitution of the society, and to its practice, where no difference is or even can be known, either in letter or in fact, between what the world calls the most honorable, or the most obscure ; for there is no difference known in the distribution of the funds, or

the offices of kindness, in the constitution. The high, the low, the rich, the poor, meet with the same respect, the same treatment. But if, as we suspect, the objector means to say, this institution does not bestow its aid indiscriminately on all the poor and needy through the land, or that Odd Fellows do not do as much for the needy as other citizens, why, then, we have something to say in reply.

That Odd Fellows do not devote the funds of the institution to indiscriminate charity, is true ; for these funds are raised for a specific purpose, which is, to aid members and their families in the time of sickness and death. They could not, therefore, apply them to any other purpose, without a violation of their published rules, unless all the members were agreed to such appropriation. And, even then, such an application of funds, to many minds, is of questionable expediency ; not because they have not the right, where all the proprie-

tors are agreed, but on the ground of precedent, which may from time to time be urged, until, in the end, a kind of claim will be set up, which may in time lead the institution beyond the boundaries it has fixed for its government, and thus defeat, or cripple to a greater or less extent, its original design.

But if the objector means to say that the members of this institution are not in the habit of doing as much for those in want as other members of society; or, in other words, that this institution dries up the fountains of their general charity, then are we prepared to meet them in the issue. Is it not the case that members of this society pay as much to the legal calls upon them, as other men of the same pecuniary ability? and in the occasional cases of distress which call for aid, are they more stinted in their gifts than other citizens? We believe not: at any rate, we have never had the misfortune to meet with such an instance; nor

have we had the fortune, whether good or bad we do not pretend to say, to meet with the objector who would allege that he had! he only thought such *might* be the tendency! Now, we inquire, in all honesty, is this a just criterion of judgment? is this a just ground of condemnation, or even of objection? What may, by possibility, be the tendency? Alas, if such be the ground of objection and condemnation, we know not what cause, however good, may not pass under the ban of condemnation. On this ground we will object to wealth, for it may, nay, it has led to aristocracy and oppression! We will object to religion or religious societies, because they, too, have led to bigotry and persecution! We will object to learning, because in some instances it has conferred upon its possessor a power which is dangerous! And thus we might reason with reference to every subject, until we had vitiated and filled with poison the very elements of society. We will not

name instances, which have come to our knowledge; but let the objector go through many, we will not say all our large towns, and enquire who have been the most forward in alleviating the wants of the poor, and we happen to know that in several instances at least, he will be told that this very class of citizens, to whom he objects, because their beneficence is so circumscribed, was the only class who, for whole winters remembered, or made any considerable outlay for the benefit of the destitute. These were the men who sought, in their cellars and hovels, the hungry and famishing, and administered to their wants to the amount of several hundred dollars, in a single season. And this money was not taken from the funds of their Lodge, but contributed by individuals for this specific purpose. With such instances before us, and they are not few, will it be said that the operations of the order are circumscribed? They are circumscribed, indeed,

to a certain extent, but it is by the same power which ever limits the benefactions of the kind-hearted every where — the extent of their ability. Such is the spirit, and feeling, and action, this order is ever destined to awake in the minds of its members; it not only gives them the theory, but the practice of true benevolence.

“You create Distinctions in Society.”



SUALLY when we arrive at this stage of the discussion on this subject, we hear the whisper of some kind friend who says, but “You create distinctions in society.”

We frankly acknowledge, could this objection be made to appear well founded, as urged against Odd Fellowship, it would have not a little weight in prejudicing our mind, and fixing our hostility to the institution; for one thing is certain, which is, that we need no more distinctions among us than we have at present. For who has not seen and lamented over the atoms into which communities are shivered? We have the distinction of letters, of wealth, of

politics, and of religion! with a thousand other nameless distinctions, which present the inhabitants of a single neighborhood knotted into groups, as though they were people from different quarters of the globe, or distinct races, each considering his neighbor inferior to himself. Now, if Odd Fellowship is about to add another class to the long catalogue which already exists, then we join with the objector to oppose its onward march. But is this the case? On what ground do those different classes meet in the lodge-room?

They meet not only as fellow-citizens, but as men; not as belonging to this party or that sect, but as heirs to the same ills and the same reverses which fall to the lot of our common race; they come together, not to further this or that party design, but to prepare each other's mind for the trials to which each is so certainly liable, to heighten each other's enjoyment in social and fraternal intercourse, and to give assur-

ances of aid and support when the dark whirlwind of life's reverses shall come sweeping down and overturn the fair fabric of earthly hopes, and when death shall smite his victim, and through him strike other hearts. At such a time they pledge to be there to bind up, and console, and alleviate the quivering and bleeding members.

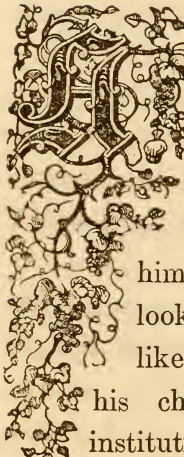
They meet to train their bands, not to battle with parties which may choose to put themselves in hostile array ; but to contend with the more subtle and hostile foe, disease, and to be prepared to reach out the hand of aid, and speak the word of sympathy to all who may need it — to snatch from the grave half its gloom, and from bereavement half its sting, by giving to the widow and the fatherless the assurance that they are not quite alone in this world of sighs. Such is their business, and it is thus they meet. In their assemblies is not heard the hoarse croaking of a purse-proud aristocracy

clamoring for a moneyed and an unworthy ascendancy over their equals, and not unfrequently their superiors. Here the high are made low, the low are elevated, until all occupy the one great level of our nature ; all are impressed with the great and truthful sentiment, that by nature "there is no difference." Such are the distinctions created by Odd Fellowship, and these only. Nor are they peculiar to the lodge-room : they extend to all the walk of members of the order.

If such teaching and such practice are "creating distinctions in society," then is this order open to that objection ; if not, then it is clear of the charge. If breaking down the artificial lines which have been drawn by an arbitrary and a capricious hand be a virtue, then is this institution entitled to the praise of that virtue ; if such be a vice, then it must, yea, is even willing, to bear the odium of that vice.

V II .

“Yours is a Secret Institution.”



ANOTHER, who contemplates this subject, appears confidently mailed in an objection, which he is confident no weapon can penetrate, protected, as he believes himself, from crown to toe, he looks defiance as he proclaims, like a true knight pronouncing his challenge, “Yours is a secret institution.”

We are aware that this objection is most strenuously and frequently urged against this institution, we are unable however, to see the force of such an objection, unless it proceeds upon this principle, that all which is secret must necessarily be suspicious! And we believe this is the

light in which this subject is usually viewed by those who object to secrecy in an institution. As this objection is considered one of considerable importance, by those who urge it, and by many is doubtless advanced as unanswerable, we propose to view it in all the lights and aspects in which it may occur to our mind, and so far as we are capable of doing it, furnish an answer to the honest enquirer after truth on this subject; and where we fail in this, we may succeed at least in giving to our opposers an apology for our usages.

What, then, is meant by secrecy, as applied to the Independent Order of Odd Fellows? It is important that we understand what the objector means, as the objection, undefined, is one of immense latitude. Does he mean to affirm that the public are unacquainted with the fact of who are members; that this is one of the unrevealed and unrevealable features of the institution? if so, a greater mistake was

never labored under by any toiling mind, for this is a fact which none have ever attempted to disguise. Who are, and who are not members all have a right to know, and may know by simply making the inquiry. So that the charge of secrecy cannot attach to us in this respect. Does the objection apply to the place of meeting? This cannot be, for wherever there is a lodge, the place where it meets is, or may be known to all; and is often visited by all classes of citizens: here, therefore, is no secret. Does it relate to the time of meeting? This cannot be: since every lodge, in published documents which it gives to the world, fixes the time of its meeting for the entire year, not only the day in the week, but the hour when they may be found in session. So that secrecy cannot be charged here. Does it relate to the rules which govern them in their meetings? Assuredly, this will not be charged, for these are made public. And we may

say the order is anxious, even more anxious that the public should have these papers and the information they contain, than they are to avail themselves of them. In this instance, therefore, the charge of secrecy is not sustained. Can it be said the *objects* of the institution are secret? We know not with what propriety this can be charged, for these are openly avowed by every member, and by several periodicals, which are published for the institution; and are thrown broad-cast over the continent. So the charge is not applicable in this instance. And will the charge of secrecy hold in relation to the general interests of the institution? We apprehend not; for we are confident, that so far as general arrangement, number of lodges, number of members, amount of receipts and expenditures, and the condition of the order, in each state in this Union, is concerned, no society publishes fuller statistical reports than this society; and they are so published as to be open

to the inspection of all persons who will take the trouble to peruse them. And beyond all this, the transactions of their great central bodies are open to general inspection! Now, we inquire, what does any other society, in this or any other country, more than this, to inform the world of its doings? In all this we have not found a place for the charge of secrecy! Where, then, are we to find room for such a charge? If it be levelled now, let it aim at a definite point, then we can plead to it with certainty.

“But you have some things connected with your society, which you do not make public!” Indeed! And this is what you charge on this institution as sufficient to give it character; this is enough to make it a secret society, because it has some things which it will not tell the world! Now, if this be secrecy, properly so called, we have multitudes of secret societies; indeed, they make up the mass of society in which we live! If the fact that a society or an organ-

ization has some things which may be considered its own peculiar property, may be charged upon it as secrecy, why, then, we venture little in the position, that society is the keystone to the great arch on which all good society rests.

Let us for a little time study this subject of secrecy so much is said about, as connected with general society. Is there nothing in families, nothing in their relations and government, which would be highly improper to be known abroad; matters which should be considered their own property, and with which those who live around them have no concern, but which, were they known, would be a torpedo in the bosom of a neighborhood before peaceful, and an alarming annoyance to those who were their innocent authors? All, who know any thing of the internal arrangement of families, know this to be the case; and hence the verdict of reprobation which the public and Divine Revelation has rendered so unspar-

ingly against all tattlers and tale-bearers! We say this verdict is rendered on a universal acknowledgment of the rectitude of individual claims on what concerns them alone. And so firmly is this principle fixed in the mind of society, that the dependant who would wantonly invade it, could not hold his or her place an hour; and with the recommendation of such a character, would fail to find place or employment in any well regulated or even good society. And that citizen, no matter how worthy he may be in other respects, if possessing this single taint, is considered an enemy to the peace of society, and as a leper, is cast from its bosom.

Having reached this first step in the argument, we are now prepared to advance to another. It is well known that assistants are employed by every commercial house. Now, suppose these were to give to the public the *secrets* committed to their trust by their employers, and this of necessity,

for they must understand the details existing between the establishment and those indebted to it, and to a certain extent the financial state of the concern: we say, suppose they were to give these, with a key to all marks employed by the house they serve, to the world, does any man in the least acquainted with business need to be told the result?

Certainly such a course could not fail to awaken distrust, suspicion, the wreck of confidence, the overthrow of hopes, and the failure of establishments which, had they been left to work themselves clear of their embarrassments as they might have done, embarrassments inseparable from business, would have come up out of the wilderness crowned with honesty and abundance. But, through the betrayal of one little trust, one *secret*, dismay, oppression, heart-burnings, and a thousand nameless ills have stalked through a peaceful and prosperous country, overthrowing all that was fair, making their

cruel blades drunk with the blasted hopes of multitudes, and the spirit of friendship in which they had lived. Such is not speculation, but history; and few there are engaged in business, who might not attain the same end, by the same process. What has befallen one man, may befall another; and all through the betrayal of one secret apparently trifling! The security of individuals, and of society, depends on the safety of such trusts. We believe there is not one lover of society, who would have such secrets fewer, or less sacredly kept.

Let us take another instance, connected with the ordinary affairs of society, as an illustration of this principle. Every bank has connected with it a board of directors; who usually meet two or three times each week, to counsel and advise with other officers of the institution, for its safety and success. And it is perfectly well understood, that the inquiry with them is not, whether this or that man needs their aid, but whether

it will be safe and profitable for them to extend it to him. Now, no one can say that these persons have not a right, we may say, a moral right, to guard in this way their own property, and to counsel on the safety or hazard of a proposed investment; yet who will say that it would be to their credit or advantage, or to the credit or advantage of the applicant, or for the good of society, that all should transpire which occurs in their committee-room? Although the business of these men holds such an intimate relation to the vital interests of so many persons around us, can we pretend to say, either that we know all that is said and done when they are together, or that we have even a right to know? Here we have to all intents and purposes another secret society, one intimately connected with our prosperity, whether we will or no, and yet we hear no note of complaint against it on this ground! and why? why, because the good sense of the world acknowledges the neces-

sity of its secrecy, and of course its right to be so.

We have found the principle of secrecy, to a certain extent, connected with our domestic, commercial, and moneyed relations; and that such a state of things was necessary for the good of individuals as well as for the safety of the great body of society; let us now see if the same necessity exists in connection with any or all of the professions.

How is it with the physician; could he find employment, were he to divulge all which arises in the course of his practice? He may make such development it is true, but he may do it only to the initiated, to those who are equally bound with himself to keep the trust inviolate, or in other words, to those of his own profession. Others may not, they ought not, to know these things; they are the property of his patient, entrusted to his care, and he is responsible for their safe keeping. Indeed,

it is questionable whether he has a right to communicate all even to his own profession ; whether there are not many things which he holds, that should never pass beyond the treasury of his own mind.

He should, he must be *secret*, for he holds treasures which are invaluable to those who have, from necessity, entrusted them to his care, but which could not, if given to the world, enhance the happiness of any one in the least. To the rightful proprietor it is above price, to all others it is worthless.

We repeat, therefore, he is bound to be secret ; and if he is not, a just reprobation and a want of bread, will be the righteous penalty which he must endure.

Then, again, take the legal profession. What client would submit the details of his case to counsel, with the assurance that the whole would be given to the public ear ? Or what class of men exist who would employ one as counsel, even in the most trifling cause, who was in the habit of

treating the confidence of his clients in such a way? It would be in vain such a man might plead scruples of conscience on the subject of *secrecy*, and an unwillingness to keep what he knew from society; the good sense of that very society would feel itself abused by the very plea made in justification of a sickly recreancy, and would hurl such a being from its circle, as a moral pestilence which all ought to dread.

The clergyman in the prosecution of his duties not unfrequently finds himself in the same condition.

He and his officers are frequently made the involuntary treasurers of facts and circumstances, which it would be worse than cruel for them to unfold to the public; not on the account of a single individual, but for the sake of parties who are innocent and unoffending, yet who must be more or less unfavorably affected by the circumstances. We are not under the necessity of supposing these to be circumstances of what the

world calls crime; they might consider them matters of indifference, and some even as praise-worthy, and still they might, if made public, essentially affect the happiness of many: while, as there is no necessity that they should transpire, and no real good could result from it, their divulgence would be a wanton trifling with the feelings and interests of others. Such is but a cursory glance of the secrecy which not a few, but all enjoin upon the professions; which not only choice, but necessity demands they should keep locked up in their own breasts. And so necessary is this same hated feature of *secrecy* considered, that provision is made for it almost every where! No grand jury is empanelled, without being solemnly sworn to keep secret what transpires in the jury-room. No ecclesiastical body meets, which does not reserve to itself the right to clear its galleries, and transact business by itself, or in other words, in *secret*. Every legislative body has the same rule, and a betrayal

of the trust imposed in secret session, involves a penalty of no less magnitude than expulsion.

The senate chamber of each state, and of the United States, is guarded by the same sanctions. The cabinet of each governor, and of the President of this Union, is to all intents and purposes a secret society; and so they are in every government under the heavens. All diplomatic proceedings are transacted in secret. While the prosecution of war could never be successful, without the incorporation of the feature of secrecy. Science, though apparently open to all, is secret; and he who would enjoy the bliss of her mysteries, must pay, in time and money, the price of membership, and endure the slow and painful process of initiation.

