

earth, and calling all humanity to worship beneath its dome, cavil at the foresight of the Master because the encouragement he vouchsafes is unexpected and inexplicable! Nay, when that encouragement is peculiar as here, when the blocks offered for our building bear the guarantee of the legitimate trade-mark, shall we brand ourselves with the infinite ingratitude of debating the source of their provision, and, where a brother has laid them well and wisely, and in due humility, affect to correct his under-estimate of his labour, and persuade him that his own chisel has been the vulgar instrument of their fashion!"

Lockyer spoke with an earnestness to which he rarely yielded, and which was not without effect, as earnestness seldom is. But the argument was palpably *ad captandum*, so I stood staunchly to my guns.

"Supposing then that Stuart was right, and that its masonic talisman really saved his party—supposing, that is, that the cannibals he encountered were real *bona fide* Freemasons under some Obi or Fetish constitution—does it not strike you as a fact little creditable to the Order, that its teachings, elsewhere vindicated as sublime and elevating, should have been welcomed by a barbarism the darkest and most revolting, and should have failed in imparting the faintest gleam of humanity to natures whose morality is absolutely at the zero of the race they dishonour? I should be far better pleased to acknowledge the masonic area as circumscribed, rather than to hail the scoundrels who killed Cook at Owhyhee as disciples of the precepts of my creed."

There were the light of triumph in Fred's eye, and the smile of victory upon his lip, as he answered Socratically.

"Who said anything about moral precepts in the premises? Not Stuart that I remember, and certainly not I."

"Does not Masonry imply them? Surely it is not from you that I shall learn that it means nothing beyond empty ritual and hollow ceremony! Why, even Alexandre Dumas gave it a better character when he made Cagliostro its Grand Master."

"Precisely. But does not religion, for instance, mean also something beyond empty ritual and hollow ceremony, and is therefore every Sunday evening worshipper in St. Paul's a devout Christian? Or will you refuse to kneel in the Madeleine because you remember Charles IX and Coligni, or blush to admit your protestantism in the recollection of James I, and Bartholemew Leggatt! If a king to whom the authorized version is dedicate, and a bishop who rebuilt the great cathedral, could conspire to burn a man in Smithfield, merely for being Arian, may it not be possible for a Mason to be no better than either, unenlightened by the liberality of his tuition, as were the others by the example of their Master."

"Of course nobody expects individual perfection. But there is no