

THE MASONRY OF EARLY BRITAIN.

THE Druids were the Masons of early Britain, and had many usages similar to those held by the ancient Masons. Their assemblies were held in woods and groves, and the most impenetrable secrecy overshadowed all their doings.

Their teachings were committed to their disciples in verse, and were not to be written under any circumstances. And under the veil of secrecy they concealed every useful knowledge. Much has been said about their barbarism by opponents to Masonry, though no proof has ever been advanced to support their assertion.

A remnant of Druidical superstition, still practiced in England, is the gathering of the mistletoe at Christmas.

We do not pretend that the Masonry of this age is identical in usage with that of the Druids, for the Druids received their Masonry pure, and then, like the Egyptians and Chinese, suffered innovations to creep in. But it was the same worship of God, and the same study of the arts and sciences that it is now. We claim the same Masonry, but *more* light.—*Ibid.*

ANCIENT INITIATION.

IN Egypt the ceremonies of initiation into the mysteries, took place in a pyramid erected over a cavern; the present pyramids of Egypt are nothing more or less than Masonic Temples, and these were so constructed as to defy the ravages of time.

The Arabs have a tradition that the present pyramids were built by Saurid Ibn Salhouk, king of Egypt, who lived three hundred years before the deluge, and who adopted the curious form of building, on account of the great solidity it gave to the structure, and its symbolical reference to the sun—the spiral flame. It was also to indicate the God-head: for having three sides, it represented *trinity* in unity, and wisdom, strength and beauty.

The caverns under these places of initiation, or Temples of Masonry, usually extended East and West, and differed in their appearance, some being perfectly bare and devoid of all ornament, while others were embellished with symbols cut into the solid rock, and contained couches and cells, or closets. In these caverns were celebrated the rites of Ancient Masonry.—*Ibid.*

EARTH TO EARTH.

Alas! how vain is earthly life!
How soon it fades away;
'Mid scenes of woe, strife or care,
Swift ebbs its little day.
The fairest hopes have ended
In the mournfulness of tears,
And gentlest forms have left us
In the march of troubled years.

The home of mirth and cheerfulness
Is sad and silent now;
Still is the voice of joyousness—
Pain-laden every brow.
And where but yesterday was bliss
Beneath love's radiant skies,
To-day are downcast sorrow,
Deep grief and tear-dim'd eyes.

Strange is this mystery of life,
Which ends so often here;
The grace of glowing tenderness,
In the mourning and the tear,
Which throws around our pathway
Those dreary clouds of gloom,
Which hover ever in mid-air
Above affection's tomb.

We give our friends to the silent earth,
Those whom we mourn to-day;
We miss them from our happy home,
Tho' we would bid them stay.
We part from them and they from us
In the freshness of their grace,
And we grieve for the faded flower,
We mourn the dear, dear face.

Strange ending of our tenderness—
Of all our anxious fear;
Of all those joys of heart and home
We ever hold so dear.
In the very midst of life and strength,
When all with us is peace,
Our tenderest links are broken,
Our brightest hours cease.

Yet faith looks on undoubting,
Amid each mournful scene;
Hope points to a higher life than this,
Like the Acacia ever green.
When in that land of love and light,
Ours is a radiant greeting,
When in affection's faultless flow,
Ours is an eternal meeting.

—London Freemason.