

the United States, and different parts of Europe. A man named William Morgan suddenly disappeared, and the Masonic fraternity were charged with his murder. They were united by the spirit, as it might be called, of the anti-Masonic prince of darkness. Every Mason was called a murderer. Anti-Masonic meetings were held in different places, and political parties arose whose battle cry was "Down with Masonry." The contest was for life or death, and the odds stood on the side of the frightful decree against Masonry. But in spite of all the efforts of the anti-Masonry party, Freemasonry weathered the storm, and has lived and triumphed. Christianity, the best religion that was ever devised, has had to pass through fiery trials. When the Divine Son went forth to proclaim His heavenly message men sent up one universal hiss to Heaven. Instead of receiving His message they nailed Him to a cross, and left Him to languish away His life. The Apostles were treated as if they were enemies to God and man; but they truly were the best of philanthropists. The question naturally arises, Why did mankind persecute institutions that were intended to do good? The answer is, It is through the agency of superstition and bigotry. Bigots desire to prevent discussion; they wish to hang reason by the neck and torture common sense. Mankind is prone to fall into superstition from lack of knowledge. Superstition leads people to believe in phenomena which are nothing more than mistakes of the senses, which may result from various causes. Superstitious people are weak and squeamish; they fly into hysterics at the least cause for being alarmed. Let a Masonic Lodge be opened in their vicinity, and they are frightened out of all knowledge. Many people blame the whole Order for the evil deeds of individual members. This is not fair. Nor is it fair to condemn the whole Society because one or two of its members may have done what is contrary to law. Is the white throne on which the Almighty sits less pure because a rebel angel aimed to sit upon it? Are the Apostles less righteous because some of their converts went back into the mazes of irreligion? Certainly not. Neither can Masonry be blamed because a few of its members have done that which is not right. Some people are easily duped upon almost any subject. They are selfish, and narrow-minded, and contracted in their views. Such are the people who would persecute the Masonic Order in any manner that they are able. But Masonry, like the giant oak, struck its roots deep into the soil, and could not be destroyed. Thus it has triumphed, and it still continues to do so. New Masonic halls are being reared in different parts of the country, and in the name of the great Jehovah solemnly consecrated to Masonry, and dedicated to the promotion of "truth, friendship, and charity."

THE OBSOLETE LEGENDS OF THE OLDER FREEMASONS.

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IN the infancy of nations, men accepted myths which, as culture and civilization advanced, were displaced by the theories of science. Thus, the fables of the sun and the sky and the dawn in the old Aryan mythology have received, in modern times, their true astronomical interpretation. So, too, in the individual life, the nursery tales which charmed our childhood, have, in maturer age, lost all their influence, and our faith, once so absolute in their truth, has been uprooted by the teachings of a higher education.

Something of this kind will be found in the legendary history of Freemasonry. Not all the legends of its early period have been preserved to the present day, and of those which have been, the interpretation is very different from that which was originally accepted as their true meaning.

Hence it comes that there are two classes of Masonic legends—the one class which is at this day current and which constitutes a part of the ritual in some one of the various steps of initiation. Such are the legends connected with the temple of Jerusalem, with King Solomon and his two colleagues, and with the second temple and the discovery of the lost word. These comprise, in their modern interpretation, the most important symbols of the Order.

The second class comprehends a large number of legends, invented for the most part, before the disseverance of the operative from the speculative element of Masonry. Whether these ever had any symbolic meaning, or whether they were, for the most part, distortions of history, we are not always able to determine. They are, however, no longer found in the working ritual of initiation, especially in that of the symbolic degrees, and have been discarded by the advanced Masonry of the present day, just as in mature age we dismiss the nursery tales of our childhood. But they are not altogether to be repudiated, because they constitute a part of the intellectual history of Speculative Masonry, and demonstrate the progress of its gradual growth from unmeaning legend to significant symbolism. I propose, therefore, to discuss some of the most important in the present essay. To the Mason who derives his knowledge of the