Nature is secret; and though man, for six thousand years, has been endeavoring to possess himself of her hidden treasures, up to this hour they have eluded his research.

At the outset, he knew that matter possessed form, extension, and divisibility; he knows that now, and but little more; the essence ever has, and perhaps ever will, bid defiance to his investigation. This, with the ten thousand means by which nature carries on her stupendous processes of production and reproduction, ever has been, and is now, to the human mind, one vast and unexplored wilderness. And above the whole is enthroned the Infinite, whose ways are in the deep, and whose chariot is the whirlwind, whose throne inhabiteth justice and judgment; He who spake and it was done, who commanded and it stood fast; He who hath his secret place. Tell me, O man, canst thou, by searching, find Him out? And wilt thou say still, that secrecy wraps in its dark folds iniquity, and is suspicious? But if this be too mighty for thee, then go and seek for the springs of thy own being; grasp, if thou canst, the life of the active spirit within thee, trace the path of its flight,

and tell us how it records the burning thought it gathers in its wanderings. Thou canst not! Then thou, too, art secret! and is thy inmost being to be suspected because thou knowest it not?

We find secrecy everywhere.

As it exists in society, we can trace some reason, some necessity for that existence; in nature we cannot, but we know it is there; and our faith proclaims to us that it is right. We are not, therefore the less happy, because of the existence of many things with which we are not acquainted. The truth is, there is, there has been, and there ever will be secrecy in the world, and among men; and it is now complained of, only because mischief has been done under its cloak. But if every subject which has furnished a covering for crime, is to be indiscriminately condemned on that account, then we have no protection for the most sacred of all subjects, nor for the most elevated virtues. The knaves most to be

dreaded, are those who "Steal the livery of heaven to serve the devil in." And under the cloak of a God-inspired religion, what crimes, what cruelties have not been perpetrated. It is not, therefore, in the use, but in the abuse of these privileges, that we ought to complain; and if we understand the charity aright which the Scriptures inculcate, we have no more right to accuse our neighbor who uses his privilege of secrecy, of being sinister in his design, than we have to accuse him of the same motive in becoming religious, or in embracing any one of the great moral virtues; for in either instance the heart is hid from us, and our only safe criterion of judgment is by the fruit one produces after his profession.

If men become worse after becoming connected with these institutions, if this is the general tendency, or if a majority of those bearing such relation become worse, then condemn the institution, as one which exerts an unhappy influence. But if these

aberrations are only occasional, if they are not more frequent here than they are in other more sacred and authoritative institutions, then candor requires that we place them to the credit, not of a bad institution and a defective discipline, but to a bad heart. We come now to inquire to what extent, and why Odd Fellowship is a secret institution.

We have already seen that its secrets could not relate to who are members, their place of meeting, their time of meeting, their constitution, by-laws, business, or object; that it could not relate to the great central bodies which hold jurisdiction over the whole, for all these are matters of notoriety, which it is the wish of the institution to give to the world. In what sense, then, is Odd Fellowism secret? It is to this inquiry we now propose to give an answer; not that we intend to tell what the secret is, but to state the points at which it is secret. Odd Fellows are required to be *secret*, in the

first place, so far as relates to persons who propose to become members of the order.

The reason of this is, the character of each candidate must be subject to the investigation of a committee appointed for that purpose, who must report to the lodge the result of their investigations; and the precaution of secrecy is taken, so that in case the report of that committee should prove unfavorable, and the applicant be rejected, he might suffer no loss, but occupy the same position in society he did before his application. The injunction of secrecy, in this instance, is to protect the applicant, not ourselves. The second feature of the institution which involves secrecy, relates to the fact whether persons we do not know are members or not.

This institution is designed to be one the world over; and to give its assistance not only in the chamber of sickness, and to those who reside in our immediate vicinity, but to the virtuous needy wherever found.

When such present themselves for sympathy or aid, the inquiry is not, to what nation does the applicant belong, but is he what he claims to be? is he in want? These questions being properly answered, his wants are redressed, not as a charity, but as a debt. It must be obvious to every one, therefore, that such an individual should be furnished with a true title to what he claims. If he is a true man, he has such a title; and this title is unknown to all except the members of this order.

This, in a word, is their great secret. This, it is true, might have been given on paper, it might have been written; in which case it is equally true, it might be stolen, or counterfeited, or lost. Hence it was thought preferable to furnish members with a title that should speak a language which was the same everywhere, and which could be used in all nations, and at the same time be of a character to defy counterfeiting, and the encroachment of robbers, or the perils

of shipwreck: a title which, while reason holds her dominion over the man, might ever be present with him. To accomplish this, each member is furnished with passwords and signs which cannot be mistaken. And as the several ranks attained in the order entitles the member to more or less for his support in time of want, he is by this means enabled to decide the fact and the amount of his claims beyond a doubt. He holds by the power of a word his title, his claim, his right upon strangers for their offices of kindness and appropriations, not as a common beggar, but as a joint proprietor with them in the institution to which they mutually belong. His secret is, therefore, his property, his title-deed, his policy of insurance. And no man has any more right to claim that secret, nor has he any better title to it, than he has to claim for his own either of the documents named above; it is the property of its possessor, which he had the same right to purchase as

any other property ; and having paid for it his money he is protected in its possession, by the same law which protects him in the possession of other property.

The fact of the title existing only in a sign, or a word, in a moral point of view at least, can make no difference, so long as it guarantees to him certain valuable considerations, under given circumstances.

Such is the secrecy of Odd Fellowship ! no more, no less ! Wherein is it more secret than most of the institutions around us, on which no one has ever thought to lay such a charge ; and wherein would society be bettered were this objectionable feature, which runs through its length and breadth, to be abolished ? Wherein, indeed, would it not be made almost infinitely worse ? Who, were there no secret cement, no hidden cohesive power to resist the repelling influences, which are constantly acting upon it, and which hold it together, would be bail for its stability and present

order? Let him that would, imagine, if he please, for one moment, such a society! a society stripped of all secrecy! where every thought and every word of every individual should be laid open to the day—the conversation of every circle should be simultaneously reported to all ears—the business of every house, and every man, with their wishes and designs, all accurately mapped to every eye—the counsels of every chamber forced upon the attention of every individual person. What is accruing in the hovel, and in the palace—in the prison, and on the gallows—in the mechanic-shop, and in the halls of legislation—in the field, and in the bed-chamber—in the cell of the recluse, and in the banqueting halls of affluence—with the sick, and with the well—in the street, and in the kitchen—in the abodes of moping ignorance, and in the halls of science—in the place of mirth, and in the church of God. Suppose

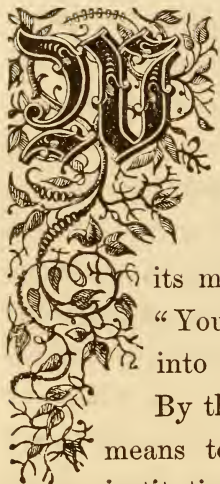
he were gifted to see and know all this, as he certainly would have been had the Infinite designed there should be nothing secret in this world, by some kind of pre-science, and yet be endowed with all the sensibilities which our nature now possesses; and would he desire to live in such a society? Could he survive such frightful disclosures for a single day?

And yet, strange as it may appear, this is what those contend for, in effect, who denounce all which is secret, or what is the same thing, all which they do not know, as suspicious. Yet, such is the appalling chaos to which the objectors to secrecy, if their views were carried to their legitimate results, would hurl society. For, as relates to the objection, what is applicable to a society composed of a few, is equally applicable to an individual, or to a million; or if there be any difference, the preference is to be given to the many, for as numbers

increase, the power to do mischief is diminished; as the success of an effort to corrupt, deceive, or control for evil becomes less as there are more minds to act upon; and hence, the chances of detection will become greater in proportion to numbers.

VII.

“You do not admit the Ladies.”



WHEN we arrive at this stage of our investigations of this subject, we often hear a dulcet voice mingling with the general cry against us, and if we interpret rightly its mellow articulation, it says: “You do not admit the ladies into your institution.”

By this, we suppose the objector means to carry the idea that the institution is eminently selfish, being designed exclusively for the entertainment, convenience, and protection of the men! But is this the case, according to the exposition we have given above? Or does the objector mean to say, that because the ladies are not permitted to participate in

the active work of a lodge-room, they therefore derive no advantage from the results of that work? Does he mean to say, because the fair daughters of our good republic are not compelled to follow the plough, they, as a consequence, receive none of the blessings of the harvest, which a thousand glad voices join in shouting home? That because they are not compelled to tread the slippery shrouds, or climb the giddy mast, or toil behind the counter, or in the counting-room, they therefore enjoy none of the blessings of commerce? That because they burn not life away over tomes of legal treasure, they have none of the protection of law? That because they do not exhaust their being in the fatigues of politics and the toils of legislation, that therefore they are not partakers in the blessings of civilization?

If the female, though she does not participate in the busy cares of these and

a thousand other callings, and knows but little, perhaps nothing, of their details, is nevertheless a partaker of their fruits, why shall it be said she enjoys no advantages from, nay, that she is rejected by Odd Fellowship, because forsooth it is not made an exception to many other institutions with which we are surrounded? Is the fact that ladies are not admitted to the privilege of the ballot box, or to the offices of state, an imputation on her intellect or integrity, or is it not rather out of respect to her character, and with a view to pay a high compliment to her native modesty, and to venerate the position in which God in his wisdom has placed her, that her relations in these respects are as they are?

Let not that be charged on Odd Fellowship as a crime, which in general society is looked upon as a virtue; let it not be said that when it pays the highest compliment in its power to the fairest portion

of the Divine creation, it is mantling loved ones with insult. Females are not debarred the lodge-room, because they have not the capacity or the integrity necessary for its business.

We indignantly repel such a charge; but for the same reason that would not allow us to put her in any other office or stern duty, which nature, and the God of nature, when he fixed the offices devolving upon the respective sexes, designed for man, and for which He in a peculiar manner fitted him.

But if the objector intends to assert that the ladies have no interest in the existence of this association, we must inform him that here he is again in fault, and that he has unfortunately mistaken the great design of this institution. Were it not for our mothers, our wives, our sisters and daughters, this association would lose half its power to exist—it even may be doubted whether it would exist at all. Has the

mother or sister no interest, when the son or brother is in a distant land, in the fact whether he be friendless and alone, whether he dwells in solitude or in society? Is there no sweet cordial to the heart, in the knowledge that a far-off child, or brother, though in the land of strangers, and far from the tenderest of all sympathy, that of a mother's or sister's bosom, is yet where the tide of kindness springs up to cool a fevered brow, and allay the pain of those throbbing temples? Let those who have no sympathy with such a case, go and ask of those whose fondest hopes lie buried in distant lands; ask such not of the anguish of separation, for that is ever sufficiently keen, even under the most mitigated circumstances; but of the agony arising from the thought of one so near the heart, one cradled on the bosom of love, one who had been guarded from the first morning which heralded his being, with all the tenderness a mother's heart kn ew how to lavish upon

it: ask, we say, of the agony which rent that spirit at the thought that such a loved one suffered and died alone; that in the furnace of consuming fever, his chamber was cheered by day only by the stillness of solitude, by night by the dying rush-light, which threw only a tomb-like gloom through the place where he lay; that no mother's or sister's hand was there to smooth the pillow pressed by that aching head, no sympathetic mind to suggest a ray of hope, or anticipate a want, or tenderly respond to calls made audible by suffering, no affectionate attention to mark, with all the precision of tenderness, the casual words which fell from his parched and broken lips; that there was no ear to listen to the expressions of disordered reason, as strong affection compelled it, even when dethroned, to think of home and those dear as itself who lingered at its hearth-stone; none to mark the affectionate action, and words of home, when reason was again brought back

to her accustomed seat to whisper her last adieus to the world from which she was passing away. O! could I have been there, exclaims that parent, that sister, or the best loved child, to have found a last recognition, to have received but one word, one adieu; or, could I only know even that he was attended gently and kindly, how would such an assurance crown with flowers the arrow which now penetrates my heart. Would it be no solace, no bliss to woman, under such circumstances, to know that the gentle and affectionate offices proposed by Odd Fellowship were not forgotten, that they fell like a fragrant dew around that pillow, and were a cloudless sunshine on the path of that world's pilgrim to light him down to the grave. Or when sickness lays its power upon the husband and the sire, has woman no comfort in the daily visits of those whose covenant obligations bring them to her home of affliction, who pour words

of tenderness and encouragement into her ear, who affectionately minister, as those who feel their obligation, to her seeming wants, who tell her that the afflicted one is not only a neighbor but a brother? Is it no solace to her heart, to know that there are those who will mingle their tears with hers in the hour of bereavement; who, when the cherished of her soul is laid low in his narrow and dreamless bed, will lay the clods lightly on his bosom, which is now still forever; who will so draw the curtain over the commerce of the grave, as that she shall not be made to feel, by the visits of the sexton and the undertaker, that the world makes merchandise of her affliction? Has woman no interest in those who, in her widowed loneliness, wrap in the mantle of their protection her children, when life's adverse whirlwind sweeps down upon them? No interest in those who will lead her father-

less son or daughter along the path of learning, and teach their inexperienced feet to shun the pit of ruin which lies hid in their way? Woman no interest in a union which takes those dearest to her by the hand, and leads them away from the vicious enticements around them; which takes such from obscure retreats, and gives them a right, and learns them to mingle in society as men? And can it be said that woman has no interest in all this? It is true, Odd Fellowship while it makes such provision for her, does not ask woman to participate in the trials and embarrassments of its merely business scenes; but is she therefore excluded from all participation in the application of its means of relief? By no means, for while stronger arms prepare the means and concert the plans of relief, they frequently leave to woman's affectionate nature and sympathetic heart, to her modest, unobtrusive

tenderness, the application of what has been provided for the comfort and cheering of the needy, the suffering, and the friendless. Such is the relation the ladies hold to this institution, such its relation to them and to their interests. In the language of an eloquent and famed advocate of this cause, "Odd Fellowship is not designed to bring angels down, but to raise men up to heaven."

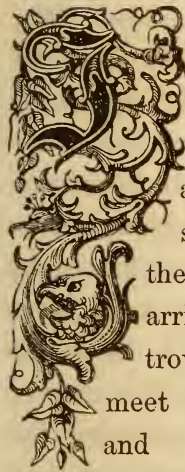
Beyond these, we know not what advantages there are which woman could enjoy by being a member of this association. For, now, she directly or indirectly, inherits all its gifts, and enjoys its moral and social influences; what more could she receive as a compensation, were she loaded with the cares incident to the active business of the association? She could enjoy none whatever, and it is for this reason she is not recognized as an active participant in its merely business meetings. In

this, whether right or wrong, the order has conformed to the good sense and fashion of the world. If this practice be wrong, why, then, the custom of the world is wrong. Reform that in this respect and you will reform us.



VIII.

“The Church and Religion cover the whole Ground.”



