

and to the chosen of the Jewish chieftains. The Egyptian religion was of a *spurious* kind, and was not the true religion as revealed originally to man. It had engrafted on it a mass of human lying tradition, but still, as far as we know anything of it, we can see that in its mazes of error was to be found much truth, and the germs of education and light. It was for the purpose of concealing their treasures of knowledge from all but the initiated few that the Egyptian priests made use of their hieroglyphs and huge stone figures. These became objects of adoration to the ignorant multitude, who worshipped them as Photh, the God of Learning. Hence this spurious system of symbolic Masonry was held in high reputation amongst the ancients, for they knew that by its means had been preserved the learning and wisdom which had made Egypt the most civilized country in existence. From Egypt these mysteries spread to Greece, and thence to Rome. Hence Cicero says: "These are the mysteries which have drawn us from the barbarous and savage life our ancestors led. It is the greatest good that has come to us from the city of Athens among so many that she has conferred upon mankind. It is she that has taught us not only to live with joy, but still more to die with tranquility, in the hope of becoming more happy." The Eleusian, the Orphic, the Bacchic, the Samothracian, and all the other numerous systems practiced by the ancient heathen in every age, were instituted to preserve a knowledge of a future existence; but they added to the truths they taught many pernicious errors. They taught that the initiated should be happier than all other mortals in a future state, and that whilst the souls of the profane, on leaving the body, stuck fast in mire and filth, and remained in darkness, the souls of the initiated winged their flight directly to the happy islands, and the habitations of the gods. True Symbolic Masonry was

founded for the purpose of keeping in our remembrance the most sublime truths, even in the midst of our innocent and social pleasures, just as the Egyptians were accustomed to carry round their festive tables a coffin, to remind the guests of their mortality.

The Egyptian mysteries were, no doubt, far more free from error than those subsequently worked in Greece and Rome, and one reason for this is to be found in the fact that women were admitted to a participation in the last named countries. Hence, very soon they became contaminated by all kinds of licentiousness, permitted under a cloak of ceremonial. Doubtless one reason for the exclusion of women from pure Masonry is to be found in this circumstance.

To obtain initiation into the Egyptian mysteries it was necessary for the applicant to pass through a course of preparation which included the most terrible trials of courage and fortitude. It was at Memphis that the principal series of mysteries was worked. There were the greater and the lesser mysteries, the former being those of Osiris and Serapis, the latter those of Isis.

Several ancient authors, whose works are now in existence, were initiated into these mysteries, and have left short accounts of them, but these are necessarily very shadowy, since initiates were bound by the most solemn vows not to reveal what was communicated to them, vows kept with the utmost caution—a lesson to some Masons of the present day.

Referring to the mysteries of Isis—the *First Degree* of the Egyptian system—Apuleius writes, "The priest, all the profane being removed to a distance, taking hold of me by the hand, brought me into the inner recesses of the Sanctuary itself, clothed in a new linen garment. Perhaps, curious reader, you may be eager to know what was then said and done. I would tell you, were it lawful for me to tell you; you should know, were