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WHO WAS TO BLAME?

A MASONIC TALE.

BY BRO. ROBERT MORRIS.

THE case was, without contradiction, a bad one. I was lecturing through that part of the country in which it occurred; and holding letters of authority from the Grand Master, it was natural that I should be invited to come over and preside at the trial. I wrote to the Lodge full instructions how to open the case; how to bring charges; to issue summonses; to take testimony, and to do all needful things preliminary to the discussion of the question. Then I left my work, three days distant, losing a week of precious time, out of pure good nature, and went to Capacity Lodge, No.—, to preside.

The case as I remarked, was a bad one. Brother Nicodemus Elmore had fallen into bad practices, and was on trial (masonically speaking) for his life. Who is it that tells a story about the devil once having a Freemason in his power and compelling him to comit *one of three* grievous Masonic crimes, viz: Either to steal, to expose Masonic secrets, or to get drunk. The poor fellow thought he was choosing the least of three evils when he chose the latter, and the joke was: he got drunk. Here the laugh comes in. Alas, for the shrewdness of the infernal enemy, while the brother was drunk he committed both the other two. It was "even so" (as some poor stick of a ritualist says with ponderous emphasis in a dozen places on the blue lodge lectures)—"even so," with Brother Elmore. Being a kind husband, a good father, a peaceable citizen, and withal a first-class Freemason; all but for the Bourbon, he would have died at the stake before committing any offence to have compromised him in any of these relations. And so being instigated by the aforesaid devil to comit *some* sin he had compounded with the old rascal by getting drunk; repeating the drunk on many occasions, in fact protracting the same old drunk for several days, and in that condition (the strychnine in his whiskey being at war with the cocculus indicus,—the tobacco juice that so nobly does duty therein, being at enmity with the extract of pokeberry root that colors, and the potash refusing all chemical affinity with the other drugs so generally compounded by the distiller,) delirium tremens stepped in, as he had every right to do, and arrested our Brother Nicodemus Elmore like a veritable police officer as he is. He quite took possession of that Master Mason for the time being, and played old Hobbs with him: (whatever the expression means, I don't know. I put it with Burns' other expression, "right, guide, willienwacht," and give it up.) He made him *feel* things; he made him *see* thing; he made him *taste* things; he made him *hear* things; he made him *smell* things; he played the gamut on the five human senses, especially those three so greatly revered by our ancient brethren. (Grand Master Scott remembers them, if the editor of the *Evergreen* does not—a joke.) Worse than that, he (not Scott, but delirium tremens, a very different fellow,) made him say things that would cause a man's hair to stand on end if he had any, and if he hadn't, would curdle his blood. I have heard a good many persons swear and