

his life, he might however have a chance to be made a subordinate officer, and might even marry a daughter of one of the priests, but his connexion with the outer world was ended and he was compelled to write to his friends that he was punished for his rashness, but that the merciful Gods had granted him a happy and peaceful retreat—from that moment he was considered dead and his name never mentioned.

Advancing about fifty feet beyond the gate, he perceives a brilliant light which grows more intense as he approaches, and he enters a hall one hundred feet in length, breadth and height; on each side are branches of trees, with balsam and pitch, all on fire, and the flames meeting in an arch overhead, this furnace is directly in his path; after passing this peril another is before him in the shape of a grating or trellice work of red hot iron across his path, its lozenge-shaped compartments leaving scarcely room to place his feet; hardly is this second trial surmounted when a third presents itself, a wide and rapid stream bars his progress which he must pass by swimming, rails are however placed to prevent him from being swept off by the current; he strips off his clothing and fastens it on his head by means of his girdle, placing his lamp over all, to direct him in the obscurity which prevails on the other side. He crosses with difficulty, and finds himself at the entrance of an elevated archway, within which is a landing place, or platform, of about seven feet square, on each side of which are to be seen parts of two large brazen wheels, while the planks of the landing conceal the rest of the machinery underneath; before him is an ivory door opening inwardly and which resists his efforts to uncloset, he then perceives two rings suspended in front of the door and catches hold of them, when to his surprise and terror the brazen wheels commence to turn with a deafening noise, and the floor slips from under him, leaving him suspended by the rings over a gulph, from which a fierce wind is blowing; after remaining for a short time in this cruel position, stunned by the noise, chilled by the cold blast from underneath, and fearing his strength would fail him, to his great joy the noise gradually subsides and the floor is restored to its place, the two-leaved gate flies open and he is at the entrance of a vast temple sparkling with light.

The door by which he enters the sanctuary is in the pedestal of the triple statue of Isis, Osiris, and Horus. On the walls are traced a serpent vomiting an egg, a symbol of the universe enclosing within itself the germ of all things, and which is developed by the heat of the sun, the crux ansata representing the generative power of nature, both active and passive,—another serpent coiled in a circle with its tail in its mouth being an emblem of eternity, also of the annual course of the sun—with many other allegorical pictures.

The Neophyte is received by the priests, who are clothed in their mystical robes and ranged in a double line, at their head a torch-bearer carrying a vase in the form of a ship, which gives out a brilliant light, an altar bearer carrying a representation of the moon, the next bearing the attributes of Mercury, viz: the branch with the golden leaves, and the caduceus; representing the Divine Voice, or logos the universal life,—another with the hand of justice and a vase in the form of a woman's breast,

having a reference to the milky way through which the spirits must travel in their return to the uncreated light—another the mystical winnowing fan; another the sacred sieve, significative of the trials of initiation and the sifting out the unworthy; another a vase with the water of purification; another a cistus or sacred basket, the representative of the "cties," or female organ of generation, and in which was placed the "phallus," or male organ; lastly, one carrying a vase called "canope," shaped like an egg, round which was coiled a serpent, an emblem of our globe, surrounded by the signs of the Zodiac.

The candidate prostrates himself before the statue and is raised by the "Gerber," or Master of Ceremonies, and presented to the Grand Priest who embraces him, offers his congratulations on his success, and presents him with a cup containing a mixture of milk and honey, telling him that the draught will make him forget the evil maxims of the world, and having drunk he directs him to kneel before the triple statue and placing his hands on his head prays to the goddess Isis in his behalf. The Neophyte is next presented with a bitter draught which he is told will cause him to remember the lessons of wisdom he is about to receive, and this part of the ceremony is concluded by a hymn in honor of Isis.

After this comes a long course of fasting and purification accompanied by a series of instruction, but all received by the candidate in perfect silence, he must not utter a word although tempted in every manner to do so. At length his trials are over, and the twelve days of reception commence, during which he is clothed with mystical garments and receives an explanation of the symbols and is instructed in both the sacred and secular knowledge in possession of the priests. After which is held the sacred procession called "the triumph of the initiate," and in which he occupies a prominent position, arrayed in gorgeous apparel and his head covered with a white veil concealing his features, he is thus presented to the king; and after the procession, conducted back to the temple, and divested of his splendor he puts on a white tunic which must henceforth be his clothing. This terminates the grand ceremony and is generally followed by a sacred feast of three days in which the newly initiated occupies the seat of honor.

Such of the initiates of Isis and Horus as were found worthy were admitted into the mysteries of Serapis, of these we know almost nothing. Apuleius tells us that they were celebrated in the night at the summer solstice, and that the candidate was prepared by fastings and purification. In some of the ancient monuments this God, called indifferently Serapis, Jupiter, or the sun, is represented with a long bushy beard, an emblem of the strength of manhood, and with a calathus (literally a bushel measure) on his head, being the symbol of plenty and representing the sun in the superior signs, alluded to the strength of his heat and the abundance of the fruits of the earth, which that heat produced.

The mysteries of Osiris were the consummation of the Egyptian initiation, we have no details of the trials through which the candidate was obliged to pass, but what may be called the legend, has very much in common with that of the Master Mason's degree, and to which we will revert further on.

(To be continued.)