

Jamblichus, [in Vit Pitbagr. :] "Take no one by the right hand but the initiated, that is, in the mystical form : for the vulgar and the profane are altogether unworthy of the mystery."

V. The Dissector frequently taking notice of the number seven, I instantly recurred to the old Egyptians, who held the number seven to be sacred ; more especially they believed that while the feast of seven days lasted, the crocodiles lost their inbred cruelty ;† and Leo Afer, in his description of Africa, lib. viii., says that, even in his time, the custom of feasting seven days and nights was still used for the happy overflowing of the Nile. The Greeks and Latins professed the same regard for that number, which might be proved by many examples.

VI. The accident by which the body of Master Hiram was found after his death, seems to allude, in some circumstances, to a beautiful passage in the sixth book of Virgil's *Æneids*. Anchises had been dead for some time ; and Æneas, his son, professed so much duty to his departed father, that he consulted with the Cumæn sibyl, whether it were possible for him to descend into the shades below, in order to speak with him. The prophetess encouraged him to go, but told him he could not succeed unless he went into a certain place and plucked a golden bough or shrub, which he should carry in his hand, and by that means obtain directions where he should find his father. The words are well translated by Dryden, viz :

—In the neighboring grove
There stands a tree ; the queen of Stygian Jove
Claims it her own : thick woods and gloomy night
Conceal the happy plant from mortal sight.
One bough it bears, but wondrous to behold,
The ductile rind and leaves of radiant gold ;
This from the vulgar branches must be torn,
And to fair Proserpine the present borne,
Ere leave be given to tempt the nether skies ;
The first thus rent, a second will arise,
And the same metal the same room supplies.
The willing metal will obey thy hand,
Following with ease.

Anchises, the great pre-servor of the Trojan name, could not have been discovered but by the help of a bough, which was plucked with great ease from the tree ; nor, it seems, could Hiram, the Grand Master of Masonry, have been found out by the direction of a shrub, which (says the Dissector) came easily up. The principal cause of Æneas's descent into the Shades, was to enquire of his father the secrets of the Fates, which should sometime be fulfilled among his posterity. The occasion of the brethren searching so diligently for their Master was, it seems, to receive from him the secret word of Masonry which should be delivered down to their Fraternity in after ages. This remarkable verse follows

Præterea jacet examinum tibi corpus amici,
Heu nescis !
The body of your friend lies near you dead,
Alas ! you know not how.

This was Misenus, that was murdered and buried *monte sub arvo*, under a high hill ; as (says the Dissector) Master Hiram was.

† Pignorius in Mens.