T is usually a very easy matter to find fault and start objections, to any subject, much more so than to obviate them; and those who controvert this subject seem to be aware of the fact: accordingly, when we arrive at this stage of the controversy, we are called upon to meet this objection, “The church and religion cover the whole ground.” The conclusion drawn from which appears to be this: therefore, there is no necessity for such an institution as the one of which you are the advocate. No one can hold the church in greater veneration than we do; no one, we

think, can desire to exalt it more ; for few are more indebted to it than ourself. We feel assured that the church, the glorious church which the Saviour purchased with his own blood, is not, nor can it be second to any subject or any interest this side of heaven. We, therefore, accord most cheerfully with the proposition, "that the church," by which we mean all Christians, "covers the whole ground." We say we mean all Christians, when we say the church ; for being Christians, they hold the doctrines of the Bible, which are able, nay, they have made them wise unto salvation. The Bible inculcates every possible virtue ; hence, the church, which is made such through embracing the Bible, must embrace every possible virtue. But while we most cheerfully accord with the proposition, we must beg leave to dissent from the conclusion the objector draws from it ; for in assenting to that, we should be compelled to depart from the wholesome

usages of the church, and contradict the true philosophy of our being. Were we to adopt the conclusion of the objector, we must renounce all distinct organizations altogether, and have but one great organization, and that the church; and that must not exist as now, it must be a unit; for each distinct communion would say, the Bible favors me, and you, therefore, are superfluous. At least, it would be said of usages which have no direct Scripture sanction, which are innocent in themselves, and are adopted as matters of convenience, or of necessity, for the time, that this or that not having a Scripture sanction must be relinquished. While some, even, would strike out from the wholesome articles of religion every rule of morality, and every exponent of Christian duty, alleging that the simple text is enough to govern men, as it is from this alone that we derive our knowledge of duty; and that any part, attached by human hands, is a wanton

invasion of religion : for this, with the heaven-given spirit speaking through it, is enough to govern Christians. They would say, he who hath this rule, and is a Christian, needeth no other. There would be no allowance made for the ignorance and prejudices of men, whose views and feelings are often capricious and varying, and who, even after conversion, need to be schooled by wholesome rules and restraints into the practice of Christian virtues, which they have too long opposed and rejected. But, admitting the truth of the objector's conclusion, we must relinquish our organizations for the promotion of knowledge ; and sabbath schools, tract societies, temperance societies, colonization societies, Bible societies, education societies, humane societies, and every other class of benevolent organizations formed for the good of the world, because religion covers the whole ground.

For seventeen centuries of the Christian era, the world adopted this creed, and what was the consequence? Why, the pall of a starless night rested on all moral subjects, and moral death rioted in the darkness, not only on the bodies, but on the intellect and on the souls of men. For half a century, these societies have existed and operated; and be it said to their boundless praise, in that time more has been done to redeem the world from the power of sin and misery, than in the seventeen ages which preceded them! But let us not be understood as asserting that these societies have arisen by an inherent power, or that they have operated by an internal life peculiarly their own. We mean to say no such thing; but we intend to say this: religion has originated them, religion has carried them forward, religion has imparted to them the vital principle, and they are her highest encomiums, for they are the glittering waymarks which report her progress in the world.

The conclusion of the objector would not only obliterate these portents of a religious day to our earth, but it would strike with fearful force at the root of all civil government, scattering to the winds the wholesome laws and restraints which now guard the interests of society. For if religion covers the whole ground, then our whole system of legislation and civil jurisprudence is, to say the least, superfluous, and ought to be abolished, and the whole world fall back under the Theocracy which characterized the early history of the Jews. Such would be the result of such a conclusion; for if one society or institution, which is wholesome in its influences, can be pronounced unnecessary because religion covers the same ground, then another can, and so on, until the whole, as by a mighty tide, is swept away. If this be more than the objector intended, it is his, not our fault; the conclusion is one of his own choice, and we have only traced it to its legitimate result.

If, in blindly beating down one foe of his own creation, he has, in his zeal swept away whole ranks of his bosom friends, by his artillery discharged at random, the fault be his: we did not ask him to fire. We said the conclusion was a contradiction of the philosophy of our nature. We think it even so. That is a trite and true adage, which says "What is everybody's business, is nobody's business," and is fully justified in all the transactions of life; for who needs to be told that energies, whether of one or many individuals, if divided, are powerless; that it is only when concentrated, that the physical or moral powers are fully understood and known. It is in this correct view of things, that the whole economy of our mental, moral, and political, and we may say, our religious enterprises are founded. There are certain things in one of these great departments which ought to be done. Some are keenly awake to these interests, but they cannot secure them alone. Some

are indifferent respecting them, while others are decidedly opposed to the whole.

Under such circumstances what is to be done? It is evident the object cannot be secured in the midst of this Babel-discord. What is to be done? Why, go through society, and gather up those elements which possess an affinity for each other; bring them together and organize them; give to the organization a head and corresponding parts, with centre of motion; make of them one complete body, set this whole in motion, let it be guided by concentrated intellect, and impelled by concentrated forces; and who that does not see how a good force, directed to a good end, must necessarily accomplish a good work.

Jefferson could write an unrivalled declaration of independence, and Henry could make thrilling patriotic speeches, but they could not make a free people; nothing but the concentrated energies of a whole nation could do this. Washington could command

an army, but it required the united strength of an army to gain one victory. Wilberforce could demonstrate that slavery was wrong and cruel, but nothing less than the united effort of the whole British people could unloose the fetters of one slave. And the pulpit may, in tones never so eloquent, tell of the wants of a world lying in darkness, and of the duty of the church to pour light into those desolate regions, but nothing short of the united and heaven-aided energies of that church can emancipate them from a darkness which may be felt. What is true in relation to the instances named above, is true in relation to every subject of general interest. There must be a given point at which all must aim, and when that is known, every energy must be strained to reach it.

It is on this principle every institution is founded — the concentration of energies — and this is a feature which signally characterizes our holy religion, as well as every

other cause. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst," says the glorious One. It was on this principle that the apostles gathered the fruits of their ministry into churches; and it is on the same principle that government and society, with all their ramifications rest. It is true the church and religion cover the whole ground, for these institutions are the offspring of religion; to her, and to her alone, are we indebted for every beneficent thought towards the well-being of our race. This is as true of Odd Fellowship as it is of either or any of the institutions or societies named above. All, we believe, attribute to the Christian religion the present advanced state of the civilized world. All acknowledge that the great difference which exists between the nations of Europe and America, and the tribes of Asia and Africa, arises mainly from the influence which religion, and the Bible — the great teacher of religion — has had over

these civilized races. This justifies the remark which we made above, that these societies were evidences of the advance of religion, and its influence over the world.

But while we credit the church for all this, we must confess we are not prepared to adopt another sentiment which we think is implied in the objection—it is this: that the church is bound to support all the poor who may be in her communion. That her members are exhorted to charity and hospitality, and that in her collective capacity she is called upon to make collections for the destitute, we most cheerfully admit; but that she is to take whole families upon her hands, and supply all their wants, we think admits of a serious doubt. In a country like that of the United States, for instance, where the government has made provision for the comfortable support of the poor and the unfortunate of all classes, where each member of the state is taxed for this purpose, to the extent of his ability, we cannot

see how, on the principles of equity, it can be demanded of any branch of the Christian church, that in addition to their bearing an equal proportion with others of their fellow-citizens, and supporting among them the gospel of peace, they should take on themselves this increased burden, and at the same time take it from those hands which are strengthened by the constitution to bear it. Beyond this, the church has a wider field before her. As she looks from her lofty position over the field embraced in her great commission, and contemplates the millions who are perishing for want of the bread of life, which she holds in her hands, she can but feel, and we think we hear her say, "the world is my parish." Is it not enough, that through the operation of her tireless energies, she has roused the public to a sense of its duty to the poor at home, and incited it to care for them? And now may she not with propriety, go after those abroad? In such an enterprise we can but

feel that the church acts worthy of herself, and we must say to her traducers, that in the last few years she has acted well her part.

But more than this: we apprehend, that were it understood that the Christian church was to maintain all the poor who might be connected with her communion, were it understood that she was to administer to all temporal as well as spiritual wants, it would furnish an unworthy motive to men to connect themselves with her; and as a consequence, many would flock to her bosom, not from a love of the cross, but from a love of bread. We know it has been so. When the church has been secular in her objects, she has always been secular in her membership, and what is more lamentable, she has, under such circumstances, been secular in her ministry. From the opening of the fourth century to the days of Luther, is a striking illustration of this truth. Even now,

where there are very few inducements of a temporal or secular nature connected with her communion, is she imposed upon, and her beauty marred, and her peace and harmony disturbed, by the encroachments of the designing and the unworthy. Even the pulpit, with the protection of all the heaven-sent sanctions with which it is surrounded, and all the precautions which wisdom and goodness could devise to guard it, is not unfrequently made a facility, by the depraved, for securing their ends. For these reasons, we say we doubt, especially under a government like ours, whether it is the design of its great Head that the church should burden itself with a pledge to support all the poor and helpless who may be thrown into her bosom. We question whether caution would think it safe to suggest such an inducement.

With such views, we cannot be otherwise than pleased, when we see men organizing themselves for the purpose of driving

want from the world; who, though detached from the church, are nevertheless her auxiliaries in the great work of alleviating human suffering, and who have derived the first thoughts of their mission, their impulses and motives from her. Should it be said by the objector to these views, that the church might discriminate and detect the imposter, we answer, since the days of Peter and Paul, when or where has she done it? when has she had the power to do it? She has never been endued with the gift of discerning spirits. It is only by their fruits she can determine who are worthy and who are unworthy; and, often, when these are brought forth, it is too late, the mischief has been done, the wound inflicted, and the marred body must be left for time to heal its hurts. Such is the office we claim for Odd Fellowship. That position is humble and subordinate, it is true, when compared with the exalted position of the

church of Christ ; yet, while it remains praiseworthy to supplant a vice and implant a virtue, while moral economy is such that he who is induced to imbibe a virtue, is advanced in so much as that virtue is important, towards what he ought to be, we cannot consider this institution, in a moral point of view, unimportant. Some may have made injudicious comparisons between Odd Fellowism and the church, but they have done it without understanding the true relation of either. Odd Fellowism was never designed to interfere with, or enter into competition with the church, any more than the temperance, or education society. Nor is there an intimation, or an expression of any design, that it should or could in any wise be taken as religion. It teaches the importance of the relative duties which we owe to each other as citizens, and social beings ; it derives these lessons from the pages of the Bible, to which it appeals at every step of its

working, and enforces its precepts by the God-given sanctions it contains. It is on this ground that we claim for it a place among the moral auxiliaries which the religion of the Bible has given to our world. So that, while we accede to the truthfulness of the proposition, that religion and the Bible cover the whole ground, we feel impelled to the conclusion that such a proposition has no injurious bearing on Odd Fellowism, more than any other organization not strictly a church; and that this much abused subject still most properly lifts its beautiful form, smiling with kindness to the world, amid the arid wastes, as an important auxiliary to humanity, and to the moral interests of our world. Some have instituted invidious comparisons between Christian churches and Odd Fellowism, because, occasionally members in these churches have been in want, or have suffered, it may be, for some of the necessaries

of life. What we have said above, should be a sufficient answer to those who make their comparisons before studying their subject. Such may censure the community where these things occur, or its officers for not doing their duty ; but why censure the church in its collective capacity ? Has it not done for these what it was designed to do by its author ? Has it not preached to them the Gospel ? Has it not moulded society around by its influence, and reared the frame-work of the ark which is to afford shelter to such when the floods of want break loose upon them ? Has it not appointed the proper officers, and furnished them with the means to make every applicant comfortable ? Then censure them not as a church, but censure the community. That the church may do this work, if she please, that she finds an indescribable pleasure in doing it, when she has the ability, there can be no question. But that she has

promised to do so generally, or that it would be expedient, or even safe for her to do so, is questionable.

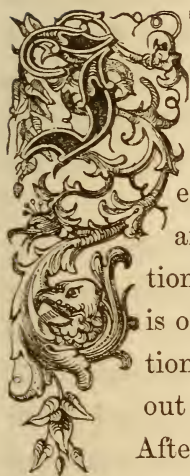
But how is this in Odd Fellowism? We have here a society formed for this express purpose, a society which, while it claims no exemption from public charges or common charities, proposes in the hour of adversity to give its members maintenance to a certain amount each week, during their incapacity to help themselves, and this, not as a charity, but as debt. To secure the means necessary for this, they make each member a contributor to a certain amount, the fund so arising to be devoted to this purpose. In sickness, they propose to give their members all the attention necessary, or which their situation may demand. To secure this, they have an organization, and rules to govern that organization, for this specific object.

Under such an arrangement, and with such provision, ought not their sick and distressed members to be cared for and

attended? Ought not this to be done better by them than by any other class in society? They would be censurable, more than censurable, did they not redeem their pledges, under these circumstances. Indeed, it is no disparagement to any people, to have it said the sick among Odd Fellows are better attended than any other class of men in like circumstances.

IX.

“It turns the Bible out of Doors.”



T has been well and often said, “a fool may ask questions a philosopher cannot answer.” And we have learned by this time that objections are quite as available as questions. Another objection which is often urged against this institution is, that “It turns the Bible out of doors.”

After what has already been said, this may appear, as it really is, a strange objection; and the more so, as the fact that every lodge-room is furnished with a Bible is one which is by no means secret; a fact which the objector might have learned, had he only taken the trouble to enquire of any

one who knew, or which he could have been permitted to do, gone into a lodge-room and seen for himself. Yet this objection has not only been stated in private conversations, but by the aid of the press and newspapers trumped through the land. We will pass no censure on those who can find time and heart to do such undesirable work, as impliedly to cast on many, whose life as well as profession speaks a different language, the imputation of infidelity.

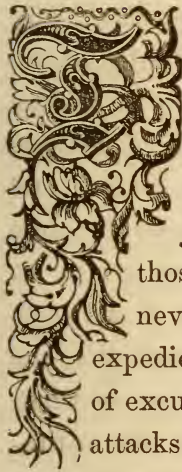
We will only leave with them the inquiry, is such the charity which thinketh no evil? and pass to assure them of the far-known fact that every lodge-room is furnished with a copy of the Sacred Scriptures; and more, which is, that most of their lectures and charges are extracts from those pages of wisdom and authority; that whether men ever heard the words of Inspired Wisdom at home or in the church or not, if they are Odd Fellows they must see and hear the Bible read, and have its precepts enforced

upon them. All the way they travel in the order, whenever they meet, then they must hear the voice of the Bible, not as the words of man merely, but as the voice of God ; nor as directed to a promiscuous assembly, but to them as individuals. If this be turning the Bible out of doors, if this is treating it with neglect, if this is high-handed impiety, why, then, we submit with patience to the imputation of heathenism and infidelity, until our accusers shall show us what is meant by bringing the Bible within doors, when in this respect we may mend our ways. And if we can be persuaded that the Bible of which they speak, will not make us as vindictive and censorious, and as uncharitable as they show themselves to be, we may be prevailed upon to adopt it. But until that time, they will please excuse us if we continue to use the commonly received and authorized version of the Word of God ; until that time, we shall be under the necessity of teaching our members such

antiquated precepts as the following: "Thou shalt not covet." "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." "Charity suffereth long and is kind, is not puffed up, behaveth itself not unseemly, hopeth all things, endureth all things, charity never faileth." Such is the turning out of doors, and the rejection of the Bible, of which Odd Fellows are guilty; may they never be guilty of a greater crime.

X.

“Odd Fellowship is Freemasonry Revived.”



HE mind of man hath sought out many inventions. How true! And never was this saying more true in relation to any subject, or class of subjects, than it is in relation to those which excite our prejudices; never is the mind more fruitful in expedients than when it is in search of excuses with which to ward off the attacks of those subjects which in spite of our prejudice, are assailing and commending themselves to our conscience, and our judgment. It seems to us this is the only apology we can make for this far reaching after objections to a subject like this. But we will not complain; so here is another,—“Odd Fellowship is Freemasonry

revived." How far this may be true, we are unable to say; though we confess that to us it appears highly improbable, that two institutions which are identical, should exist in the same place, at the same time, under different names, and without any intercourse. Yet we know this to be the case with these institutions, both in Europe and America; those who are Odd Fellows unite with the Masons, as a distinct and separate society. And Masons do the same in uniting with the Odd Fellows: which we cannot see why they should do, if the institutions were the same. Beyond this, the two fraternities have no intercourse whatever. How this could be, and the institutions be one and the same thing, we are unable to account. Such being the facts in the case, it seems highly improbable that they should each possess the same character, and not exist under the same form. There is still another fact in relation to this subject, which is simply this: We know

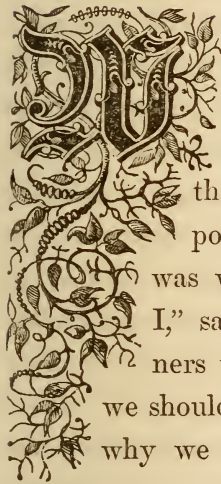
nothing of Freemasonry only what we have read in books. Now, if what has been published as an exposition of the internal operations of this institution be true, then we perhaps know as much about Freemasonry as the objector, and a great deal more about Odd Fellowship, and we can assure him that the two institutions so far from being identical, are in no wise alike; if that be untrue, then neither the objector nor ourself know anything about it. Let this, however, be as it may, one thing is certain, if we can depend on reliable testimony; which is, that these institutions, so far from being the same, are in no way similar; unless it be that members are known in each of them by certain signs and tokens, instead of a written title or certificate, which would be likely to make them resemble each other about as much as they both might resemble the savages of our western wilderness, who it is well known, make

themselves understood by the same process, they having no written language.

