

THE MASONIC GRIP BY CRIMINALS.

CALCRAFT, England's great executioner, always shook hands to the accompaniment of kindly words with every criminal he swung from the gallows. His successor, Marwood, rejected the established etiquette, and sent the victims of outraged justice into eternity with no show of courtesy. A recent writer, (Mrs. Elizabeth Oakes Smith), with that usual sagacity of women when writing upon subjects concerning which they know nothing, says: "The reason Marwood refuses the etiquette of his predecessor is, because he is a Free and Accepted Mason, and dreads the condemned man giving a Masonic grip in return." This precious *morceau* is adrift on the sea of newspaper literature, and, possibly, may lead some into the false supposition that a Masonic grip would prevent a hangman, or other officer of the law, from the execution of his duties. Now, we have a stern old Mason in Bro. Ephraim Whitesides, who has the management of the smith department of the Kentucky Penitentiary. He is noted for his solid virtues, but has no mawkish sentimentality. A criminal sought to obtain his notice with a Masonic sign, and he promptly informed him that when he violated the virtues enjoined by Masonry and became subject to the ban of the law, he forfeited all claim to fraternal recognition and must not repeat the sign to him. Masonry does not require of its members any cognizance of a man who has so far forgotten his fealty to the law as to have incurred its punishment as a convicted felon. No true Mason, acting as a sheriff or prison warden, or juryman, or judge, or umpire, would for a moment disregard the claims of law and equity because of the impertinent intrusion of the Masonic signs or grip. Rather would their use under such circumstances serve to prejudice the case of the person so recreant to propriety as to employ them on such occasions.

We undertake to say that, were the judge, jury, and prosecuting attorney Masons, and a prisoner at the bar were to telegraph the Masonic signs, and the evidence were such as to create the conviction of guilt, such a plea would have no possible effect, except to prejudice the interests of the accused by disgusting them with the impropriety of his conduct. And so with the hangman or jailer.

We have known men, seeking favors of us as a public officer, or desiring to drive a bargain with us, to endeavor to strengthen their cause by reminding us of the fact that they were Masons. We have left the counter of several merchants without purchasing when thus addressed, and been suspicious of several cases submitted to us for public adjustment when such instrumentalities have been used to prejudice our influence. No man has a right to employ Masonry for private ends. It is true, that, all other things being equal, we should *prefer* one another. We love a Masonic brother—possessed of the same virtues—a degree better than we do the profane. It may, too, be something in a man's favor when accused, to know that he is a Mason, just as it would be to be assured that he had been a consistent church member. But it is a slander when it is asserted that Masonic signs or grips can be legitimately employed to defeat the ends of public justice, by protecting the guilty. The true Mason is not the mere man retentive of memory of the ritual, and deft in the use of the signs of the Craft, but the character that is decorated with the lofty virtues which the institution inculcates. As there was an Achan in the camp of Israel, a Judas in the Apostolic College, an Arnold in the Revolutionary army, and as there are spots on the sun, so there are unworthy characters in Masonry, deserving of opprobrium and death, and to protect whom the Order interposes no warding shield.—*Kentucky Freemason.*

MASONIC OLD WOMEN.

SOME people do not like to be called old, and a great many persons we know do not relish being termed "old women." But yet the clearness of truth compels us to say that old women do exist and are many, and that we meet with them and confront them in various scenes and in different walks of life. To suppose that we can always be young, is, alas! a great fallacy; to believe that youth, with its halcyon smiles, and living hopes, and active hours, is ever to wait upon us here, is but the baseless fabric of a deceiving dream. No, youth has to give way to middle age, and middle age to old age, day by day, and the weakness, and perversity, and querulousness of old age often seem to tinge with dullness and gloominess the early promise and the mature excellence. Old age is then inevitable, and old men and women have to share with youth the pageant of the hour. But we are talking of old women. They sometimes unpolitely say that old women, as the young Frenchman gravely observed, are "*de trop*," though we protest against any attack on real good old women. But we confess, as we say this, that we have a dreadful souvenir of some Masonic old women who have