

Lodge, and explained the phrase, *oldest Catholic religion*, by a reference to the *Te Deum* composed in the 4th century by St. Ambrose—"The Holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge Thee;" concluding that it must mean Christianity, which was typified in the two earliest dispensations known in the world, viz., those of the Patriarchs and the Jews; when Martin Clare delivered his opinion in words to the following effect; "I have had several long and interesting conversations with Bros. Payne, Desaguliers, and Anderson on this very subject: and it is evident from their researches, that the belief of our ancient Brethren favoured the opinion that Masonry is essentially Christian; that it is indebted to Christianity for its principles; that in all ages the English Fraternity consisted exclusively of Christians; and that, therefore, the religion in which all men agree was the Christian religion. The ancient charges, which are now before us, were extracted from old masonic records of Lodges, not only in Great Britain, but in foreign countries; and at the time when those records were originally compiled, the religion in which all men agreed was the general religion of Christendom—of the Holy Church throughout all the world, which, as has justly been observed, the *Te Deum* pronounces to be Christianity. The most ancient manuscript which passed through the hands of Bros. Desaguliers and Anderson during their researches, gives a decided affirmation to this doctrine, as may be gathered from the following passage:

Bysechyng hym of hys hys grace,
To stonde with zow yu every place,
To conferme the statutes of kyngs Adelston,
That he ordeynt to thys Craft by good reson,
Pray we now to God almyght,
And to hys swete moder Mary bryght,
That we move keppe these arcyclus here,
And these poyntes wel ul y-ferre.

And as thou were of a mayd y-bore,
Safre me never to be y-lore;
But when y schaltheinus wende,
Grante me the blisse withoute ende,
Amen! amen! so mot hyt be.

This manuscript is supposed to have been compiled in the time of Athelstan, and I should, therefore, conceive its authority to be decisive.

"In the above-mentioned year I had passed to a new Master and a new Lodge; and the first conversation I heard was on the subject of a pretended revelation of Martin Clare's revised lectures and ceremonies, in a book called 'The Testament of a Mason'; where it was feigned that formula had been found amongst the papers of a deceased Brother high in office, and, consequently, might fairly be presumed to contain the real secrets of the Order. The question was asked, Who is the author? and it was subsequently traced to one of the unfaithful Brothers who had been disappointed in his expectations of being nominated to a Grand Office.

"During the same year, if my memory be faithful, a Brother was introduced into our Lodge, whose name was Coustos. He was a foreigner, and not wanting in assurance. A great sensation, however, was created, when he exhibited some scars which betokened very severe wounds, that had been inflicted, as he affirmed, by torture in the Inquisition, at Lisbon, to extort from him the secrets of Freemasonry. It appeared by his own account, that he had resisted both persuasion and force; and that his final escape out of their hands was owing to the interposition of the British Consul. Subscriptions were entered into in order to enable the sufferer to publish his account of the whole affair, which accordingly

came out in the following year, and put a considerable sum of money into his pocket."

(To be continued.)

THE SOLDIER MASON.

A Sketch from real Life.

"As a military man, I can say, and I speak from experience, that I have known many soldiers who were Masons! I never knew a good Mason who was a bad soldier."—
LORD COMBERMERE.

During an early period of my life, it was my fortune to hold a curacy in Worcester.

The parish in which I had to labor, though limited in point of size, was populous, and in it were to be found, densely packed together in two narrow, close, unhealthy streets, some twelve or fourteen hundred of the working-classes. It was a post at once interesting and distressing; interesting, from the varied aspect it presented of human sorrow, struggle, and suffering; and distressing, from the poverty which prevailed in it, and the utter inability of an individual clergyman to cope with its many wants and requirements.

In my rounds I lighted upon a party whose name was PARKER. He had been a soldier, a corporal, and had served with some degree of distinction in India and the Peninsular war. Subsequently he was stationed at Gibraltar, and there, from some peculiar circumstance which at the moment I forget, came under the personal notice of General Don. He had a certificate as to conduct and character from the General, written by himself throughout. If I mistake not, he had been orderly for months together to the old chief. At all events, the testimony borne by him to PARKER's services and character was of no commonplace description. There was something in the bearing and conversation of this man which arrested my attention. He was in bad health, suffered at intervals acutely from the effects of a gun-shot wound, and was frequently disabled for weeks together from all exertion. In his domestic relations too, he had much to try him; his means were narrow, not always prudently administered, and he had some little mouths around him clamorous for bread. And yet no murmur escaped him: he suffered in silence; but personal suffering did not render him selfish. To eke out his scanty pension, he resolved on returning to Worcester (still famous for its gloves), and there resuming the calling of his boyish days—leather staining. Now this department of labor, though it may be carried on with tolerable impunity by the strong and healthy, is, to the feeble and the failing, most pernicious. Dabbling with the cold water hour after hour, and walking about in garments dank and heavy with moisture, till, eventually, even upon a vigorous frame. Imagine, then, its effects upon a frame enfeebled by a tropical climate, and worn down by continuous suffering.

