

"Konx Om Pax;" and now the postulant was prepared for the lesser mysteries of nine days' duration.

The first day was devoted to a general assembly, the second to purification of the sea; the third to offerings; on the fourth was the splendid procession, the consecrated chariot bearing the holy basket of Ceres; the fifth day was the torch day, because on the night which succeeded it the candidates wandered two and two in silence with lighted torches, frequently returning to the sacred place; then, at an increased pace, starting forth again, crossing and interchanging their flaming torches in representation of Ceres with torch lighted at Mount Etna searching for her daughter. The procession frequently amounted to 30,000 persons, who moved with measured steps to the sound of musical instruments and of sacred hymns, and who halted at times for offerings of sacred dances; all then having washed at the springs, the statue of Bacchus was taken into the Temple. Prayers were offered, and the candidates again purified, and the ritual of initiation was read, and the sacred song raised to the honor of Ceres. Then followed scenic representations of departed spirits, the places of eternal darkness and eternal light, the joys of the blessed and the tortures of the damned, mysterious shades of infernal deities—Anguish, Madness, Famine, Disease, and Death. When these things had been seen and explained, the initiation was complete, the neophyte was released from his sins, and his consecration was finished. On the seventh day games were played in honor of the gods; on the eighth day the initiation of the sixth was repeated on new comers; the ninth day was concluded with drink offering.

This was the mystical representation of the history of Ceres and Proserpine, the object being to spread among the people the conviction of the immortality of the soul, and of a place of reward and punishment. The initiated were assured of immortal joy in the world to come. For the nine days all business, as well public as private was suspended.

So much for the lesser mysteries; of the greater we are not so well informed. It is probable that the true object was to give a rational explanation of the mythology and religion of the people, to impress the initiate with a proper idea of the immense importance of the soul. They even instructed in natural history, the use of metals, and to form some idea of the true God by the greatness, splendor, order, beauty and magnificence of nature.

They were taught that the souls of men were originally demons and exalted spirits, who were punished for their disobedience by being chained to mortal bodies. They were taught to alleviate suffering, to strengthen the bonds of social intercourse, to improve their talents, and to labor diligently.

The date of the origin of the mysteries is unknown; they are considered to have existed 2,000 years. The pomp with which they were celebrated, the enormous magnitude of the temple, and the number and splendor of the priests, are sufficient proofs of antiquity. They were first prohibited under the reign of the Emperor Theodosius, Dec. 20, 381, in which all nocturnal festivals, within or without the temple, were prohibited under the pain of banishment. When the ban was decreed it is presumed the mysteries took refuge in the Alexandrian School of Philosophy. The greater mysteries probably ceased in the year 528, when the philosophers as the strongest pillars of heathenism, were compelled by the Emperor Justinian to flee for refuge into Persia. Thus ended a noble institution, the most imposing in origin and in results.

The ancient fortified town of Eleusis, in Attica, is on the Bay of Salamis, and is now called Leivina. The rules and regulations for the celebration of the mysteries were lately discovered by one Viastos, at the village of Higi-Constantios, but as yet they are not deciphered, they being allegorical.

The Eleusinian mysteries were of vast good in their day; they served, and were peculiarly calculated to "reform the manners and perfect the education of mankind." If it were possible to lift the veil which covers the Mysteries of Eleusis, we should possess a key to the Mysteries of Egypt and of the east.—*Phil. Chronicle*.

## ORIGIN OF MASONRY.

BY OWEN A. BASSETT, M. W. GRAND MASTER OF KANSAS.

A SCORE of annual pages has enriched the history of Freemasonry since the gavel was first wielded in this Grand East, and the memory of these twenty years recall eventful scenes; the scenes of strife and famine, war and pestilence. First came the days of bitter feuds and personal encounters, followed by a time of quiet and a year of famine; then the discordant elements gathering strength, renewed the contest, and the nation was convulsed with civil war; and when the sword was sheathed, the victors in the Senate battled for the spoils. When the tumult ceased, a period of prosperity ensued; then another cloud appeared, which like an Egyptian plague, destroyed the