

view of making my captivity as pleasant as possible. I was of course *hors de combat* for the remainder of the campaign. I was taken into the interior as soon as I could be moved, but my story went with me, and I everywhere received the kindest treatment from the Russian officers. My captivity was not of very long duration, and I need not dwell upon the subsequent events of the war. The death of the Czar hastened the peace, and I was among the first of the prisoners who returned to England. I need scarcely add that I have ever since been a most zealous Mason, and shall cherish the principles of the Order as long as I live—*London Freemason's Chronicle*.

THE MORAL VALUE OF MASONRY.

It is a good thing to belong to this noble Fraternity of "friends and brothers, among whom no contentions should ever exist but that noble contention of who can best work and best agree"—this vast Masonic family, diffused through the whole world, and which, though continents and oceans may divide them, are bound together by the electric cable of brotherly love. I feel that I lost valuable time in beginning my Masonic travels so comparatively late in life. For many years I stood aloof from all secret societies, from the fear that my conscience might be compromised, and I only discover it when too late to retrace my steps, as Virgil says:

*Facilis descensus, Avernî, sed revocare gradum, superasque evedere ad auras,
Hoc opus, hic labor est.*

But when, with better wisdom, I resolved to test Masonry for myself, my experience underwent the same revolution as that of a young man whom I recently made an Entered Apprentice. At the close of the work, he said: "I had not the slightest idea what Masonry was. I supposed I should be shook up, and roughly handled, and go through a variety of "tom-fooleries," and at last be declared a Mason. But when I found everything so solemn and reverent, when I heard you pray that I might grow in wisdom and grace, and become a true and faithful brother; when I listened to the beautiful lessons—why I felt as if I was in a church!" and I remember when I took the sublime and beautiful degree of Perfection, in another branch of our Order, (and you who have, in the language of the ritual—"wrapped in serene joy, contemplated the pillar of beauty" there, will recall its impressive and beautiful lessons), there was in my class an active Christian gentleman from Illinois, and bending over to me he said: "This is solemn business; this is going to make me a better man!" and dull must be the understanding, and hard the heart, of any man on whom our rites do not make this impression.

And so I stand before you to-night, not as an apologist for Masonry, but as an admiring disciple, and in the measure of my opportunities a diligent student. And what has won me is not merely the beauty of its rituals, though they are not wanting in charm, but the fact that after searching the whole Masonic edifice from the foundation stone of Entered Apprentice to the top coping of a Prince of the Royal Secret, I find everywhere in Masonry evidences of a profound moral character—that it is essentially religious.

I have been very much struck with this fact, in studying the philosophy of Masonry, and in asking the secret of its wonderful popularity, that it bears a striking similarity to what I suppose to have been the main design of Jesus Christ, the divine Redeemer of mankind, in establishing his religion in the world. He came to establish a universal Fraternity upon a very simple creed. It has been well said that Masonry teaches the Fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man. If you study the design of Jesus, simply in the light of the gospel, the same description forms the essence of his teaching. If he did not originate the expression that God is our Father, and we are all His children, and so bound to love one another, he at least popularized it, and made it a power. For when the Jewish prophets in one or two passages speak of God as our Father, they were speaking only of the children of Israel, and never thought of giving it a universal application. But Jesus taught that all true religion may be summed up in one word—all the law and the prophets hung on two maxims: thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself: and "thy neighbor" is thy fellow-man, however low down in the social scale; the more needy, the more ignorant, the more debasing, the more wicked, so much the more need of thy compassion and thy hand of help. And this is the very essence of Masonry. We can bow at His feet as our brother Mason; yea, as a Grand Master of Masons; for how poor and shabby are our Masonic lives with His self-sacrificing example.

I need not stop to remind you of the patent fact, that this simple design of Jesus Christ has been sadly perverted through past ages, through priest-craft and king-craft, and creed-craft, and sect-craft. So that instead of religion making all men a band of brothers upon a simple creed, scarcely any thing in human history has been such a