



Semper idem—Semper fidelis.

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KING SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

Pronounced at the Cooper Institute, Oct. 22, 1860, before Metropolitan Lodge, No. 273, on the occasion of its Eighth Anniversary, and Fraternally dedicated to the Lodge.

BY AUGUSTINE J. H. DEGANNE
PART FIRST.

It is told, in a quaint old nursery tale,
That perchance you have often read,
How a castle lies hid in some charmed vale,
Remote from all usual tread;
And, within, an enchanted Princess,
Asleep in her silken bed;
Whilst around about, and slumberous
Charms,
Lie the forms of her lordly train—
And their equires, and archers, and yeomen-at-arms—
As valiant as ever drew rein;
But with helmets, and bucklers, and lances,
All clouded with mildew stain!

All corroded and mildewed with rust of time,
They are lying in court and hall;
Every young knight's beard bears a frosty rime
Like the beard of the Seneschal,
Who awaits, in his chair, at the postern,
The sound of a trumpet call:
While below, in the crypts of this castle strange,
Overlooked by self-same spell,
There are shapes like friars, in cloister'd range,
Lying each at the door of his cell,
And awaiting, in motionless slumber,
The stroke of a summoning bell!

For whenever a knight who is tried and true,
Hides late o'er the haunted wold,
And pouts a loud summons the trumpet through,
That hangs at the postern old,
Then, in all the crypts of this castle,
A bell is solemnly tolled,
And the Princess arises, in royal gear,
From the couch of her charmed rest,
And her knights and her nobles take shield and spear,
At their beautiful lady's behest,
And they hie to the gate of the postern,
To welcome their midnight guest!

Then, afar through the cloisters and corridors,
Sounds a monotone stroke of the bell;
And each friar steals forth, o'er the marble floors,
From the door of his darksome cell;
And he creepeth away to the postern—
His marvelous story to tell:
While the bell of the castle is ringing again,
And the wondering guest comes in;
And the Seneschal leadeth his ghostly train
Away through the ghostly din,
Then the friars rehearse to the usher
Their stories of sorrow and

With a patter of prayers, and a dropping of beads,
They recount, to the shuddering man,
How their souls waxed heavy with sin and deed,
In the days of their mortal span;
And how Heaven's avenging sentence
Their earthly years o'erran!
And the Princess reveals to the stranger knight
How she needs must slumber away
Till a Prince of the Temple, in valorous fight,
Shall a Saracen sorcerer slay,
And the spell of his midnight magic
Disperso under moon's sweet ray!

But alas! for that guest of the haunted grange
If no Templar knight he be,
And woe, when he listeth that story strange,
If no memories pure hath he!
To the spell of the sorcerer's magic
He must bow his powerless knee,
He must sink into sleep, with the shapes he sees,
And his buckler and helm will rust!
He must lie in the cloisters and crypts, with these
Who have risen, to greet him, from dust!
And await, with them, an awakening
By hero more pure and just!

Like that charmed castle, in haunted vale,
Is the wondrous MASONIC PAST!
Where the heroes and yeomen of History's tale,
Are reclining in slumbers fast;
With the spell of an indolent Seeming
O'er all their memories cast!

But the Princess, who sleeps in her mouldering bed,
Is the spirit of ancient TRUTH;
Lying evermore shrouded with tatter and shroud,
But forevermore fresh with youth—
And awaiting the pure-hearted Seeker
To come, with his valor and truth!

Like the knights and the nobles in slumber profound,
Are our riddles and fables of old,
In their rust and their dust they enumber the ground,
A. d. aside in their garments of mould—
Keeping TRUTH, like a charmed Princess,
Asleep in their ghostly hold,
And the haunted cloisters of History's script
In the Halls of the Past they dwell;
Like the souls of the wars, they hide in each crypt,
And emerge from each darksome cell—
At the blast of a summoning trumpet,
Their wonderful stories to tell!

In the volumed marvels of Grecian mind,
And the records of Roman lore,
There are riddles of wisdom for human-kind
To ponder, a lifetime, o'er,
And to all of their mystical meanings
Each heart is an open door!
Every human heart is a postern gate
To the House of the wondrous Past,
Where the heroes and sages of History wait
The sound of a trumpet blast,
That shall break the enchanted slumbers
For ages around them cast!

How the voices of Song, out of Dorian aisles,
With their Iiad and Odyssey swell!
How they roll from the shafts of Tuscan piles,
Where the FLORENTINE chanted of Hell!
And how grandly, through Gothic chancels,
Of Paradise Lost they tell!
And the whispers of hearts, and responses of souls,
Flow around, like the west-wind kind,
Was the song of the SIXERS of AVON rolls
Through the gates of our listening mind,
And the pain of the pilgrim HAROLD
Sounds fitful and strange behind!
All the crimes of the earth are as Holy Lands
To the feet of the children of Song;
Every realm hath its Mecca, where pilgrim bands
To some Kaaba of Poesy throng;
And the Homes and the Tombs of the Poets
To the whole wide world belong,
In the paths of their minstrels the nations tread,
And the king on his bard awaits,
For ULYSSES is dumb, and ACHILLES is dead,
Until HOMER their soul creates,
And 'tis TASSO who frees Jerusalem,
Though GODFREY wins her gates.

Through the twilight of oaks and of mistletoe bowers,
The hymns of the Druids I hear;
And the Fairie Queen lures me through labyrinths of
flowers,
And I list to all melodies clear;
From the echoes of "woody MORVEN,"
To the murmurs of sweet WANDERERE;
And I hear the old NORSEMAN chanting their tunes,
Under arches of lore and fires;
And the TROUBADOURS singing, through long rich June,
To their soft Provençal lyres;
And the BARDS of the Cymbrion mountains
O'erweeping their wildered wires.