

will abandon the whole thing, once and forever; and if you have attained to the degree of Master Mason, before you make the discovery. If your father is a reasonable man, he will accede to that."

"Grand suggestion," cried Charley: and bidding his friend farewell, he hastened home to put into execution his new resolution, at the first opportunity.

The opportunity presented itself the next morning, and though James Van Orden showed by every lineament of his face, how deeply pained was his heart that such a desire should rank in the breast of his darling son, after discussing the point at some length, he reluctantly consented.

The petition went in; and in due time Charley was elected, and initiated. He had admired Masonry before, now he was charmed with it; but to his dismay, he learned the next morning of his initiation, that his father had hastened home from the prayer meeting before it closed, to renew his demand that Charley should not go forward; and that, not finding him at home, he had followed him over the mountain, in hot haste, in hope of overtaking him before he should reach the Lodge room. That he had even ventured so far as to go up and knock on the outside door, requesting of the tyler who presented himself, that he would request his son to step out, as he wanted to see him a moment on urgent business; and that the tyler had informed him that he would be obliged to wait awhile, as his son was then in the lodge room, being initiated; and that upon receipt of that intelligence, he had retraced his steps, with a burdened heart.

The cause of this new demonstration was, one of the "brethren" at the prayer meeting, who had been worried until all further resistance gave way, by Rev. Mr. Allwise, who was a bitter anti-Mason, had "made a clean breast of it," by confessing that the whole thing was full of iniquity, and by renouncing all further connection with it forever. Could James van Orden endure that his son should be lost, by entering such a cess-pool of corruption? No; and so he acted as has been described.

"Well," said the discomfited, and now almost exasperated father, "what is done cannot be recalled; but this thing must stop just where it is; you must not advance one step farther."

"But father," remonstrated Charley, "I must stand by my contract in good faith; I assure you, and am willing to swear to you, if you will, that I will do precisely as I agreed. I not only have found nothing objectionable, so far, but the entire initiatory ritual is most ennobling and inspiring. How any one can pass through it, and not be a better, instead of worse man, I do not understand."

"But, Charley, they are only drawing you on. Probably you will see little to object to in the next degree, and that little so offset by what is pleasing and instructive, that the latter will entirely outweigh the former, in your judgment; and so you will be willing to be led on to the third degree, in which, before you are aware, you will find yourself tied by oaths, which you cannot recant, without virtually perjuring yourself; and then you will feel bound to stand by the institution, right or wrong."

"But, father," still persisted the young man, "do you think Bro. Snyder perjured himself in what he said at the prayer meeting last night? If so, why do you believe him? why have further confidence