Whether, after this explanation, and as we think refutation, the objector will persist in urging the identity of the two institutions, is to us quite as unimportant as it is uncertain.

XI.

“Your Society compels the Good to associate with the Bad.”



WHY do you bow to that poor negro,” said a person once to the immortal Washington, as he walked the streets of one of our populous cities; and the reply was worthy of the man: “Shall I,” said he, “manifest less manners than he?” And it is thus we should reply to those who ask us why we condescend to unite with persons connected with no church in the promotion of good and worthy objects: Shall the Christian, the follower of Him who went about doing good, have less interest in the improvement of the world than they? And yet we often hear this objec-

tion urged against this institution, "Your society compels the good to associate with the bad, and is objectionable on this ground, if no other." We might reply to this objection, and it would be answer enough to it, by the simple inquiry, whether the good ought not to associate with the bad? whether bad men, left to themselves, will be very likely to become better? Does the objector mean to convey the idea by this objection, that good men ought to become recluse—that it is their duty to assume the habits and practice of the anchorite? that so soon as a man is converted, he should withdraw from the world altogether? Is this the doctrine he would teach us? How does this accord with the instruction the Bible gives us on this subject? "Behold," says the Great Teacher, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves, be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves." What is the doctrine which the Saviour taught those

from-the-world separatists, when he sat at the table of Matthew, the publican, as an invited guest, and they denounced him, because he kept company with sinners? What is his irrefutable reply to these his traducers? "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." And in his recorded prayer, just before he left his disciples for the hall of Pilate, and the crucifixion scene; what was the burden of that omnipotent plea? "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil." Such are the views of the adored Saviour of the relations of his people to the world. He does not pray that his disciples or his people should be taken immediately to heaven, but that they should be "kept from the evil" — from sin, not from sinners, for it is to these they are sent; their errand is "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The Pharisee who came to worship in the temple, could not keep company with the

poor publican, who came on the same errand; and yet that same poor publican went down to his house with what the arrogant Pharisee could not obtain; he went down justified. These and a thousand other Scriptures show us how wonderfully some men have misapprehended the great and important doctrine of the Scriptures on this subject. That Christian men are exhorted to "come out from the world, and be separate," is a most true and wholesome doctrine.

But let us understand this doctrine, which certainly cannot mean that Christian men shall literally go out of the world, and abandon the society of their neighbors, who may be so unfortunate as to be without the change which has made them Christians. What, then, is intended to be taught by that Scripture? is it not this? Christians will abandon those things and practices, which the word of God makes it unlawful for them to use, but which are indulged in

by unregenerate men. They will perform those duties which are enjoined upon all men by Jehovah, but which are neglected by those without the religion of the Cross. They will be actuated by those motives which are apprehended by faith in the atonement, but motives which are wholly disregarded and lost sight of by irreligious men. It is by such lives they will separate themselves from the world, for such lives will necessarily render them unlike it. It is by such a walk, that they like righteous Noah and Lot will reprove the world of the ungodly, for such a walk must ever be opposed to its practices.

Such, we apprehend, is the true doctrine of separation from the world. And this, we think, was taught by Paul, when he assured his brethren that it was unlawful for them to commune with the adulterous and the covetous, and persons of this class; yet he says they cannot be free from them entirely, for then, says he, "Ye must needs

go out of the world." As though he had said, you cannot be free from such persons, indeed you ought not to be, but you ought so to live that your lives may reprove them; you must mingle with such here, from the necessity of the case; the "wheat and the tares must grow together until the harvest," so that you cannot be free from such persons while you are in the world.

This Scripture contact of the good with the bad, of the moral with the immoral, the religious with the irreligious, is the true way to try the strength of the one, and reclaim the other. We are aware that the plea is, that the good will be liable to become vitiated with this too liberal contact with careless and irreligious men; but it is to be feared that he who has not religious integrity sufficient to bear the shocks with which these make their onsets upon him, is wanting in that integrity which would enable him to bear a trial of his faith in any form

in which it might be presented by the world, with which he necessarily comes in contact, in the ordinary transactions of life. In other words, it may be doubted whether he possesses the deep-seated, genuine principle of religion at all. The good common sense of the world practically discards such a view of man's relations in this life. Hence it is considered morally right, for the Christian and the non-professing man to form partnerships, the religious and the irreligious members of society mingle in the civil and political affairs of the day, and we often see them occupying the same field, side by side, in urging forward great moral interests. In this we are often led to rejoice; for while, on the one hand, we see in these instances the grasp religion has on the popular heart, on the other, we trust that those persons who have been brought so far, by the force of right principles, will, through the force of the same truth, be carried still onward to the wished-for and all-important goal.

It will doubtless be said by some, that even in some of the cases named above, the contact is questionable: the connection of good men with politics, for instance; but we reply to this, by saying that the very things to which objection is made, have arisen through the carrying out of the principles of the objector.

Good men, through mistaken views of their duty, have given up these subjects to the interested and the unprincipled, until anarchy pervades the whole, and now, with uplifted hands and averted eyes, they lament over the confusion which prevails; a state of things for which, if they could be made to feel the fact, they are responsible. And it is thus many will ever act. Instead of summoning to their aid a strong and an invincible moral integrity, and then going forth and throwing themselves into the breach, and with giant efforts rolling back the dark wave which threatens them and the world, they will wrap themselves in

their sacred seclusion, leaving the field open to every intruder who is pleased to occupy it. There they will rest supinely, and let the devil work, without let or hinderance; and occasionally they will take the trouble to look out from the crevices of their retreat, and then the land is filled with their bitter wailing, as they cry, "Oh! the desolation! Oh! the moral waste!" Nor can such by any means be drawn from their retreat, unless it should be to cast a stone at some daring brother, whose heart has ached long enough over the wide-wrought ruin, and who has come forth to try what his strength can do towards repairing some of the breaches which have been made in the moral enclosure. Such persons are full of alarm when a new enterprise or a new science lifts its light or promise over the land, and, without giving one hour to determine the merits of the subject, are prepared to send out the alarm wide-spread, and impeach or disfranchise all who dare to

differ from them in their hasty and unjust conclusions. No matter how high the talents, how far-reaching the intellect, or how strong the moral integrity of the man whom they condemn; he has embraced interests and views which these judges do not understand, which are at war with their long-seated prejudices, and which they cannot appreciate; and, as a matter of course, all the moral excellencies, which have been maturing and growing firmer for years, must pass for nothing, they must now give way, and fall about his ears. The spirit which gave Galileo the choice between recantation and death, for asserting the most sublime physical truth known to our world, is not dead, but still lives and works among men.

But the course pursued by the objectors to Odd Fellowism is at once the most curious and strange. First, they assert that the institution is one of a most dangerous character; they then take it for granted that all

who are connected with it are corrupt and dangerous men, which of course would make the institution still more dangerous. Then they assert that it is highly improper for good men to connect themselves with it. Such is the course of reasoning pursued by the opposers of this cause, tacitly, if not in reality. That they are impotent to prevent the existence of such institutions they acknowledge; that something of the kind ever has existed in the world is a fact; that such societies ever will exist, while men claim and enjoy the right to select for themselves relations in private life, is highly probable. Under such circumstances, what is to be done? Why, according to the objector, we are to withdraw from them every conservative influence, and let them riot on the interests of society, without the vigilant eye of one who has the integrity to hold them back from mischief, or sound in the ears of those in danger the alarm. They object to the connection of good men

with them, while, if there is real danger, these are the only men who can be depended upon, to give us notice of that danger. It is now we hear the note, you are all interested; bad men are there, and you have a common interest in covering up and disguising your proceedings. But how is this? We find in these societies the most prominent and trustworthy members of every church; here are men of prominence from every circle in society; here are clergymen from every church in Christendom, except Papists; men whose piety is spotless, whose character cannot be impeached; men whom we would believe on any other subject, and under any other circumstances: all of whom tell us the same story; all bring back the same account of this institution, and they do this after having studied it long and attentively too. Now can it be possible that all these men, after all the tests which have been applied to their moral integrity, after all the professions

they have made of attachment to the truth, after all the evidences they have given of the fact, are corrupt at the core, and deceivers and base hypocrites; that, Judas-like, they are prepared not only to sell their master, but their country, for the interest of this society, which none consider more than secondary in importance? So much for the corruption and baseness of the members of this institution. Let him believe it who can; let him judge thus who dare with his Bible open before him. Indeed, if this is the charity possessed by our opposers, with all their professed goodness, we greatly prefer that which is taught by Odd Fellowship; for were one of its members convicted of such slanderous denunciation of his neighbors, were he never so honorable, he could not escape the penalty of immediate expulsion from the order. Nay, we say, let good men be found here, and if the order be what its opposers suppose it to be, we are assured they will either give the alarm to

a threatened world, of the volcano which is boiling and about to burst under their feet, or they will snatch from the hands of those who hold it, the lever with which mischief is about to overset the world, and thus secure society against the general and fatal crash. So far as this institution is concerned, in bringing the different classes of society together, there is more reason to rejoice than to indulge in unnecessary alarm. It is indeed a happy feature of our age, that the world finding itself by far too much divided, is putting forth some great and laudable efforts to bring its scattered fragments together and make them cohere; not by giving up any view or doctrine which any one may regard as essential to his views, but by that all-pervading love by which the Saviour designs to bind man to man, and bring our race to heaven. Such a union is not designed to obliterate the lines which mark the boundaries between virtue and vice, nor to confound the one with the other,

but to tolerate innocent non-essentials in our brother, and at the same time give a strong, because a united, discountenance to all which is sinful and dangerous.

This is the same principle on which Odd Fellowship brings its elements together. It teaches its members that they are not to meet under its outspread banner as rich, or poor, as Baptists or Presbyterians, or Episcopalians, or Methodists, but as men who are liable to reverses and suffering, as moral beings who are constantly in need of moral culture and moral restraints; that their business here is not to discuss this or that, or the other end, but act mutually to make each other happier and better.

If this is not a fair field for the powers of good men, if this be not a place and a work appropriate to the best of men, if this is a place to endanger the purest feelings, the most exact sense of right, then we have failed to understand the duty of man to man, and the relation of good morals or of religion

to this life. If teaching men that it is their duty to be good citizens, good parents, and good neighbors, to live peaceably with all men, to love God with all the heart, and their neighbor as themselves, to practise universal kindness, to look upon the whole globe as the field of their charitable labors and to do all they do as in the presence of a heart-searching God, whose eye is ever upon them, and to whom they must give an account for all their actions here; if pointing them to the grave, and urging the uncertain, it may be the early period when they will certainly accupy it as their abode, as a reason why they should curb their passions, and bring every affection into subjection to the perfect law of love; if all this, which is enforced on Odd Fellows, endangers the character of the good, then we have learned for the first time, that the same great truth may at the same time give life and produce death—may work a radical reform, and entomb in a ruinous error. And yet these

truths are taught and enforced in Odd Fellowship.

The objector will doubtless say, there is nothing new in all this, the same things are taught from the pulpit. This we cheerfully acknowledge, and hence conclude they will do no harm if taught in the lodge-room.

One thing we must be permitted to express here, it is this: that the spirit of religious intolerance, which has pervaded so many minds, and which has so often been manifested in relation to this subject, which says, "stand there, for I am holier than thou;" that spirit which forbids men to think for themselves, however they may act, has done the church of God, as well as the world, infinite mischief. Men will think and act for themselves. They feel an assurance that they enjoy this right by permission of the highest legislation in the universe; and when they know they are justified in their action by the great charter of liberty which he has given them,—when men under these

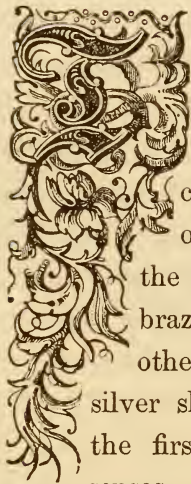
circumstances meet with opposition, and from those who profess to hold that charter in high estimation, and even to be governed by its spirit deeply engraven on their inner heart, they will ever feel less respect for such men, and will be influenced by them less in all subsequent time: it will even be fortunate if they do not pronounce the professions of such hypocrisy, and the very substance of the new creation of their inward nature, which they profess, a farce; and little wonder, for such manifest any other than the liberal feeling and the catholic spirit which the great charter of religious liberty inculcates, and which the lowest intellect can understand.

We do not mean to say by this, that opposers to Odd Fellowship cannot be Christians, or that many do not and have not opposed this order from honest convictions of duty. However this may be, the disaster of which we speak is not the less certain, or less ruinous. When instances can be

found where the faith of men has been unsettled, where religious habits have been undermined and Christians have been plunged into error by the teaching or the practical workings of this order, then, and not before, may it with consistency be pronounced dangerous.

XII.

“Your Regalia is Useless, Expensive, and Extravagant.”



WO knights once met on the high way at a place directly over which a shield was suspended. After the usual civilities, common to travellers of their time, one remarks to the other, “this is a beautiful brazen shield.” “No,” said the other, “you are mistaken; it is a silver shield.” “I must insist,” said the first, “on the veracity of my senses; it is certainly of brass.” “It cannot be,” said the second; “my eyes tell me it is silver.” “You must be plying me with falsehood,” said the first knight, in anger. “And you would push the lie down my throat,” retorted the second. So each

drawing his blade, they concluded to determine whether the shield was brass or silver by arguments of steel. While they were thus engaged in earnest endeavors to cut each others' throats, covered with dust and blood, a third person made his appearance, and being informed of the cause of their difficulty, told the astonished combatants of what they had entirely overlooked, which was the fact that the shield had actually two sides, and that one was of silver and the other of brass. The fact in the case was, each knight had examined only his own side of the shield, and was prepared to pledge his blood that he had got the right of the whole subject. It is often so here; each man takes the side which lies towards the way from which he comes, and each believes he has got the whole subject; but we should bear in mind that every question, like the shield, has two sides, one is silver, and the other brass, and he must take the whole mass if he would find both.

It strikes us this is too much the case with those who urge their objections to this society, and especially so, when we have heard this objection urged, "Your regalia is useless, expensive, and extravagant." It is well known that one of the most successful modes of teaching has been by symbols. In some ages of the world this form of imparting instruction has been used altogether, and in sacred things this form has been preferred above all others. Hence among the Jews their external religion consisted almost entirely of symbols.

These have been continued in the Christian religion, where we have Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and what could more beautifully and sublimely express what they were designed to represent? One peculiarity in symbolic teaching is, that the sign be simple in itself; which also constitutes to the furtherance of the great end of this kind of instruction, which is that it be enduring.

Suppose, then, we wish to teach the importance of unity and purity, and at the same time produce uniformity in the appearance of a company of men, and distinguish the relation each bore to the object which engaged our attention, and still have symbolized before each individual the peculiar obligation he is under, and the specific duties he is to perform ; how could this be done better, and in a more simple way, than by a collar and apron, to which should be attached a simple color, which should at the same time tell the rank and duty of the wearer. Such is the design of the regalia of the order. If it be said that it is simple, we have only to reply, then it is just what it was designed to be.

