

will never make known or divulge any of the secrets of this Order, by word, writing, assent, or for any reason, purpose, or pretext, even to save your own life."

To this I was told to say, "*I do.*"

"You solemnly promise, swear and affirm, that you will give your vote, at any and every election, whether of Church or State, to an Odd Fellow, in preference to any candidate of any party, without regard to his qualifications, fitness, or moral character."

"*I do.*"

"You solemnly promise that you will never sue an Odd Fellow, or cause one to be sued,—that you will never bear witness against an Odd Fellow who may be arraigned for any crime, or any purpose whatever, and that you will spare no pains or money to conceal any evidence that may have a tendency to convict him; that if upon a jury, you will always decide in favour of a brother without regard to evidence."

"*I do.*"

"You solemnly promise that in case of the failure of a brother, you will use all the means in your power to assist him to secrete his property from his creditors."

"*I do.*"

"You solemnly promise, swear and affirm, should a brother be imprisoned for any crime, you will use every means in your power to release him."

"*I do.*"

"You solemnly promise, swear and affirm, that should the Grand Lodge of the United States, deem it advisable to change the order of this government, or to change any of its officers, you will lend your vote and influence to accomplish such purpose."

"*I do.*"

"You solemnly promise, swear and affirm, that if you shall at any time be appointed a Committee to kidnap, make way with, or murder an Odd Fellow, who has divulged the secrets of the Order, that you will not flinch from the performance of your duty."

"*I do.*"

"You solemnly promise and swear, that you will obey the Noble Grand in every thing he shall direct."

"*I do.*"

I was then conducted across the room to another officer, who, I afterwards learned, was the presiding officer of the Lodge, who thus addressed me:—

"Stranger, thou hast now taken upon thyself the solemn, fearful, and binding oaths of our Order, and I trust that you well understand their import, and the certain punishment that awaits those who break their obligations. You have seen much this night, and I trust that all these things are so deeply impressed upon your memory, as never to be forgotten. You are now an Odd Fellow—entitled to all the privileges of the Order, and bound to bear your portion of its burdens. The oaths you have taken, are binding upon all the members of this, and every other Lodge. You are to obey the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of this State; and he is bound to obey the Grand Lodge of the United States. You will see thus that our organization is perfect.

"To fulfil these duties, you are to be charitable to all Odd Fellows, leaving the rest of the world to take care of themselves; remembering that those only who join this Order are our brethren. You are to consider the tie of Odd Fellowship more binding than that of relationship, and its duties paramount to all others.

"We have five signs to this Order. The Outer-sign and Inner-sign, the Middle-sign, Pass-word and Grip. The Outer-sign is given at the outer door, by snapping the thumb against the wicket, at the same time the Pass-word is given.

"The Inner sign is made by rapping at the top, centre, and bottom of the inner door. This is done because there is a bolt to draw back at each of those places to gain admittance, and at the same time you give another Pass-word.

"The Middle-sign is given on entering the room, by placing the hand on the left shoulder and uttering *secrecy or death*.

"The Grip is given by locking the two thumbs together.

These you will remember, as with them you can gain admittance into any Lodge. As you advance in the degrees, you will be further instructed into the mysteries, grips and pass-words. I now also present you with a copy of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Lodge, which you are to study faithfully, and always abide by."

I was now conducted to another officer, with a white feather in his cap, who, in a solemn manner, addressed me thus:—

"Worthy friend,—you are now elected a member of this Lodge, and initiated into its mysteries. You have suffered some harsh treatment, and I trust that you are so well satisfied, that you will never injure a brother who has suffered with you.

"Becoming an Odd Fellow will give you the advantage over others. It will shield you from the punishment of crimes, even should you be guilty. It will save you from want, if you are poor, and may elevate you to a seat in the Councils of the Nation. We are bound together by a strong cord, and it will grow stronger and stronger as you advance. We are *brothers* in every sense of the word; in prosperity and adversity, right or wrong;—remember we are brothers, and while your oaths bind you to assist them, their oaths bind them to assist you. You will here witness many things which you never dreamed would here be practised; but remember all things done here are *secret*,—nothing must be divulged. In religious matters you will be allowed to exercise your own opinion, if it does not conflict with your duty as an Odd Fellow; but, in the practice of all things, Odd Fellowship must have the precedence. In the Lodge you must conduct yourself with decorum, remembering that every word and action will be set down by the Secretary, and should your conduct be disrespectful, it will be brought as evidence against you.

Now all is told, the worst the best,
Our motto—"Secrecy or Death."

I was then conducted to the Secretary's desk, and signed my name to a book,—then back to the Noble Grand, who said:—

"I wish you joy—remember your oath—secrecy or death. You will now receive your clothing, and be arrayed in your proper regalia."

My clothing was now restored, a white apron was tied around me, and I took my seat.

OPENING AND CLOSING A LODGE.

The Noble Grand says:—"Officers, attend to your business—Guardian, shut the door—Warden, do your duty."

He then inquires the duty of each member, to which the answer is returned, "*Secrecy!*" He then asks, "What is the penalty for neglecting this duty?" The reply is, "*Death!*" which is given in a very solemn manner. He then says, "I declare this Lodge now open for business."

The closing differs but little from the opening, except the advice which is given. The closing Ode is generally sung, and is something as follows:—

"Brothers, good night—farewell,
Remember at every breath
The duty of each brother is
Secrecy or Death."

DEGREES.

Each brother, after being elected to the degrees, is initiated into one at a time.

The first is the "White Degree," the obligations to which are similar to those given at initiation. A lecture is then read, which is sometimes taken from the Apocrypha, sometimes from the Songs of Solomon, and sometimes from the Pentateuch. It is impossible, from the haste in which they are given, to remember them, and as I have not the books from which they are read, it cannot be supposed that I should be able to remember them correctly.

The next is called the "Degree of the Covenant." The Noble Grand, after administering the oath, reads from a book the nature and design of Covenants. The conferring of this degree occupies considerable time, as much of it is taken from the Bible, and at the end the candidate is again sworn.

On being initiated into the Royal Blue Degree, the candidate is furnished with a rod of steel. The oath is more horrid than the others. The rod of steel is given