just now, seem very much to have cast off the garb of
secrecy, and hold their meetings before the eyes of the
world, and even have their own daily press, when we look
into the matter we find that they still retain all the charac-
teristics of Secret Societies.   For many things done in them
have the nature of strict secrecy, to conceal which with the
utmost care not only from those outside but from very many
of their own associates, is a primary law : for instance, their
secret and important resolutions, the names and persons of
their chief leaders, certain secret and clandestine meetings,
as well as their decrees and the ways and means to be
employed in carrying them out.   To the same end is the
complicated distinction of the members in trades and duties
and employments ; not less that the established difference
in their ranks and degrees, and the severity and discipline
by which all are ruled ; while the candidates for enrolment
are bound by promise — nay more, by a special oath — to
swear, as in most cases they are required, never in any way
to divulge their associates, their signs or their doctrines.
Thus by a feigned appearance, and the same style of pre-
tence, the Masons, as of old the Manicheans, try by every
possible means to hide themselves and to have no witnesses
of their actions but members of their own sect.   They seek
hiding places as most convenient, having assumed to them-
selves the character of learned men and philosophers for the
sake of training their associates ; in their language they
cultivate strict politeness of speech and charity towards the
lower classes ; they profess only to desire a better state of
things for the masses, and to make the greater number
participate in the conveniences of civilized life ; but even
suppose these principles were the true ones, they would by
no means represent all their objects.   Besides, those who
are admitted into these societies must promise and engage
that they will render implicit obedience and fidelity to the
dictates of their leaders and teachers ; that they will carry
out their commands at the least sign and indication of their