

III. A part of the Mason's catechism has given occasion to a great deal of idle mirth and ridicule, as the most trifling and despicable sort of jargon that men of common sense ever submitted to. The bone box and the tow line have given wonderful diversion. I think there are some verses in the last chapter of the book of Ecclesiastes, which in some manner resemble this form of expression. I shall transcribe them, with the opinion of the learned upon them, without making any particular application, viz: "In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the grinders cease because they are few, and the doors that look out at the windows be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the streets; when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern."

The expositors upon these verses are almost unanimous in their opinion, § that they ought to be thus explained, viz: The keepers of the house are the shoulders, arms and hands of a human body: the grinders are the teeth; those that look out at the windows are the two eyes; the doors are the lips; the streets are the mouth; the sound of the grinding is the noise of the voice; the voice of the bird is the crowing of the cock; the daughters of music are the two ears; the silver cord is the string of the tongue; the golden bowl is the pia mater; the pitcher at the fountain is the heart, the fountain of life; the wheel is the great artery; and the cistern is the left ventricle of the heart.

IV. There could not possibly have been devised a more significant token of love, friendship, integrity and honesty, than the joining of the right hands, a ceremony made use of by all civilized nations as a token of a faithful and true heart. Fides or Fidelity was a deity among the antients, of which a learned writer\* has given us this description, viz: The proper residence of faith or Fidelity was thought to be in the right hand, and therefore this deity sometimes was represented by two right hands joined together; sometimes by two little images shaking each other by the right hand; so that the right hand was by the antients esteemed the most sacred. and agreeably to this are those expressions in Virgil—*En dextra fidesque*, as if shaking by the right hand was an inseparable token of an honest heart. And Æneid. I.:

—————*cur dextra jungere dextram*  
Non datur, et veras audire et reddere voces?

That is, Why should we not join right hand to right hand, and hear and speak the truth?

In all contracts and agreements, (says Archbishop Potter, in his *Antiquities of Greece*, vol. i., p. 251,) it was usual to take each other by the right hand, that being the manner of plighting faith. And this was done either out of respect to the number ten, as some say, there being ten fingers on the two hands; or because such a conjunction was a token of amity and concord; whence at all friendly meetings they join hands, as a sign of the union of their souls.

It was one of the cautions of Pythagoras to his disciples—"Take heed to whom you offer your right hand;" which is thus explained by

¶ Eccl. xii. ver. 3, 4, 6.

§ Bishop Patrick, Doctor Smith, Forster's Melancthon, in locum, &c.

\* Chartarius in lib. ut supra.