But it is further said, much of the regalia is extravagant, and involves needless expense. Lodges are not in the habit of purchasing such regalia ; theirs is common and cheap. The expense of the costly regalia of which they complain, is a matter to be

settled between the wearer and the objector. If he thinks this a matter of his concern, and can make the purchaser of costly regalia think so too, he may, perhaps, prevail on him to be more economical in future. But we have the curiosity to look at this matter of expensive equipage a little further. We have often seen, on occasions of military parade, the very class of persons who object to expensive regalia, stand with chained attention, admiring a corps of military, praising the neatness of their equipage, and envying the soldier his place. They would even bring their children to look with them on this jovial death-pageant, and admire this or that officer, as with glittering sword and shining tinsel flashing in the sunbeams, he gave his orders, which, when the reality should come, would send fifties or hundreds of immortal souls to the spirit world, and make as many wives widows, and twice as many children fatherless; a pageant which must ever be attended with hardness

of heart, and with all the immorality of the camp; which must dry every tear by the representation of human suffering over which it would remorselessly roll its iron war-wheel, and crush with its remorseless war-tread in its barbarous charges to death, hushing groans by the shout of battle or the thunder of arms; while the desire to alleviate the bleeding and mangled forms which strew the field, does not once enter into the economy of the profession. And the objector admires this glittering array, and never once thinks to censure this lavish expenditure for death purposes; and yet the equipage worn by one of these minions of the Angel of Death, would furnish a whole lodge with the badges of the order. But no sooner does an Odd Fellow make his appearance with the badge of humanity, and of moral lessons, by which to train his better feelings to tenderness, and instead of making widows and orphans, to alleviate

their sorrows and administer to their wants, than the welkin rings with "Oh! the extravagance of Odd Fellows!" But suppose Odd Fellows should wear just such badges as the objector would have them, how long before we should hear another objector from another quarter saying, "You cannot think very highly of your institution, or you would clothe it better."

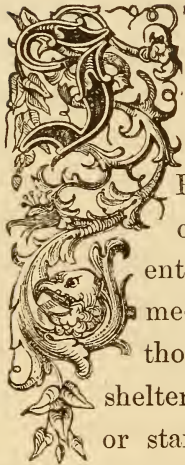
The truth is, persons connected with this society feel that it is worthy of a proper representation, and while it continues as it is, we sincerely hope it may enjoy such attention and representation; for of all this we believe it every way worthy.

Men are not very apt to lavish attention on unworthy objects, especially those of a moral nature; but when they do this, and more especially when persons of all classes do this, it is very good evidence that the subject which they treat thus, is, in their judgment, one worthy to be honored and

respected. Those who understand the subject the best, reckon Odd Fellowship to be worthy of this attention; and those who know little or nothing of it, complain of them for rendering such a judgment, and maintaining, without compulsion, such a practice.

XIII.

“We object to your name—‘Odd Fellows!’”



T would seem as though the opposers of this institution were determined to cripple or crush it under some form. Hence, when they are met at one objection, where they had entrenched themselves, they immediately fly to another, as though they hoped, by taking shelter under successive subterfuges, or starting a whole array of phantoms of their own creation, to frighten the lovers of this cause from their position, or by clothing the public mind with prejudice, to bar effectually the onward march of the order. Here, then, after we had patiently threaded our way through the mazes of a whole wilderness of objections, and hoped

here to find rest, we are aroused from our fond hopes by a whisper in our ears from a spectre-like form, "We object to the name of your institution — 'Odd Fellows!'" Oh! horror! So here we are again, fairly at sea, navigating this dangerous name-ocean, where, we suppose, according to the objector, many a fair craft has foundered on a name, a horrid name! Very well, what is there in a name, after all? Are names essential qualities of objects, or merely signs of qualities? Nay, are they the signs of qualities at all? Is not their office still lower than this, and do they represent in any way, unless it is by conventional agreement, under certain circumstances, more than the fact of mere existences; and these, quite as often as otherwise, arise from merely accidental circumstances, of which numberless instances might be given. For instance, the name of Christian was originally designed as one of reproach, but notwithstanding, was adopted by the church at

the time, and has been by the world since. So with the terms Puritan and Methodist. Now if men have been pleased to furnish a nomenclature for this order, and it has seen fit to adopt what has been furnished to its hands, of what harm has it been guilty, more than those named above ?

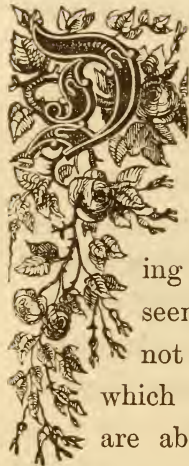
In these instances, the cause was enough to elevate the name, and make it respectable. Let it be so in this.

The name does not make the thing. Neither does it add to nor detract from it a single quality. We might apply the term virtue to vice, but this would not change the quality of the action one iota, nor would it render the one less odious, or the other less commendable. Were we to call gold lead, or lead gold, these metals would retain the qualities they now possess, in spite of the name ; and so with men. How many have borne the name of Socrates, but did the world ever enjoy more than one sage of Athens ? Many a Washington has

lived in our day, yet there is only one who is entitled to the appellation of Father of his Country. We have known many Franklins; and yet the world boasts of only one who could devise the means to master the hissing lightning, and tame it into the service of man. Who does not see in all this, the cause or the man giving character to the name, and not the name to the cause or the man. It is true, a name might have been found by which to designate this institution, possessing to the popular ear a little more euphony than the one it has, but so long as it answers our purpose, and as there is no law for imprisoning or hanging men for their names, we hope we may be permitted to wear ours.

XIV.

“It makes Christians fellowship the Wicked and the Infidel.”



IOGENES, it is said, on one occasion, was seen walking the streets of Athens at noon-day with a lantern, and when enquired of what he was looking for, answered, “I am looking for an honest man.” So it seems our opponents, at noon-day, not contented with the light which already blazes on this subject, are abroad with tapers, rush-lights, and torches, peering into every crevice and corner, not to find a virtue, however, but to see how many bad things they can guess, and find, and say, about Odd Fellows. It is further objected, that “it makes Christians fellowship the wicked and the infidel.”

This, however, is only the same objection which we have already answered, put into a new dress; but notwithstanding, we will answer it, as there is one feature presented in this form, which was not fully expressed, and therefore was not met under the objection which asserts that this society compels the good and the bad to associate together. The great difficulty in this form which the objection has assumed, appears to be in the persons whom we fellowship. If it is intended to be said that we fellowship all of the man's belief, we flatly deny the charge. There is not such a thing hinted at in the whole order. The institution does teach toleration, which we suppose means simply to allow every man the same privilege which we ask for ourself, that is of selecting and enjoying his own opinion, on any and every subject; and this is a right which is guaranteed to every man, in all moral and civil codes. Hence that man's opinions are tolerated, though not espoused, by every mem-

ber of society. The object of fellowships the very men to whom he objects, as an American citizen, as a temperance man, as a benevolent man; that is, he fellowships him just so far as he thinks he is right, and no farther. The fact that he is persuaded that he thinks right, and acts right, on some subjects, does not make it follow as a necessary consequence that he does so on all subjects. This is the principle of fellowship among Christian churches. They act together, and have what is denominated fellowship, notwithstanding each holds much of what the other denominates error; they fellowship as far as they agree. Such is the case in Odd Fellowship. We believe it is the duty of all men to be friendly, to help each other in the time of need, to contribute to each other's happiness and comfort. Here we are agreed; here we mutually believe each other to be right; and so far, and no farther, our fellowship extends. We do here what good common sense, and reason, and the

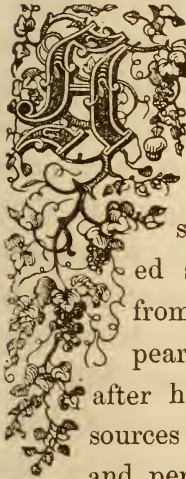
Bible demand of every moral being—approve what we conscientiously believe to be right, and condemn what is wrong.

Here is one thing, however, which surprises us not a little. The objector intimates at least, that there are a great many bad, wicked, and infidel men in this society. How this may be, we are unable to say. It has not been our fortune, however, to meet with very many of this class, and we have had a pretty extensive acquaintance with the order. But we have had the fortune to meet with a great many men who stood, wherever they were known, deservedly high for piety, religious zeal, and consistency of life, although they sometimes met with irreligious, infidel, wicked men, according to the objector. And we have often wished, most heartily, that as much could be said of some, not all (for there are some honorable exceptions), of our objectors, though they profess to dwell constantly in the bosom of the church.

We see, however, how far the fellowship of the order reaches, and that this spectre of *fellowship*, like all others which visit our world, is either only imaginary, the fruit of not exactly a disordered, but of a prejudiced mind, a creature only of air.

X V .

“Odd Fellows are bound to shield each other from Punishment when Guilty.”

FTER thunder, we generally have rain,” was the only reply of Socrates when Xantippe, after having exhausted her ingenuity to arouse his passions, and as a last resort poured some dirty water upon him from a window. And so it appears to be with our opposers; after having exhausted all their resources to accomplish something else, and perhaps not being fully satisfied with their own effort, they now think to spatter us a little, so that in any event we may not appear quite as clean as we otherwise should.

Hence, we have this objection, "Odd Fellows are bound to shield each other from punishment, when guilty; and the minister who is a member of this society, will protect its members, who are accused before him, so that the church cannot obtain redress when she has been wronged by her members." There are two parts to this objection; one relates to matters of a civil character, the other to those of an ecclesiastical. As relates to the first part of this objection, which is, that Odd Fellows are bound to shield each other from merited punishment, it were answer enough to say the Koran was never more false than such an assertion. Every Odd Fellow knows that he is taught, and strictly charged, directly the opposite of this. The importance of conforming to the laws of the country where he may be, is directly and forcibly urged upon him, and he is assured that in violating these laws, he not

only violates the spirit but the letter of the laws of the order.

In many instances, a violation of civil law excludes a member from the association. Hence, when members of this institution are guilty of crime, we feel ourselves doubly bound to bring them to justice, for such are guilty of a double crime; they have violated two codes by which they have solemnly promised to be governed; and when a member is found in these unhappy circumstances, other members are strictly charged not to cover up or palliate his guilt. As to the ecclesiastical objection, were it the case that the minister was clothed with absolute power, there might be, could we bring ourselves to believe a man standing in this sacred relation would dare be so base, some apparent weight in the objection; but since all churches with which we happen to be acquainted, try their accused members by their peers, the minister only sitting as judge in the case,

having no power to move, only as the jury shall say guilty or not guilty, or we are unable to see the force of the objection at all. We think, however, this circumstance is sufficient to show the impossibility of such an occurrence as the objector supposes.

But suppose we were to admit the possibility of such an occurrence; what then? Why, in most, we think in all instances, the parties have the right to an appeal to a higher tribunal, where any irregularity or partialities in the court below, would be detected; and shame and disgrace, if not punishment, would fall on him who could so far depart from his duty as to favor the guilty, under any circumstances whatever. Were there no other, these views, we think, would sufficiently obviate the objection; for we can hardly conceive one so stupid, and so steeped in folly, even had he the disposition, as to venture his reputation, on such a procedure, when the means of detection were so certain and so easy. But let all

this be as it may, what we said in answer to that part of the objection relating to civil matters, is equally applicable here. A double obligation rests on the administrator, to see that the offending member is punished. Now look for a moment, at the character which these accusers ascribe to their brethren, no matter whether laymen or clergy; men who, perhaps, were in the church before their accusers were born; who have manifested, and do yet, an uncompromising zeal for the advancement of the holy cause which they profess; men whose property, time, and talents, are unreservedly devoted to the advancement of all that is good; men against whom slander dare not breathe; who have ever been considered ornaments to the body with which they were connected, until now they have committed the wonderful offence of becoming Odd Fellows; no other crime or offence is alleged against them; to all appearance, they are as good, they live as devotional as

ever; and yet they are suspicious characters. Let those judge thus who please, who find comfort in it, but before they settle down in that judgment, let them go and read the fiftieth Psalm and the ninth commandment, for their especial edification; let them study the import of charity, as taught by the Sacred Scriptures, and of toleration, as taught by the Lord Jesus Christ, when the disciples came and reported one who was casting out devils in his name, but who would not follow them, and they forbade him. "Forbid him not," said he, "for no man that can do a miracle in my name, can lightly speak evil of me." Here is another objection, which, like its predecessors, is without foundation and without weight; and we would that it were as sinless on the part of those who make it, as it is without foundation so far as it relates to Odd Fellows. Thus we have passed through this long array of objections to the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. How successfully and con-

clusively we have met and answered them, our readers must determine. One grace, however, we think will be awarded us, that is, patience; and another we have tried to exercise, which is candor and fairness. If we have been lead astray at any point, let it be attributed to inadvertence, not design.

As to the character of the objections urged against the order, an enlightened public will judge of them. The weight and importance of each, we are aware will strike different minds with different force: though we have endeavored to treat each with candor, and with reason. Yet, we must say, this has been done as a matter of respect, not because we considered them worthy of the importance the objector would seem to attach to them.

Several of these objections we consider of the most frivolous character, having, if allowed their full force, without the least palliating circumstance, no moral character whatever. It ought always to be borne in

mind, that an objection to be of force, when levelled against a moral subject, must involve some moral principle, of greater or less weight; a mere capricious fault-finding, in any case, is so far from being praiseworthy, that it is in the highest degree contemptible. From this part of our investigation, which has occupied so much of our time, we now turn to one possessing more beauties, and which, we have no doubt, will possess greater attractions to the mind imbued with the true spirit of benevolence and charity.



PART III.

Advantages arising from Odd Fellowship.

WE come now to speak of the actual advantages arising to individuals from a connection with the Independent Order of Odd Fellows.

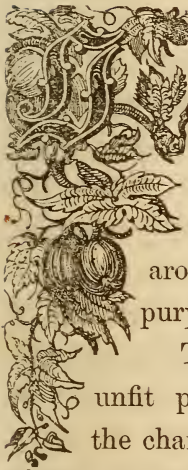
The motto selected and adopted by the order, is "Friendship, Love, and Truth." In its economy, and in the minds of its members, these are not mere empty words; for on these the whole superstructure rests; on this basis the whole internal procedure of the order is carried

on ; here rests its constitution, its by-laws, and its practice ; these form the main-spring of all its action, and the unyielding cement of its union.

By *Love*, we do not wish to be understood as speaking of the sickly fondness manifested by effeminate lovers under that name, and which plants its root and flourishes best in the soil of fancy ; which has an eye only for a pretty cheek, a symmetrical form, a lofty carriage, a captivating manner, or those artful and merely external blandishments, which so often captivate, though they may have an existence independent of all true worth or principle. But we mean that respectful affection which is founded in the really valuable and substantial qualities of mind ; the beaming forth of the true excellence of the noble soul which inhabits the external and visible man : in a word, that which is the man himself. With this view of our kind, Odd Fellowship engages in its appropriate work.

I.

The Social Influence of Odd Fellowship.



ODD FELLOWSHIP proposes to confer on its members peculiar social advantages, and at the same time protect them from those dangers which often lurk in ambush around resorts devoted to these purposes.

The drawing room is a most unfit place to form an opinion of the character of men; so is the place where the care and anxiety of a business life rest with their crushing weight upon him. Under such circumstances you do not see the man, you only view the drapery which imperative circumstances have thrown around him. In one instance, his brow is prepared to be garnished with a

wreath of smiles, and all the beauty of his being will be called up for the occasion. In the other instance, he acts equally under a disguise. Here the sternness of what he terms life's realities are crowding around him, and as in the drawing room you know him only as a man of pleasure, so here you know him only as a man of business.

