

attitudes possible upon the softest bales of canvas, while the unfortunate but classical Hoyer (having been beat out of his seat by a customer calling) leaned pensively against a barrel of ochre. Near the stove were seated a few outsiders, among them two or three lake captains. As is customary upon such occasions, the conversation embraced all topics, ranging from grave to gay, from lively to severe, and at last—now we cannot tell how—the subject of Masonry was brought up, and its influence upon the world, and its good in a general sense was discussed, when Capt. P—, a gentleman well known in this city, interrupted the speaker with the remark, that whatever good or evil Masonry may do in the world or ever has done, it was at one time the means of saving his life.

There are, as everybody knows, thousand of instances related where men have been saved from death, even among the rude and savage tribes, where civilization had no existence: but we venture to say that this was the first instance which any of us had ever heard related by a party particularly interested. Without much urging the Capt. was prevailed upon to give us the story of the adventure, which in substance is as follows:

"Many years ago, the first voyage I ever made—by the way, I shipped as cabin-boy in the old brig 'Hope,' commanded by Capt. Roberts—we sailed from Liverpool, bound for the port of Rio Janeiro. There was nothing to mark the outward-bound passage, and nothing of interest transpired while we were in Rio, save that interest that every thing had to me, a stranger in a strange land. I will not attempt to describe my astonishment at the sights I saw—of the quaint houses, the throngs from all nations, the dress and the dialect of the people. Capt. Roberts was very kind to me, and often took me ashore with him, and seemed to take a pleasure in answering my many questions, which certainly was a condescension on his part. Sailing was not those days what it is now. I noticed that very often as we walked along the streets he would salute people, sometimes even stopping to shake hands with them; they were from all nations, and I wondered at his extensive acquaintance, and boy-like I asked him about it. 'Why,' said he, 'I do not know one of them; never saw them before, and probably shall never see them again; they are Masons.' I started back with something of horror, I suppose, as I asked him, 'Why, you are not a Mason?' And never shall I forget the feeling that came over me as he answered in the affirmative. Had he acknowledged that he belonged to a band of pirates and assassins, I could not have been more shocked; for, from earliest youth I had been trained up to the idea that Masonry was an evil principle—the fatal tempter of fallen mankind—that beneath the mantle of mystery that surrounded it was practiced Pagan rites of idolatry; that it abjured the Christian religion, and that its members were joined together in unholy alliance by the most frightful oaths and ceremonies to defend one another against all assaults, and to wage an infernal war upon virtue. Do you wonder that I was shocked?

"We were not long in getting in our load, and then, with many a fond farewell in our hearts, we bade adieu to Rio, and turned again towards home. There was nothing worthy of note transpired until we arrived near the equator, when a dead calm fell, and for days we lay idle, with not breeze enough to fill the sails that hung flapping against the masts. About the fourth day a slight breeze sprung up, the sails filled, and once more we heard the ripple of the water under the bows of the 'Hope.'

"Breakfast was just over when the cry of 'Sail ho!' from the masthead attracted the attention of all. Some ran up the rigging to catch a glimpse of the stranger, and in the course of a hour she was plainly to be seen from the deck. And then a hot controversy sprung up as to who and what she was—so hot that but for the interference of the Captain there would have been a fight among the parties. I have often noticed that men are always readiest to fight about that of which they know the least. Still the 'Hope' held on, and as the hours went by the stranger steadily gained upon us. The 'Hope' was but a slow sailer at the best, and by the middle of the afternoon she was within but a few miles of us. Nearer she came, and still steadily gaining. And now we could see that her decks were crowded with men; and then suddenly there floated up from the deck to the masthead the black flag, and from the portholes grinned the muzzles of cannons.

"Never shall I forget, to the longest day of my life, the consternation that the sight of the flag produced among the crew. Some cried, some swore, others prayed, while some—I among the number—stood as if transfixed with horror at the sight of that emblem of death. Captain Roberts was the only man who was calm. Calling the men together, he told us, as we all knew, that our hour had come; that flight or resistance was alike impossible, and that all there was to do was to die like brave men, and thus defeat the hell-hounds of the pleasure of seeing us terror-stricken.

"I heard all he said, and yet I did not. I thought then of my home, and heard again the voice of my mother; and there, on that foreign sea, I could have sworn I heard the old church bell, and it seemed to be tolling for the dead.