

Everything appeared novel before his eyes. The vegetation, instead of presenting the dry and sombre appearance of an autumn day, was green and luxuriant.

On the banks of the creek near by, he saw the tall cane growing which he would have sworn never grew in his district before. Near by it, in the flat lowlands, was the holly, equally a stranger to the region in which Jacob lived. Looking more closely to the objects within his ken, Jacob observed to his utter consternation a *country graveyard*, with its high rail fence, its scattered graves marked by rude stones, and, greatest wonder of all, on the side of the burying ground next to him, a *grave newly dug*. Where was he? What did all this portend? His hair rose in horror on his head. He rubbed his eyes as one awakening from a dream and asked himself if indeed he were going mad! His dogs added to his terror by crouching at his feet, moaning, their hair erect, and their eyes strangely dilated as though they saw something unearthly near by.

At this moment the affrighted hunter caught the glimpse of a procession coming over a gentle rise, but a short distance before him, and bearing directly towards the graveyard. A venerable man armed with a sword led the way, followed by two others who walked side by side with rods in hand. Then came a long file, two and two, marching in silence with downcast eyes and measured steps. It needed not the white aprons, the rods of the Stewards and Deacons, the jewels and columns of the Wardens, the open Scriptures and gavel of the Master to show Jacob Bronson that this proceeding was a funeral march of the *Freemasons*? Last in the sad array came a coffin borne by six.

The amazed beholder retained his senses sufficiently to see that there were no mourners; but how it was he took from the hands of the Marshal an offered apron and fell into ranks; how it was he found himself standing by the head of the grave at the Master's side, singing the funeral ode, joining in the solemn circumambulation, depositing the evergreen with its balsamic odor, and throwing in a handful of "earth to earth;" how it was that when all was done he found himself walking unresistingly away from the grave with that newly-found lodge of brothers, and marching, he knew not whither, Jacob Bronson has never been able to explain. He can only aver to the facts as this veritable Chronicle presents them.

The procession marched, Jacob thinks, more than a mile after the burial. The shades of evening were fast coming down when they approached the lodge room. This was in the upper storey of a small country church, but how such a church and such a lodge could be located within a day's ride of Bronson's dwelling was a mystery that he vainly attempted to unravel. Several times he turned to the nearest brother in the procession to question him, but something weird and mysterious about the whole affair seemed to restrain him, and he decided to see the affair quietly to the end.

Entering the lodge, Jacob saw a small but very neat and appropriate room fitted up with everything that can conduce to Masonic comfort or illumination. The furniture in size, pattern and position, scrupulously conformed to the requirements of the Masonic Monitors. The ceremonies were performed with an exactness which he had never dreamed of before, or if, in imagination, he had conceived it, no lodge in his acquaintance had in practice ever approximated to it. To such an enthusiast as Jacob Bronson the whole scene, surroundings and accompaniments, was a delicious reality.

Furtively picking up a copy of the by-laws which lay upon the Master's pedestal he read the name "King Solomon's Lodge, No. 33."

The lodge now began a series of exercises intended to commemorate the character of the departed. Speeches were made by seven brethren successively, who drew the moral portraiture of the deceased by the lines of Brotherly Love, Relief, Truth, Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence, and Justice, thus making up the model of a Mason, according to ancient art. These were followed by the Master of the lodge, who repeated the following lines:

THE NARROW BOUNDARY.

So each one stands, a narrow line
Divides the future from the past;
A little space to labor in,
Too brief for purposes so vast.

Those grand designs, whose tracing proves
Our inspiration is from heaven,
Those boundless hopes, those deathless loves,
"Tis but a day to there is given.

Then let us labor, while we can,
Throw off the burdens that oppress.
Redeem this poor and fleeting span,
And look to God to help and bless.

And should we seek, to give us cheer,
Examples of the bold and true,
A cloud of witnesses is here
To prove what laboring men can do.

Several hours were passed in these solemn exercises, and then the lodge was called by the Junior Warden from labor to refreshment. Instantly the door was thrown open, and half a dozen stout fellows entered with baskets and vessels laden with staple country fare. This was spread out, a blessing asked by the chaplain, and all set to with a relish. Cheerfulness ran into hilarity. Jest began to circulate, songs were sung, with whose refrain Brother Bronson was familiar. Presently the master silenced