

national confusion, while civil war, more terrific than ever cursed the earth before, threatened the boasted integrity of the republic. Even *Masonic charity*—the highest pride of the ages—seemed to be forgetting its ancient landmarks, and christianity itself the unity and fellowship of its divinity. For the time being, Mars, the god of war, held supremacy over the American people, and a baptism of blood was demanded, the crimson of which would flow as rivers.

A few months later, war had actually begun, and the month of July witnessed the stubborn, the terrible conflict of Bull Run, where the forces of the Union army were ignominiously driven from the field, and the Confederate forces were so exhausted as to be unconscious of their victory. Neither in Europe nor America had the world ever made record of such a battle, a clash of arms of christian kindreds and of Masonic brotherhoods. When the dark storm had passed away, and the dead were buried, the life story of every man, save two, of that steamboat company was in his grave—the unfortunate victim of that fratricidal battle field.

Two, we said, were yet living. One was a prisoner, dangerously wounded, in one of the hospitals of Washington, and the other was Worshipful Master of one of the lodges in that city. Engaged in official business in one of the departments of the government, he had not witnessed the battle, nor did he have any knowledge of the disposition of the wounded of either army.

The scenes in the different hospitals were pitiable indeed—the groans of the wounded and the pale cheeks of the dying in connection with the bloody operations of the surgeons, gave to the hour a blackness of darkness which made the heart sick, as it was such as none of them had ever seen before.

Lying on an improvised straw bed, the wounded Confederate prisoner learned from the surgeon that he only had a few more hours to live.

“Do you know any one who is a Master Mason who will come and see me?” he asked in feeble tones of one who was serving as a nurse. “The doctors tell me that I can’t live,” said he, “and I would be glad to see some brother Mason before I die.”

“I will find one if I can,” responded the nurse, who, obtaining leave of absence, started out at once to hunt a Mason. Within a short time he had at the bedside of the dying prisoner the Worshipful Master, who six months before had been his traveling companion on the Potomac steamer. The recognition of the young Southerner, and of his dying condition, gave his soul to fresh sadness, and opened up the fountains of his sympathy with the keenest anguish. He soon became satisfied that the young officer was a Master Mason, and he at once determined to govern himself accordingly.

“The surgeons tell me,” said the dying prisoner, “that I have only a few hours more to live, and I have sent for you to ask that you will stand by me until I die, and when I am dead that you will bury me with the honors of the Craft. Am I asking too much?” he inquired, pitiouly.

“No, my brother, not in my judgment,” responded the Worshipful Master, “yet,” said he, “I do not know what the brethren of the Craft may think of performing such a duty in the present state of public sentiment. Many if not all of the people are so deeply prejudiced, that even such an offering would be looked upon as conniving at treason. The spirit of Masonic charity, however, I know, would not thus designate it, and I will promise you that if my lodge will consent to it, your body shall be thus buried.”

“I thank you, I thank you,” said the dying soldier, as the tears choked his utterance.

Within three days he was dead, and the lodge purchased a rich coffin, which was appropriately ornamented with compass and square, in which the body was decently and solemnly placed.

The following day the Craft assembled in respectable numbers, and to the tread of martial music followed the hearse containing the mortal remains of their departed brother to their last resting place. The full honors of the Masonic burial service were performed at the grave, solemnly and beautifully, and the brethren returned to their lodge room fully satisfied that they had only been complying with the obligations of Masonic charity, as taught by the Ancient Landmarks. Thousands witnessed that funeral who thought it a strange tribute, but they had never learned the sublime moral beauty of Masonic philosophy, of Masonic charity. *Esto perpetua.—Masonic Advocate.*

MASONIC SECRETS.

Mrs. Brown and her gossip, Mrs. White, were conversing about husbands and the secret of Freemasonry. Mr. Brown was a Freemason, and the fact of not being able to share the secrets of the Order with him, made Mrs. Brown very unhappy. She was pouring out her grief to Mrs. White, and saying for the thousandth time: “I wonder what they do in the lodge room?”