To understand his worth, you must place him in circumstances where the diamonds of his nature may flash out without any borrowed lustre, from the casket in which they repose; you must place him in a middle region on a line dividing the two extremes; here place around him men in every circumstance of life, and of every creed and profession, and before him a worthy object to enlist his feelings, and then you will have evoked the true man, and may study him at your leisure. Does he now enter into the feelings and interests of those around him? Does he act here, where all eyes except a few are shut out

from him, with interest and energy? Has he forgotten the caste which the world has arbitrarily assigned to the men around him? Does he look at them with a fellow feeling, and honor them as men, not as rich or poor, but men who are acting on the same broad bases as himself, and whose hearts beat responsive to the same calls as his own? Here it is you will find and learn the man; here, where we listen in vain for those sounds of discord which ever jar on our ears without. Here the better feelings of his nature will gain the mastery, the long imprisoned man will be unlocked, and will come forth uttering his own true language. And here we may study him, stripped of his disguise, and love him, not because he has a form and complexion like ours, but because he possesses a nature which can sympathize with those feelings of our own which our judgments, our religion, and our hearts tell us is right. It is on such developments of character we found our right

attachments, and such are the developments this institution makes. This is the true social feeling which, when brought into play, heightens our enjoyments and makes our intercourse what it was designed to be. The man who is thus influenced must be a better citizen, a better companion, and a better parent. Those feelings of misanthropy and distrust, which so often embitter the lives of men, and prowls like some beast of prey around the hearth-stone, are chased away by the smile which this confidence inspires. Men under its happy effects meet as men, not as mere commercial machines, nor as sensual fountains, whose happiness is measured by the nearness to the brim to which they are filled with the gross substances of this life. Their pleasure arises from the out-gushing of the same feelings towards the same objects, which is heightened by a sense of oneness, and equality, and respect, which pervades the whole. There is here a confidence of

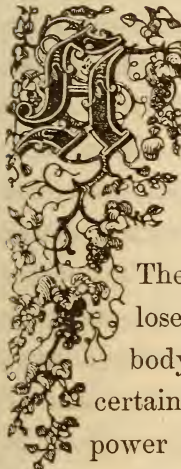
protection against wrong, which is found first in this natural confidence each holds in the other ; but should this be abused by any one holding these sacred bonds too loosely, the suffering member has redress in a salutary discipline, which seldom or never fails to redress the wrong done a complaining member. It is this state of things which makes the lodge-room attractive. He who goes there knows he will meet nothing which can offend the eye, the ear, or the heart. He meets friends. Does he need counsel ? he finds those here who will be happy to give it to him. Does he need comfort and consolation ? here he never tells his grief without sympathy. Has he been wronged ? here are those who in all laudable ways will aid him in obtaining redress. Has he met with cruel rebuffs and jeers in the world without ? here he finds a state of society which will redeem, in a measure, that world from the reproach of heartlessness and cruelty ; for here he will learn

that those are the exceptions, not the rule, and hence will be enabled to look upon the world with less of the feeling of misanthropy and reproach, and more with pity and commiseration. Such are the social elements which are fanned into existence by the breath of this institution; such the atmosphere in which its members are taught to live and breathe.

We do not say that these chords, which are designed only to discourse harmony to our ears, never become relaxed, and sometimes jar discordantly to the sense. It would be a miracle were it otherwise; but this again calls into play the happy influence of the society, as it adjusts the discordant member, and so obliterates the traces of his departure from duty, as to erase almost the recollection of the occurrence. It is not possible to mingle in such society without feeling strong resolution, as it comes up from the heart's deep fountain, proposing to us to become better as we are made happier men.

II.

“Odd Fellowship protects the Morals and Habits of Men.”

 ANOTHER happy result arising from this institution, is its protecting influence over the morals and habits of its members. Relaxation from business is needed by all men. The ever-strung bow must in time lose its elasticity, and the mind or body constantly worked will as certainly become weary and lose its power to act at all, or will act but feebly. The physical and the intellectual man imperatively demand rest, where it may find change and amusement. This men will have; and it is unfortunate for our times that so many places of doubtful character

and tendency spread out their amusements to invite the enjoyment. The bar-room, the sitting-room of the hotel, the restaurant, the billiard-room, and a multitude of places of this character, become the resort of many, and especially of young men, who, after the toils of the day, seek entertainment and rest. The influence such retreats have on the mind, the danger which lurks within their halls, is too well known to need a description here. Many minds have become aroused to these dangers, and much has been done to crush the demon, and in some instances, we may say with partial effect. But to be successful, the sentinels placed to guard men against evil must always be on their post; there must be something stated and uniform, something on which they can depend, something which will obliterate all traces of the past, and hold its treasure a willing captive to its influence. All this we have in the regular and stated meetings of this order. No one

does or can come there, who has not an immediate interest in what is occurring.

Here men are placed beyond the hum of the active pursuits of life; they meet and associate with friends; the moral atmosphere around them is pure and hallowing; those agencies which corrupt and intoxicate without, are here excluded: while a multitude of agencies are acting around him which mould the heart and the affections into a beautiful moral symmetry, and give tone to the better feelings of our nature. He who spends an evening here will feel satisfied with himself. He goes to his home with a heart more cheerful, with a mind more tranquil. He will feel more in friendship with himself and the world around him. His moral feelings will be instructed, his views of moral obligation enlarged; in a word, he will be a better man. To these influences add the care and watchfulness which is constantly exercised over members, with the discipline to which they are sub-

ject, and we can hardly conceive of a class of restraints designed to secure from evil influences better calculated to accomplish so good a purpose.

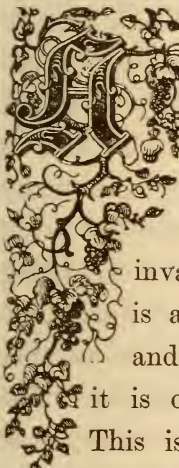
Because they do not hear of these corrections being applied, many have been led, erroneously enough, to suppose they do not exist. In respect to an erring brother, the Bible says, "Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone, and if he repent, forgive him." So says Odd Fellowship. As no advantage could be gained by publishing the errors of another to the world, we wisely and humanely keep such things where they ought to be, until every reformatory measure has been exhausted and failed, and then we are permitted to tell the fact of the dereliction of the erring one, and his separation from the institution at the same time. And such is the force of this moral influence, working in the retreat of the lodge-room, as to have effected a most happy change in the life

and habits of many young men with whom we have the happiness to be acquainted. Difficulties which have threatened the most serious results to the parties and their families, we have known settled in the most amicable and permanent manner. Animositities which have festered in the hearts of men for years, men who have passed each other with averted looks and angry feelings, we have known brought together and reconciled by the force of this influence. And some, with whom we have the pleasure of an acquaintance, who are now worthy members of the Christian church, received their first religious impressions while these moral forces, and the bearing they were to have on their lives and conduct, were being explained and enforced to them in the lodge-room. Such we believe to be the legitimate influence of this society; there may be exceptions, there doubtless are; but in what society or institution do not such exceptions sometimes obtain? To prevent

crime is a much greater virtue than to punish it. This we are confident the institution has done to a far wider extent than is usually acceded to it. Many a young man, by imbuing his mind with a feeling of self respect, and a sense of obligation to society and to God, has been held back from dissipation, and secured against the wily influences of the designing, until his character has assumed a form and consistency for usefulness in life.

III.

“ Odd Fellowship cultivates the Moral feelings.”

 ANOTHER admirable feature connected with this institution is, that it cultivates the moral feelings. A just sense of another's privileges and rights, is an attainment of invaluable worth among men. It is a virtue which all commend, and yet it is to be lamented that it is one which too few practice. This is a virtue which is insisted upon by Odd Fellowship. All members are forbidden to embroil themselves with any who, through ignorance, or even ill-will, may traduce the order. The doctrine that others have the same right to their opinions as we have to ours, is constantly kept in

view. Each, in these respects, is required and exhorted to square his life by the golden rule, "As ye would that others should do unto you, do ye even so unto them, for this is the law and the Prophets."

Here the moral feelings are brought directly under the teaching of the best of schoolmasters, Divine Revelation. Were such instruction only in theory, it might pass like much other teaching which is given to the world; it might garnish many a page, and comparatively but few lives. But here it is reduced under a regulating system to practice. It not only exacts toleration and charity, but it sets the member at once to acting on these principles. The individual acknowledges the beauty and fitness of the theory. The society says to him, go and practice it, and learn the reality of its enjoyment. He accordingly commences at once his first work — contributing for the needy, and by the practice acquires the habit of an active benevolence.

At his first step he learns the luxury there is in doing good. "That it is more blessed to give than it is to receive." Such is his first step. He now advances a second, and loves to talk of those who are the recipients of his bestowments. He finds it true in this case, as in every other, "where the treasure is, there will the heart be also." He is thus led imperceptibly on to take an interest in the welfare of those around him, which he never felt before. He begins to look on his race with other eyes, and feel for them with another heart; so that when he is called to the discharge of the personal offices enjoined by the order, he finds his mind fitted for the delicate duty devolving on him. We might name many instances in confirmation of this view of our subject, but one or two must satisfy us.

In a sweet and retired village in central New York, which nestles modestly in the lap of high surrounding hills, and more than half veils itself with the foliage of its abun-

dant and thrifty growth of beautiful ornamental shrubbery, the tall bulwarks of which are garnished with delightful cascades and high water-falls, which come sweeping down their bold and rocky channels, like streams of brilliants, to enrich the most friendly people in the world, and by their music tranquilize their minds, amid the active scenes which enliven the broad, bright Eden vale beneath; here, in such a place, and in the society of such a people, one of the choicest minds good New England ever gave to the world — and she has given it many of whom she may be justly proud — fixed his residence, and hoped, with the partner of his fond heart, with activity and frugality, to enjoy happiness and a competence.

A few brief years rolled on, and brought to these choice spirits no change, only from bliss to bliss. Their kindness won all hearts; none met but to smile on them. Not even slander could find in the dungeon of his

iron heart a single shaft he dare lift against one so much beloved; for well he knew there was goodness in that nature which would neutralize an ocean of his venom. Such was the kindness of that heart that it held a perfect sway over the minds he taught, and such his varied information that the oldest and deepest read hung on his lips to gather knowledge.

His kind heart could not withhold from those more needy than himself, when he possessed the means to relieve their wants. Hence he was always poor; and yet he felt that in the sight of Heaven at least, his was an honorable poverty, at which he need not blush. But since the Fall, death and his minions have rioted over the earth, and, as they list, strike all, both bad and good. He of whom we speak fell wounded by his shaft. Yet he struggled like a giant against the hard disease which lay upon him, and, leaning on his crutch and staff, he would cheerfully away to the recitation room, to

point out the path of knowledge to his listening pupils; or, when too feeble to do more, would call them to his room, and, as he sat bolstered in his bed, would discharge the duties of his profession. Yet all who looked upon him saw that the vital fire was waning apace. If any asked him, why this incessant toil, they felt they had his answer when his moistened and eloquent eye rested on his wife and babe. He had been the faithful and devoted servant of those who called him; he had led their children to knowledge by his wisdom, and had pointed them to virtue by his example. Something had been kindly done by the trustees of the institution he served, by making the services required of him more nominal than real, but the time had arrived when they could do no more, while the cask of oil and the cask of meal were now exhausted. Death, too, was near, and the almost widowed wife and mother saw, on one hand, want, lifting his fleshless finger, pointing to

the child of her love ; on the other, her dying husband, the bitterness of whose cup of sorrow must be increased even by the softest whisper of her apprehensions ; and she, with all the delicacy and diffidence of woman, was far from home and kindred, to whom alone she felt she could appeal with certainty for sympathy and aid. For her who had not known want in all her life, now to feel it, when the prop Heaven had given her on which to lean in such an hour, was sinking from under her, was an unmingled cup of bitterness indeed. We were in the lodge-room when one of the members of the order, through the promptings of his own generous nature, made known the wants of this family, and their circumstances. None asked the amount in the treasury, none proposed to touch it ; but many asked the privilege to give ; all did give, and with hearts which, if their eyes and countenances were an index, rejoiced in the opportunity.

That night, in one house at least in that sweet vale, there were grateful worshippers at the foot of the cross. In that house were such as felt like those who for the first time gathered manna in the desert; who felt the force of the tranquilizing assurance of David, "I have been young, and now am old, yet have I never seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread." In a few weeks after the occurrence we have spoken of above, this good man became a tenant of the house of silence. The order followed his remains to the place of rest, as citizens; and contributed from their private funds near fifty dollars, to defray the funeral charges, and to enable the now lone widow to return to her friends and the home of her childhood.

In this transaction, Odd Fellows did no more than was their duty, and we only name it to show the influence the order has on the moral feelings, and that this influence is not always unproductive of

good results. Neither would we wish to intimate that these men were really better than other citizens. Had they possessed an organization as well adapted, and as convenient for such an office, they would doubtless have done the same thing; the circumstance shows the influence, and the advantages of organization, when we would direct the affections and hearts of men. In other instances, we have seen these societies devising plans, and circulating among themselves subscriptions, for the relief of the poor generally, in the places where they lived, and expending, in a single winter, hundreds of dollars in this praiseworthy work, and with that cheerfulness and delight which always animates those who chase want from the suffering. In such efforts, you might see those who, under different circumstances, would never have thought of looking out the destitute in their miserable abodes, wending their way through streets and lanes deserted by all.

but those whom poverty compelled to reside there, and the feet of those adventurous ones who were inquiring after the virtuous needy, and with a delicacy and tenderness which do honor to our species, proffering their aid wherever such subjects of want could be found.

These are not cases existing in the imagination only, but are beautiful realities, on which we love to dwell, but not because such instances are rare in our country ; we know they are not, for many are the associations arising from the religious influences around us, which partake in this truly good-Samaritan work. But when we see those who are denominated worldly men ; when the attorney can be drawn from his office, the physician from his profession, the merchant from his counting-room, and the mechanic from his shop, to go on errands like these, we must realize that a new era has dawned upon us, and we ought to respect and honor the means which has

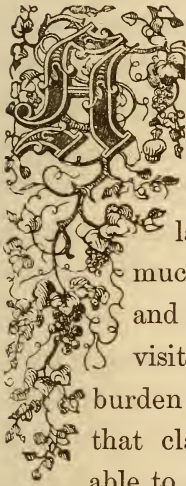
peopled the field of kindness and charity with these new auxiliaries.

These instances, of course, are cases where relief has been extended by its members to those out of the order; but they are instances which show most conclusively that the institution holds the heart under a moral influence, which exacts from it an acknowledgment of its duty, and to some extent awakes it to its discharge. We think it cannot be possible that men should be thus engaged in these works, so justly considered moral, and their moral nature not be touched and influenced by them. It does appear to us, the Great Teacher teaches this doctrine when he assures us, that to give a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, is to secure a disciple's reward. We do not wish to be understood as saying that such work is properly religion, as taught by the Bible; but we do say, it is one of the virtues

taught by true religion, and he who practises it manifests a state of moral feeling which advances him nearer to what he must be, if he would be truly religious. As a consequence he must be made better.

IV.

“It affords Relief to Families in Sickness.”



