

the confusion and gave as a toast, "Brother Bronson, the Masonic enthusiast; may the allegory of human life ever present new and valued lessons to his mind." Loud cheers followed this, and Jacob found himself standing on his feet essaying to reply, but in vain. He strove to speak, but could not utter a word.

At that moment the Junior Warden hastily observed, "It lacks but a few minutes of the hour." At once the company was scattered, the relics of the feast were hurried into the anteroom, and the craft was called back from refreshment to labor, and every one took in solemn silence his place.

If Jacob had previously been struck by the mysterious solemnity that pervaded the lodge, and the sublimity with which the whole proceedings were conducted, his awe at this stage of the proceedings greatly increased. For a look of earnest expectation mingled with an affectionate yearning for something Jacob Bronson had never seen on human face before. Presently the clock in the lodge-room struck twelve. The Master called up the Lodge, and then with his gavel pointed upward.

An appearance as of a dove, shadowy and indistinct, came out from the ceiling of the room and brooded over the open Scriptures. A strange brilliancy flashed from the letter "G." A rustling sound, accompanied by low and melodious whisperings, filled the hall, and for a few moments occupied all Jacob's attention. When sight and sound passed away, Jacob felt within him a sentiment he had never experienced before. An indefinable love for his Masonic brethren, and for Deity, the Common Father of all, possessed his very soul. Looking around he saw the same feeling expressed upon every face.

The brethren were shaking hands and embracing, exchanging fraternal vows.

Turning to the Master of the Lodge, Jacob threw himself with a gush of uncontrollable emotion into his arms, and in the act fainted away. * * *

When his senses returned Jacob Bronson found himself lying by the game he had slain the day before, and his dogs waiting patiently by his side. It was indeed midnight, but the moon was high, and the place a familiar one, not a mile from his own residence. The surroundings were changed. The cane-brake, the holly, the country grave-yard, and the lodge-room were no more to be seen than though they were part of a dream. Nor could Jacob ever find them. Though he related the story on his return home, just as it is given here, and asserts, impatient of contradiction, that it was no phantasmagoria, yet all his searchings to this day have failed to discover THE LOST LODGE.

USEFULNESS OF FREEMASONRY.

THE utilitarian curls his lips in scorn as he demands: "Where is the usefulness of Freemasonry?" Springing from the Egyptian theocratic government; continued to our day through, as some assert, the Jewish hierarchy; deriving its forms and ceremonies from institutions long since extinct, why does it still linger among the agents devoted to the improvement of mankind? How does it add to a man's wealth? How minister to the desire of gain? Does it aid the enterprising speculator in the pursuit of gold, or assist the eager or ardent aspirant for political honors in the successful accomplishment of his ambitious dreams? No. We look in vain for the vestiges of Masonic intervention in the crowded thoroughfares devoted to avarice and ambition. Her benign influence has been often felt, however, in the hour of peril, amid the scenes of poverty and want, disease and death. Once the cradle of science, the vehicle of education and religion, the practical teacher of the great trust, "JEHOVAH, OUR GOD IS ONE," enforcing, by symbols and ceremonies too striking to fade from the memory, the ameliorating doctrines of a life beyond the grave, and concealing, perhaps, among its recondite mysteries the prophetic announcement of that great atonement by which the final happiness of a sinful race was mercifully wrought;—for what it has been, it may well demand the respect of the wise and the good.

Its present claim to consideration is of no idle character. Is it nothing that Freemasonry, amid the vagaries of wild superstition, the apathy of stolid ignorance, the ingenious folly of perverted wisdom, preserved intact the knowledge of the true God? Is it nothing that around its altars its votaries bow upon the level of equality, and within the walls of its lodges its humblest member acknowledges no superior? Is it nothing, practically, to have overthrown the artificial distinctions of worldly rank and station, and to have united in one universal fraternal bond the high and the low, the monarch and his subject, the peasant and the peer?

Its claim as a useful institution might, perhaps, be strengthened in the estimation of the disciple of utility, by reference to the absolute profit its members have derived from the simple fact of their membership. With a geographical extension commensurate with the limits of the earth, Freemasonry has inculcated her great lessons of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, where the glad tidings of revealed religion are made the great good to be sought after, and which upon her altars are always open for inspection.