

of his front teeth absent ("removed" as the dentist terms it, by the fist of his wife's brother, the blacksmith.)

The air was so impure in that Lodge room that, without taking time to instruct the large assembly in the whole subject of Lodge trials, as I usually did in such cases, I ordered the Secretary to read the proceedings. This included the charges brought by the Junior Warden, and very proud the Junior Warden was of them too. For in framing them he had been guided by a Form Law-book of the oldest date, had exhausted the legal vocabulary in the operation, and I counted thirteen times in which he used the words, "party of the first part" in a simple page. It took him just 26 minutes only to read through the charges!

To my surprise, as soon as the "charges" were read, and even before we came to the evidence at all, Bro. Elmore arose and asked leave to speak. There was something so impressive in his manner, so modest and gentle, that my heart warmed to him in a moment; and, although the request was a little out of order, (I was a great stickler for "points of order" in those days; I am not now,) I authorized him to do so. He simply said that the Lodge had already too much trouble with this case. It was unnecessary to go over that pile of evidence. He owned himself guilty. He had acknowledged it all from the first. He had told the Junior Warden, and he had told the Lodge, when they first summoned him, that he was guilty. Why weary the patience of the Lodge any longer? He pleaded guilty.

After a whispered conference with Bro. Honeybay, the Master, I took the list of charges in my hand, and said:

"Do we understand you to say, Brother Elmore, that you are guilty of all these charges?"

"Guilty," replied Bro. Elmore.

"What!" says I, quoting from the portentous document before me, "guilty of the vilest crime known to man?"

"Guilty," repeated Bro. Elmore.

"Guilty, on the aforesaid night, with the aforesaid club, chunk, firebrand; broomstick, silver, etc., of striking, beating, defacing, maiming, mutilating, cutting carving, hewing, etc., the aforesaid wife?"

"Guilty!"

"Guilty of——(I really haven't patience to copy all the absurd repetitions and alliterations of the indictment, but if there is any offence in the calendar that the Junior Warden hadn't included in those "charges" it was accidentally omitted, and the party held himself amenable thereto when rightly informed.) Bro. Elmore acknowledged guilty to everything.

Then I told the Lodge that the case was closed, and that the only question now was on the penalty. There was a general outcry at this. The Secretary wanted to read those four and a half inches of evidence, a good ten hours' work by the way. The Junior Warden wanted to read a speech he had prepared, the title of which was "Moral Obliquity, as illustrated in the case of Brother Elmore," evidently a swell thing. A good many brethren who had already given evidence in the case wanted to be cross-examined so that they might say it all over again. The only living soul who had a kind word for poor Elmore was his wife. She had placed a private note in my hand as I sat eating my bite at the hotel, and this I will refer to again.

However, I decided that everything now was out of order, except that Brother Elmore might speak in his own defence and then retire. The Secretary gathered up and docketed his role of notes. Brother Junior Warden with a sigh deposited his speech in his coat-pocket. A glass of water that I had ordered brought in for Bro. Elmore's benefit being swallowed, he rose and modestly said that he had no excuse and no apology to make. It was all done when he was out of his mind, as crazy as any man in the asylum. It was all a question of whiskey. He did not remember anything about it. He loved his wife,—yet it was proved that he had grievously injured her by beating. He loved his infant child, the only living out of five, he said; yet he had well nigh taken the little girl's life. He loved the good opinion of his neighbors; yet he had so thoroughly disgraced himself by his indecency that not one of them would speak to him. He had honored and respected Freemasonry: yet he now stood, and justly, too, on the eve of expulsion. It was all a matter of whiskey. Why he had so suddenly acquired a taste for whiskey he did not know. Never, until about a year before had he drunk any. Then, during an attack of typhoid fever, his physician had recommended it to him. He came, surprisingly soon, to love it, six months before he had first got drunk upon it. Now, he stood in that condition that, but for the accidental hand of Providence, he should have committed murder through its horrible influence. The whole matter, he said, was as strange to himself as it was to the Lodge. He could only throw himself upon the mercy of his brethren. Since