

and illustrious humbug of modern history, of the history which boasts a present and a future, as well as a past, is FREEMASONRY. Let me take a few liberties with both."

And then he does take liberties with both, poking all the fun at each of them that his overflowing mirth could devise. Referring to the Eleusinian Mysteries, he says:—

"The goddess, and her establishment of hoaxers at Eleusis, did a vast 'stroke of business' for more than six centuries, without any 'unpleasantries' occurring. \* \* \* Misfortune acquaints a man with strange bed-fellows; and the common misfortune of having been hoaxed lowers the proudest and the humblest into a strange unanimity, for once, of pocketing their wrongs in silence. Eleusis, with her fine bronzed face, may say, proud and laughingly—'Expose me, indeed!—Why, I hoaxed this man's great-grandfather, and I trust to hoax his great-grandson; all generations of his house have been or shall be hoaxed.' And the satirist adds, "There was an endless file of heroes, philosophers, statesmen, all hoaxed, all, of course, incensed at being hoaxed, and yet not one of them is known to have blabbed."

DeQuincey said he had a very bad opinion of the ancient world, but it would grieve him if he thought such a world could beat ours, even in the quality of its hoaxes! Here we must again quote his exact language, for it is brimful of humor:

"I have, also, not a very favorable opinion of the modern world. But I dare say that in fifty thousand years it will be considerably improved; and, in the meantime, if we are not quite so good or so clever as we ought to be, yet still we are a trifle better than our ancestors; I hope we are up to a hoax any day. A man must be a poor creature that can't invent a hoax. For two centuries we have had a first-rate one; and its name is *Freemasonry*."

Mr. Gilfillan once called Mr. De

Quincey paradoxical. But that didn't offend him, for he replied, "Paradox is a very charming thing, and since leaving off opium I have taken a great deal too much of it for my health." But, most amusing of all was De Quincey's statement of how he exploded Freemasonry, as it were, by a dynamite cartridge, at one blast. We quote again:—

"Seriously, however, the whole bubble of Freemasonry was shattered in a paper which I myself once threw into a London journal, about the year 1823 or '24. It was a paper in this sense mine, that from me it had received form and arrangement; but the materials belonged to a learned German, viz.: Buhle, the same that edited the 'Bipont Aristotle,' and wrote a history of Philosophy. No German has any conception of style; I therefore did him the favor to wash his dirty face, and make him presentable among Christians; but the substance was drawn entirely from this German book. It was there established that the whole hoax of Masonry had been invented in the year 1629, by one Andrea."

We wish all anti-Masons were as good-natured as De Quincey, for then we could laugh with them, as well as at them, and we only regret that the "Opium Eater" did not take the opportunity, through initiation, to have an *inside* view of Freemasonry. With his love for the humorous, he would have greatly enjoyed the craft when at refreshment. He would have discovered that Masonry is *not* a hoax, after all; that its philosophy is of the highest order, its company of the best, its opportunities for intellectual culture of the rarest, and all of its surroundings just such as a man of his complex nature—with scholarly acquirements and an inexhaustible fund of humor—would have greatly enjoyed. Instead of his exploding Freemasonry, he would have found that it exploded all of his satirical views, and left him a wiser, better and even, if possible, a wittier man.