ANOTHER advantage which attends a connection with this institution, consists in the relief it affords to the minds of those families whose head is laid on a bed of sickness, from much of the care, embarrassment, and fatigue inseparable from such visitations. At such times, the burden of anxiety and care falls on that class of persons who are least able to bear it, the female. On her in this hour of intense anxiety comes the whole weight of external business, the labor of obtaining proper night attendants for the sufferer, domestic oversight, and the care of the sick chamber, all crowned with grief and the most intense solicitude so natural

to her heart, for him she loves the best of all in the world, and who now suffers. Now is the time she reaps the advantages arising from the order. Out of the darkness, which hangs around her like a curtain of night, glide forms unmasked, the forms of those she knows, the forms of friends; they come to lift and bear the load under which she was fast sinking. They take the night-taper from her hand, and bid her rest, while they bend in sleepless vigils the livelong night over him, who battles with mortal pains as with his destiny; and as often and as regular as the recurring sunset, do they return to minister to a pain-worn brother. Under their vigilant watch, all without is protected, and is safe. Waste, though ever lurking in the train of disease, is here defeated in its design, and the affectionate and bleeding-hearted wife smoothes the pillow of him who is her soul's life, free from the corrosion of keen-toothed care, in all else but the convalescence of the object of her

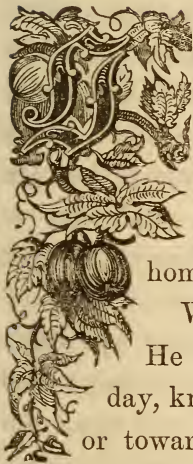
solicitude. Now the bright stream of substantial aid flows out from the fountain, where it has been accumulating, unbidden. The sick man asks not, what is to become of my wife? where will my children find bread? he has only to look on those around him, to find an answer,—he is satisfied. Are his circumstances only easy? Does he win his bread by constant industry? The little store he has provided by his unwearied toil and ever vigilant economy, wastes not away, even though the hammer has ceased to fall upon the ringing anvil, or his plane no longer cleaves the yielding wood. He now draws on other resources, both of affection and of help. Here, again, in the chamber of affliction are the hearts of men schooled in morality; here, from whence they can look through the thin gauze of mortality into the spirit-world, they learn what they need to bear such trials, what they ought to possess in order to answer the great end of their being, and what they

must have, if they would pass the deep vale of death on seraph's wings, and mount into the full sunlight of an immortality of gladness.

Let such as do not or cannot appreciate these advantages, wait until the trial we have been contemplating shall throw its dark night around them, before they pass judgment on the merits of such advantages. Then, we apprehend, such will be better qualified to appreciate the office, when they shall feel the need of such welcome service.

V.

“Sense of Safety when among Strangers.”



NE more advantage arising to the members of this society, we may be permitted to mention. It is that which arises from a sense of safety, when removed to a distance from home and kindred.

We live in an age of change. He who thinks himself settled to-day, knows not on what enterprise, or towards what country he may be bending his steps to-morrow.

Society is changing. Its elements may be said, almost without a figure, to be continually passing from pole to pole, while the great absorbing thought which possesses every mind, is, how to acquire possessions in

the world. In this state of things, it is not surprising that there should be a lamentable carelessness respecting the wants of others; that, as a consequence, many who are deserving of a better fate, are left to pine in want, and die unattended and unwept; that others, reduced to poverty, and galled by what they call the wrongs of the world to them, should turn its enemies, and adopt those summary means of subsistence, which want often encourages, and which they are brought to consider a just retaliation on those who they conceive have wronged them, is not strange. In such a state of uncertainty, there are few who can leave their homes for other lands, without just apprehension for their safety, and any order of things which can contribute to allay these apprehensions, and lessen these uncertainties is humane. But the Odd Fellow can throw himself on this troubled wave of human life, and let it bear him where it may, he has few apprehensions of want or suffer-

ing; he is conscious of holding in his hand a wand which will bring up out of this great life-commotion, this ocean of active beings, help for his time of need. If sick, if his resources are exhausted, if unholy hands have in a moment stripped him of all that was his, though he is surrounded only by strangers, he has no occasion to beg, or to feel that he subsists on charity; he has only to prove himself what he professes to be, and his wants are redressed.

How often are we told of those we knew and loved, who, when far from home and friends, have at an unexpected moment fallen the victim of disease, and while prostrate, perhaps unconscious, have been made the victims of more cruel men; and who, when sufficient strength returned to enable them to rise from the couch which bore them, find themselves with shattered constitutions and penniless, disease, and more greedy men having eat out all their substance. Take the history of one such case.

He has crept from his gloomy apartment, to the haunts of business, and of active, healthy life. He thinks of home, of friends, of the comforts which, were he there, would surround him. But his enfeebled limbs cannot carry him, his means are exhausted, and he cannot live where he is; there are none to whom he can apply for help, for he knows no one, and the story which he tells to those around him, is the one they have heard for the ten thousandth time, and it has ceased to make an impression on their hearts. Still he is surrounded by the deadly miasma which has already left him only a mere fragment of his former self. He sees those conveyances which might bear him on the wings of the wind to his home, going and returning daily, but they who guide them have iron hearts, which can only be penetrated by gold; pity for the poor, haggard wretch who crawls to their feet, and with all the eloquence which arises from the consciousness that his life depends upon the

plea he makes, finds no quivering chord there to tremble responsive to his woe; he is again and again repelled, until despair seizes on his heart. He turns his eyes, overflowing with bitter tears, towards his home; he thinks of a mother, a wife, a sister, it may be his babes, for whom he has braved all he now endures; he sees their little hands reached out to beckon him home again, and the fond visions of the past crowd around his memory, peopled with the faces of loved ones; he thinks he hears the music of their sweet voices once more sounding in his ears, and in the intoxication of the delightful delirium, he sees the world swim round and round, and hopes it is bringing him to their embrace. * * *

* * * The next morning, it is simply announced in the public journal, "Found dead in the streets, a stranger." Potters' field closes over him, and they, the thoughts of whom were last in his chilling heart, weep for one whose rudely confined form

sleeps alone, unheeded and unknown. How wide the contrast, where the offices of this society reach out their aid.

I see the stranger in the noisy city. He has this moment arrived. His pallid face and feeble step, as he summons all his remaining strength to hurry away from the din and noise of the busy streets, which crash down on his fevered brain like bolts of death, tell me of the disease which is enthroned within, and which breathes its deadly virus along the channels of his boiling blood. I tremble for his fate. I see he is intelligent, and his mien assures me that he has been used to the gentler influences of life. I feel an interest for the stranger, and wonder who will care for him here, where all is the intoxication of enterprise, or the bewilderment of change and curiosity. I fear for his treatment; and an instinctive shudder steals over me, as I contemplate how lonely he must be, what unmitigated suffering he must endure, and what neglect put up with;

perhaps he may die alone, unpitied and unwept. I am tempted to form his acquaintance, and do what little I can for his relief; but what can one do, a stranger and alone? While I thus muse, with a full heart, balancing as well as I can between prudence and duty, I see one in conversation with the host: they talk of the stranger; they pass to the apartment assigned him; soon other forms pass in, and with noiseless tread glide spectre-like to the door of the room he occupies; they gently lift the latch and enter; soon another, and then another group pass on, until that one chamber appears to be the centre of attraction to all comers. I wonder at this. Soon, one by one, they pass out again, and, as they pass mine host, I hear them say in suppressed tones, give him every attention. I gain the ear of the house-master and say, I perceive the invalid gentleman is no stranger here; and am surprised to hear him say, "Yes, perfectly so, he was never here until

this hour." But he appears to have friends, though a stranger. "Yes, there are those here who will give him all needed attention." I wonder at this. Am I in a city filled with such kindness and charity? Do the people here only need to be told that a stranger has arrived and is sick, to call them around him with such readiness? Do they understand instinctively when the needy sets his foot on their pavement, and as instinctively rally around him to proffer their aid? This must be one of Heaven's favored spots on our thorny earth. The reign of peace, with all its tranquilizing influences, must have begun here, and Eden have thrown back her morning to fan these hearts with her gales of love.

This must be the focal spot, whence shall radiate the glory of the long preached and long desired millennium to all the earth. It was thus I mused, when again the same light foot-fall caught my ear, and two men passed to the apartment of the stranger, in

whose interest my feelings had now become intense ; and with a heart filled with amazement at what had transpired, I sought my pillow for the night. At early dawn I awoke, and with a mind filled with the thoughts of the transactions of the preceding evening, went forth determined to solve this beautiful mystery. In passing, I listened at the door of the apartment occupied by the invalid—all was still within, and I passed on. Soon, two gentlemen, whom I had seen the evening before, passed in and entered the sick-room ; those who had watched out the night, passed away ; and it was thus, day after day and night after night. Men came and went as regularly, and almost as noiselessly as the sun and stars ; until one morning at early dawn, it was whispered in all our ears, that the stranger was touching with his feet the brim of the cold Jordan of death, and we all hurried to witness the last sad spectacle. We were struck, when we entered the apart-

ment. There, in a wide circle, stood many gentlemen, who had assembled at this early hour, with true feeling and intense interest, to witness the last sad step of a fellow mortal, from time to the unmeasured existence of eternity. A dim light fell faintly on the noble brow of the dying man, and a silence which was overwhelmingly eloquent reigned through the apartment, save when a deep-drawn sigh, which, as it came up from the heart's deep well of feeling, sounded and reverberated through the room like the low mellow peal of some great organ pipe among the old solemn arches of some gray and time-worn Gothic temple. Soon, the sufferer opened his languid eyes, and as he looked around on those assembled—and such a look! a volume uttered all its pages of gratitude in its single expression—and then, in the merest whisper, which was made startlingly audible by the stillness reigning through the room, he said: “Brothers, I thank you for all your attention and kind-

ness; this is all I have to give, except my poor prayers, which I have unceasingly offered for heaven's blessings to attend and reward you." "I trust," said he, and he struggled with his deep emotion, "I trust you will inform my wife of all that has transpired in my sickness. Send to her what you have written from my lips—and O! my sweet boy, must we part? must I look no more on those laughing eyes and enjoy that merry careless laugh, and hear no more the glad childish shout which welcomes me to my happy home and fire-side?" And as one present wiped the great tears from his manly cheeks, he repeated, as though he would hush the rising emotion of those around him, for all were in tears: "But the order will care for them. I have full confidence in their love and integrity. I die in peace; farewell; I die in peace." And without a struggle, his spirit passed to that happy land where there is no more death. On the following day, just as the sun was

hiding himself in the far-off west, we stood by the side of a new-made grave, the tenant had not yet been laid in its deep chamber ; there stood around it a solemn and weeping concourse, and yet there was no mourner there. Still all seemed to mourn. Tears coursed down many a manly cheek. And when the coffin was let gently down into the earth, and the expressive evergreen fell on it from each passing hand, sobs mingled with the solemn and impressive service which fell from the lips of the weeping minister. All felt that a more potent eloquence came up from that stranger's grave and coffin, than ever fell from human lips, since He who went about doing good, spake to man. It was the eloquence of a God-directed Providence.

Now, who would hesitate which portion to choose either for himself or his friend ? and in such choice, do we not assert the excellence of the portion which we select ? Yet such is the bliss Odd Fellowship is

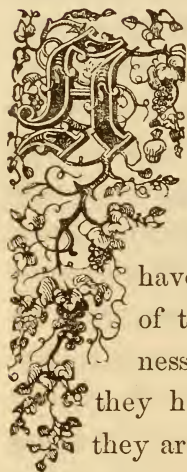
scattering all through our land. Thousands are the hearts it is causing to rejoice, in these daily and active ministrations. It is not doing this by reducing the needy to a crushing sense of beggary, but when the stranger appears at its door, it reaches out to him a full hand, and at the same time says, "Take this, it is your right." To those resting securely and in the midst of abundance at their homes, cases like those which we have detailed may seem incredible. They cannot believe the world so careless and hard-hearted as one case represents it, or as kind and affectionate as it is made to appear in the other. But could they read the history which any one of our large cities could present, for only a single day, of cases quite similar to those we have named, their doubts would vanish. But who would undertake the task of chronicling these events of poverty and scenes of heart-rending, in all our cities, for one brief year; and after they should be written

out who has a heart stern enough to read them? The truth is, our world is full of misery, and so far as man can see, multitudes of these sufferers are innocent. Many, whose prospects were for a time the most flattering, have, without any error on their part, been precipitated from their high elevation in a moment, and made subjects of the deepest want and suffering; and these form a large class who make up the vast array that pine in solitude, without friends or bread. We have learned long before this, that there are no circumstances, and no station, in this life, which can insure us against these sad reverses, either at home or abroad. How pleasant then it is to know that our friends, when separated from us and who are far away, have around them an additional protection; that they have a passport to stranger's hearts and affections; that they hold a title to property in all places whither Providence may direct them, and that it is always available, when other

resources fail. Under such security, with how much greater confidence man launches his adventurous bark on the broad enterprises of life, and against how much of the spirit of sordid avarice does it protect him in his voyage. Being confident, as he well may be, under the shadow of this society, he banishes the ever-haunting thought of a suffering wife and children, in case his health should fail, or death should remove him from them. As a consequence, such a man is not haunted by the gilded ghost, like other men; he is enabled to give more of his life, and with greater success, to improvement, and more to domestic enjoyment. The corroding cares which eat into the vitals of others, are banished from his circle, while he and his family rest in peace.

VII.

“ Odd Fellowship is a Benefit to the Families
of its Members.”



NOTHER grateful feature in Odd Fellowship is, that it always furnishes aid to the families of its members, even though their natural protector is removed from them. We have already seen what the offices of the order were, in time of sickness; but they do not cease when they have obeyed this command — they are required to bury the dead, and educate the orphan.

There is no duty which requires more delicacy and tenderness than the burial of the dead, for there is no time in one's life when the feelings are wrought up to such wakefulness, and to so much tenderness.

It is then especially the case with woman, that all the cherished love of years, all the recollections of an affectionate intercourse, all the offices of love, all the enjoyments of the past, and all the fond and cherished hopes for the future, live with increased freshness in her memory, while they lie shrouded in the coffin.

At such a time, when the fond heart is torn and gashed by a keen sense of its irreparable loss; when it feels that its very core has been wrung from it; even then the future will intrude itself on her mind, and mingle its own night with the darkness and gloom which already cover the soul with despair. The cloud which hovers over the grave is, to such a mind, the pall of all that is sweet and lovely in the world; and but for a few choice jewels which have been left by the parent, she would feel blessed, could she take her place in the coffin by the side of one she loved so well, and there mingle her dust with his, in hope of a glorious

resurrection. At such a time, who does not feel embarrassed in approaching the sobbing mourner, lest he should in any wise encroach upon those delicate sensibilities which are now so keenly awake. And then, how does gold and all the world sink into insignificance, when compared with such offices, at such a time ; how those who perform them are exalted in our feelings, almost to angels ; how much of the grief we should otherwise endure, is lifted from our aching hearts. Reader, did you ever see one who had lived in your inmost soul, stiff, and cold, and breathless ? — did you ever look on lips, rigid and cold as those of the statue, which had been wont to fill your soul with their music ? — did you ever see those eyes closed to open no more, which were wont to thrill you with rapture by their very gaze ? — did you ever see such an one composed in the narrow coffin ? — with such an one did you ever move slowly to the grave, and see that jewel of your soul laid far down in the

dreamless bed, and hear the falling clods, as by their hoarse and solemn voice they seemed to say to you what the one you loved could not: farewell, a last, last farewell?—did you ever return from thence, to realize the utter loneliness of your heart in the loneliness of your desolate dwelling? If you have not, then pause in your judgment with reference to the value of services rendered at such a time; for you cannot understand them, and never will, until death and the grave shall teach them to you by their own impressive lecture. At such a time Odd Fellowship appears in its undisguised beauty. It is here the advantage of an organization appears, in the systematic course which characterizes every step they take under these trying circumstances. They have attended the husband, the father, or the brother, through all the perils of his sick-bed; they were present, and comforted the mourners by their counsel and their tears,

when he died ; they have laid him down in his dreamless bed to rest, free from all the pains which wrung his heart while he lived. But their work is not yet done : they go now and find out the cost of suffering, and defray the charges which they find, and in this way hide from the mourner's eyes and sense an aggravating feature of her affliction. They shut the door of her apartment against the sexton and the undertaker ; they hide from her view the necessary commerce of death — and then, with a brother's feeling they say to her, we are your friends. Should want threaten you, should business demand it, should foes oppress you, should any instance arise where we can befriend you, hide it not from us, it is our business, it is our duty, it will be our pleasure, to redress your wants, and light the taper which shall guide you in the darkness of your earthly allotments ; our bosoms, bared to the tempest, shall be a bulwark to protect you. To the child they

say, ever confide your grief to us; you are the representative of one we loved; through him we are bound to you; our arms shall protect and guide you; in our hands you are to be borne up; go on and enjoy the facilities we open for the improvement of your mind and the protection of your morals. Aside from the holy offices which illuminate and warm the soul from the altar which burns in Heaven, what office could be higher or more comforting than this? What work more God-like than to visit the widow in her affliction, and to regard the fatherless in their destitution? What comfort that can be applied at such a time, more appropriate to alleviate sorrow, or lift a heavy burden from the heart? What more beautiful than to see men, not of his kindred, taking the orphan by the hand, leading him away from vice, and pointing him to the path of knowledge, removing the hinderances which otherwise might greatly impede, if not entirely hinder

his advance, and encouraging his flight along the way of mental development.