"It mauls me, sir, somewhat!" was his cheerful reply to my close inquiries on this point, one bitter November morning. His surgeon had told him, and this I knew, that his only chance, not of checking his complaint, for that was impossible, but of staying its progress, was to keep himself warm and dry, and to avoid, systematically, cold and damp.

Of this I reminded him.

"He may talk," was his answer, "but these"—looking at his children—"must not starve!"

Once only his equanimity failed him. I surprised him one evening in excruciating pain, without fuel or food in his dwelling, or money in his pocket.

He then said to me, the admission was wrong from him by bodily and mental agony, "considering the cripple that he was, and why; where he had served, and how; he thought that his country should have done something more for him. My lot," continued he, "has been a hard one. I was compelled by bad health to quit Gibraltar. The doctors ordered me home; they said, if I remained on the Rock six weeks longer, death was certain; I obeyed. Three months after General Don died, and to the man who succeeded me in my post under him, left his wardrobe, his arms, his personal valuables, what in fact proved a competence for life. This was trying; but certain tenets tell me

that I ought to be satisfied with whatever portion of work or labor is allotted me. Fidelity to my mighty Maker is one point; tranquility, stillness, and silence, while I perform my task, and that cheerfully, are others."

"You are a Mason?" said I.

He smiled.

"You may guess wider of the mark than even that."

"Why not apply to your brethren in Worcester? You are aware that there is a lodge?"

He shook his head.

"A soldier cannot beg: it is hateful to him: he fears a repulse from a board of gentlemen at home far more than an enemy's bayonet abroad."

"Then I must act for you. Your case is pressing; and, giving full credit to your narrative from past experience of your character, I shall now take my own course. Of intentional mis-statement I believe you to be incapable."

"I have my credentials with me," said he, calmly; "I was made in a military lodge in Ireland. My certificate, duly signed, is in my oaken chest: all will bear 'the light,' and on all is stamped 'Fidelity.'"

I took the initiative and succeeded. The order was worthily represented in Worcester then and now. The appeal was heard and heeded.

Poor PARKER has long since escaped from earthly trials and bodily ailments, and no feelings can be wounded by referring to his history. But it may be instanced as involving a lesson of some moment. Here was a man who unquestionably spent the prime of his life in his country's service. He had carried her standard and had fought her battles. His blood had flowed freely in her cause. His adherence to her interests had cost him dear. Wounds which neither skill nor time could heal, disabled him from exertion, and rendered life a burden. To acute bodily suffering positive punishment was added.

Who relieved him?

His country? No. She left him to perish on a niggardly pension. Who succored him? The great Duke, whose debt to the private soldier is so apparent and overwhelming? No. His Grace had become a statesman, and in that capacity wrote caustic letters (from any other pen they would have been pronounced coarse) to those who ventured to appeal to him.

Who aided the wounded and sinking soldier in his extremity?

The brotherhood—a secret band, if you will, but active—which requires no other recommendation save desert, and no other stimulus than sorrow.

And yet how little is it understood, and how strangely misrepresented!

In "The Crescent and the cross," by Mr. WARBURTON, there is a glowing passage, which winds up with the remark, "Freemasonry, degenerated in our day into a mere convivial bond."

I laid down the volume with a smile and a sigh. A sigh, that a writer of such highly-cultivated intellect and generous impulses should have so sadly misunderstood us. A smile, for taking up an able periodical, the *Morning Herald*, my eye rested on the passage. "This day £3,000, contributed in India principally among the Freemasons, was lodged in the Bank of Ireland to the credit of the Mansion House Committee, for the relief of the destitute poor in Ireland." Weighty results, these, from a society which is nothing more than "a mere convivial bond."—*Masonic Eclectic*.

Old Astley, one evening, when his band was playing an overture, went up to the horn players and asked why they were not playing. They said they had twenty bars rest. "Rest?" said he, "I'll have nobody rest in my company; I pay you for *playing* not for *resting*."

A poor man once confined in Bedlam was ill-used by an apprentice, because he would not tell him *why* he was confined there. The unhappy creature said at last, "Because God has deprived me of a blessing, which you never possessed."