How many thorns does such an assurance pluck from the pillow of the dying parent — with how many relieving circumstances does it surround the bed of death. Such are the advantages to society, and to individuals, arising out of the existence of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. For these blessings, a thousand hearts to-day rise up to call it blessed.

Thousands are already reaping the golden harvest which it has planted and nurtured. Hundreds of orphans are now living and rejoicing under the wide spreading shelter of its protection. Thousands of dwellings through the land, which would otherwise be dark and dreary with despair, are now filled with the light and comfort which it communicates. It rises up like an oasis in our desert world, like a fragrant spot, an island of verdure in some vast Sahara, planted and watered by the hand of

kindness, for all the thirsty and weary who travel that way. It is lifted up in striking contrast to the careless indifference of the multitude who compose the world. It shows what may be done by concentrated effort, by organized regularity. There is wealth enough in our world, to banish want, and starvation, and despair, from the centre to the circumference of civilized society, and this, without adopting any of those wild and chimerical agrarian plans on which some have insisted. It only wants the wish to do so in the breast of all, and a little, a very little time, and labor, and money, from each, which would do us good, and the work is accomplished. But this is not so now, and we know not that it ever can or will be so, until that age arrives when the wolf and the lamb shall lie down together, when swords shall be beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning-hooks, and when one law shall bind all nations, and that law be love. Until then, we suppose, the

affairs of the world will roll on in their usual course ; men will drive through our streets in gilded coaches ; they will be clothed in purple and fine linen ; they will fare sumptuously every day ; they will have and hold their titles, they will crowd every mart for profit and for pleasure ; voluptuous music will peal away on the night air, accompanied by the deafening shout and ceaseless laugh of pleasure ; merriment will hive her votaries in gorgeously furnished apartments ; multitudes will take their ease, and be waited on by obsequious menials ; misers will hoard and count their gold. All this will be going on, while just behind a thin curtain of board or brick, crime will riot ; frost will pinch its victim ; hunger will devour the living flesh from the bones of its victim ; human forms with human souls will nestle in cast-off rags which they have filched from the gutter ; mothers will weep despairingly over their starving children ; starving children will

cry for bread ; worth and goodness will toil the livelong night away to obtain a morsel for their thin and shrivelled bodies ; sickness will pine and suffer on its pallet of straw, without any to comfort or alleviate ; there are prayers, and there are curses — there are wailings, and there are lamentations — and there are the maniac's laugh and the fool's gibberish — all, all mingling and welling up from those low, dark, damp haunts of poverty, want, misery, distress, and vice — which speak in Heaven in thunder tones, but on earth, who hears them ? who knows of them, who cares for them ? And yet all exists within a short ear-shot of enough, of more than enough to banish the whole which makes this dark pandemonium.

Let those who object to the existence of this order, go and look in upon scenes like these, and tell us if not only this order, but every other agency which can remove, if no more, only one grain of affliction from men, does not need to exist. Not need to exist !

Alas, this is the charity of the world; a charity which, like the dark gathering tempest, frowns on every work its own tardy hands ought to have done, but have neglected. • This society not needed! Have the agencies which have existed around it so long, banished all sorrow from the world? Are there now no poor, none who need aid, none liable to reverses? Has the charity of the world done it all—will it do it all? O, that we could make the pencil speak the living reality on this subject. Then would we give the reality to the eye, which should personify the benevolence of the world, as it really is, and true charity. Had we the power, and were we called upon to discharge this duty, and give to the eye a portrait showing the wide contrast between the world as it is, and beneficence as required from man to man, first we would portray a heart—and such a heart!—it should be large, and swollen with mighty grief. Adversity should stand beside it, and on his brow

we would paint his character, stern, dark, and unbending; and with relentless hand he should drive deep into that heart his iron barb at every blow. It should stand rent and quivering with anguish, under each cruel stroke. Into every yawning gash, black-browed disappointment should pour the bitterest wormwood, and in its agony the dark blood should ooze from every opening pore. Above, we would paint a face of such a visage as agony alone can make; the cheeks we would have gashed with deep channels, the eyes should roll in dark bewilderment, and over all should pour tears of burning gall. Close beside that heart should cluster a group of babes, with tearless eyes and countenances bewildered; their limbs unclad, with locks dishevelled, their parched and shrivelled lips only half covering their unused teeth; while every muscle is shrunk and loosely hangs on each formless bone, and with their long, bony, fleshless fingers, they mark unmeaningly in

the dust. Above them all, should hang a starless night; amidst its darkness should scream careering, headlong winds; sleet and frost should be the plumage of their pinions; around should loam the heaviest clouds of inky blackness; fierce lightnings should hiss and blaze along the thickening gloom, and threaten, with fiery tongues, the trembling group. Above, should roll and crash "the live thunder," as it coursed from battlement to pinnacle, along its inheritance of terror. And there should stand Humanity alone, helpless, friendless, threatened, desolate! Then could we paint a groan, such as nature heaves when wildest evils come; could we give it color, shape, and life, 't would tell the world's humanity!

Far remote from this gloomy blackness, should appear a rising star; a halo should surround it; and in its broad circle should gather forms of beauty; and on their lips should hang the sweetest song of hope, and at the bidding of their fingers, a thousand

lutes should swell in loudest minstrelsy, the sweet response; each countenance, like the bow of promise, should beam with benevolence; and from their glittering ranks should flow far away on the darkness, floods of unrivalled light.

Far on the other hand, should stand a temple; fair in its proportions, and majestic. On it should smile unclouded, endless sunshine. Around it should carol the friendly gales of bliss. From under its wide portals, should gush a constant stream of sparkling beneficence. Around it endless spring should live; and in its halls the song of happy contentment and resignation, should ever warble in sweetest strains. Then, on the wings of light, should move the sons and daughters of sublime charity; darkness, storm, and tempest, should be afrighted from their path; in their glory the fierce lightning should be eclipsed; and at the cadence of their strain, the angry thunder should keep silence. Their path should lead them

to the group of sufferers. On their golden pinions they should bear the heirs of want and anguish, and plant them in the temple of rest and happiness ; and at the door keep vigils day and night, lest want or woe might enter. And over the portals we would write, "The asylum for the needy and the oppressed." Such is the charity of the world, with all its boasts ; and such the charity which aids the world's victim ! with what propriety has it been christened God-like ?

PART IV.

A word to the Public.

WITH such views of the rectitude of the principles, and the worthiness of the objects of Odd Fellowship, we confidently submit it to the investigation of candid minds. The enlightened, we are confident, will not judge harshly of it, until they find what they believe to be good reason to do so. They will conduct their investigations with closeness and candor, and we invite them to such scrutiny. We earnestly hope they will furnish them-

selves with the records of the institution, and that they will study them; that they will probe the whole to the bottom, and bring up from its mysterious deep any hidden poison they may find lurking there. We court investigation. The want of it, we are confident, has been an injury to us. Many have taken it for granted that we were a secret institution, that they therefore could know nothing with certainty respecting it. As a consequence, they have never made an attempt to do so, but have taken up their conclusions without the shadow of a premise. That these have often been unjust and slanderous, we have already seen. Of all this we are not disposed to complain, so much as to commiserate the propensity and shortsightedness of the multitude, in involving in indiscriminate condemnation men who differ from them in matters which involve a moral principle of so great magnitude and importance. We only ask that the institution may be judged

by that most reasonable and authoritative rule of Scripture, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

If the results of a connection with this society are bad, in a majority of instances— if men become worse husbands and fathers and citizens, then condemn it; but if it produces good, morally and physically, we are bound at least to cease our opposition to it, and allow it to work on. It is no time, in these days of general dissipation and of moral delinquency, to oppose any influence which can add one grain to give the balance of right the preponderance. Wherever such an influence is found, every good man, every lover of his race ought, and will bid it God-speed.

To the Ladies.

To the Ladies we may be permitted to say, this institution is for you. Its objects relate to you personally, or to those as dear to you as your own selves, your children, and your husbands. You, so far from being excluded from participation in its operations, are made its most efficient auxiliaries. What is kept from you, could do you no good; and, consequently, we feel assured you have no desire to come in possession of such a treasure. If you would not insist on keeping for your husband his deeds or insurance policy, you would not desire what this institution has entrusted to his care, for your good.

It has been said that all the ladies are opposed to this institution. But we think we have data which justifies us in repelling the charge. We have the honor of an acquaintance with many of the most intelli-

gent ladies of our State, and can testify in their favor on this subject. We do not remember one, in the wide circle of our acquaintance, who understands the principles of the order, who is not, so far from being unfriendly to it and arraying themselves against it, heartily in favor of it; and many of them, who, under the popular prejudice, opposed it, have, when informed on the subject, become importunate for their husbands and sons to become members. And many are the wives and sisters we have the pleasure of knowing, who with their own fair hands, delight in preparing the most tasty and expressive badges of the order.

Woman opposed to Odd Fellowship! No one who knows her character for intelligence, and her love for the kind offices of relief, would ever dare to make the assertion. She may be misled for a time by those who are prejudiced, while all the means of information the order affords are

studiously kept from her eye; under such circumstances, her feelings may be arrayed against the institution. But no sooner is she informed on the subject, no sooner does she see its happy influence on society, no sooner does she find its heart pulsating with kindness, than her minstrel voice is heard cheering on its long lines of noble-hearted men, in the work they have covenanted to do, while she fervently blesses the day which prompted the noble union. And well she may, for who is more deeply wounded by the reverses of this life than she? who feels the smart of disgrace more keenly? on whom falls the crushing bolt more certainly? and who drinks to its dregs the cup of woe more patiently, or more resignedly, and uncomplainingly, than woman? Find woe where you will, and it falls on woman. By its shaft, the heart of some wife, or mother, or sister, or daughter, is struck. And he who alleviates pain or sorrow, or averts the point of threatening

calamity, does so much to bless woman. He who shields another from immorality, or crime, or reverse, has done so much to protect woman's heart. And he who contributes to increase the social qualities of man, to lead him to elevate the standard of morality, has by so much done something to heighten the joys of woman. Say not, you may never need the offices of this society. We hope you never may. But then, alas, the day may be already marked on the calendar, which shall bring with it the wounds this society is designed to heal. But should you not need it, some one else will, and will you derive no enjoyment from blessing others? Such is woman's nature as to make us confident that this forms one of the chief sources of her highest enjoyment. Go on, then, ye daughters of this favored land, in that blest work of scattering peace and joy around the path you tread. May that path ever be one of flowers and of fragrance; may you never be called to weep as others

have wept, alone, and without guardian or protector; may you never be called to shed your unavailing tears over the fall of husband, sire, or son, like many others of our time; may you never feel the withering touch of want, or the thrill of agony which has wrung so many hearts around you; may it never be your lot to pine in loneliness, be shut out from the society of the world, and with tearful melancholy remember, that of all the summer swarm of professed friends who once glittered around you, in the days of your prosperity, not one is left to take you by the hand to lift you up, not one to speak your name, not one to sigh or weep with you, and all because you chance to be guilty of the high and gloomy crime of poverty. Pass on, ye loved ones; gather the smile of friends as you go, live in the affections of hearts worthy of you, and may no higher ill betide you than the ever-laughing pleasure of a peaceful home and fireside, and the sweet

music of a thousand voices leaping from the lips of the poor you have comforted, as they gather around, at the sound of your footfall, to call you blessed.

To the Members of the Order.

To the members of the order, we may be indulged in a few words: Whatever others may think of our order, you, brothers, know the exposition we have given of its designs and principles is correct. You know that you have solemnly covenanted to be governed by these principles, to make them the rule of your lives. You need not to be told of the manner, nor the authority, by which these principles are enforced. It is enough for us to say, you have recognized their heavenly origin, and that your own good sense not only approves their rectitude, but acknowledges their importance.

However you may have looked upon this order, and your relations and obligations to it, heretofore, you will learn from these pages that yours is a high office, that your relations are of no ordinary character, and that on you rests a high moral responsibility. You are not to be governed by a sordid selfishness in your intercourse with the world; you cannot be; the interests of a hundred thousand of your fellow-citizens are linked with yours; the world, the whole world, is the vast field which invites the culture of your hands.

If in this work you are unfaithful, if you are untrue to these principles, you are not affected alone, but your want of rectitude reaches the whole order. Many will judge of it by your life and conduct, and you may be assured, if these disagree with your avowed principles, the consequences fall not merely on yourself, but on those who are innocent, on your worthy brethren, on the widow and the fatherless.

By unworthy acts, you not only pierce your own heart, and stab your own reputation, with suicidal madness, but you aim a dangerous blow at the very vitals of your friends. The eyes of the world are upon you. They are contemplating your actions, and their impressions of this order will be shaped according to your character. If that be good, they will be favorably impressed with what you know to be a good institution; but should your actions be unworthy, an unfavorable impression is made, which the wear of time cannot obliterate.

Let us beware, therefore, how we indulge our passions, and much more, how we are brought into captivity by them. Groans and misery are in the world. Let us find our pleasure in hushing the one, and in relieving the other. Let us find our pastime in bearing the torch of comfort to the darkest hut, and in lighting there the blaze of joy and contentment. Let us seek our happiness, not in listening to the roll of martial

music, the roar of cannon, and in the neighing of the war-horse and the shout of fame, but in the blessing of the widow and the orphan, and those who are ready to perish. Clean hands and pure hearts ought to characterize those who come to such offices, and these we ought ever to wear. Above all, brothers, let us not be forgetful of our higher calling. The glass of many of us is almost run; the spade is already lifted to hollow out for many of us the narrow house; we are just ready to witness the sundering of earthly ties; the moment comes when wife, or children, or brethren, cannot hold us back from our returnless voyage; the friends who have gone before are beckoning us from earth — all, all beneath the stars is passing away; we, too, are on the wing; death hurries to meet us, and we are hurrying to meet death. Have we that charm which, when we grasp his fleshless, frosty fingers, will make our spirits flames of unextinguished glory, or shall that

touch chill our hearts and freeze our hopes forever? There are few of us who have not friends in heaven, and all of us have the opportunity here to add to the number already there, through the offices we are enabled to perform by the aid of this institution. Those offices are calculated to frame our minds, and fit them for those high virtues which are necessary for us, if we would enter upon blessedness in eternity.

Then let us seize that righteousness which is by faith; let us lay hold on eternal life; let us walk in the light of those high virtues which arise from loving the author of our blessings with all the heart, which spring up out of the great code that Deity has seen fit to give the world. Then shall we not only hold the sublime form, but the sublimer substance; we shall not only have the external beauty but the internal glory, deeply engraven on our hearts. Let this be our aim, and then, when earth's highest noon shall fade to our glazing eye into the

faintest evening twilight — when the scenes of the death-couch are enacting around us — when tears are fast falling on our pillow from the eyes of those who loved us — when cherished forms seem to recede, and we can only hear the far-off sob and wailing of those we leave behind us — when the last adieu, like the dying strains of far-off music as it lingers on the quivering harp-strings, sounds on our ear, how sweet to the soul its visions ; what forms of beauty sweep in robes of light along the apartment now — what radiant smiles, what *Æolian* whispers, what voluptuous music ; how in every face is seen one benefited and befriended for the name of Christ ; above all, rises a glittering, burning cross — and he who is passing away cries, as he beholds it, “ O Death, where is thy sting ! ” And he who graced the cross responds, “ Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

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