

night was banished from our eyes; never did child count on the morrow as I did. Alas, alas! when that morning dawned, my father was found in his bed a corpse. An apoplectic fit had seized him, brought on, no doubt, by excitement and overjoy at the prospect of our meeting. To add to our grief he had died intestate, and his immense fortune went to a distant relative, who had not the kindness nor gratitude to present us with a single shilling."

"My poor friend, what troubles you have known."

"He who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," enabled me to bear them. The next I knew was my dear partner's loss—oh! the heaviest trial of all; but even that God has enabled me to bear. Whatever afflictions he may have in store for me, I trust that I shall be enabled to bow meekly to his decrees. Out of my beloved Eustace's income, by strict economy, he saved sufficient to purchase me a small annuity, which, with what I derive from the 'Manchester Unity,' enables me to pass my days, if not in affluence, in comfort."

"But still, Mrs. Wilton, there are some things connected with Odd Fellows, which I think I never could countenance; for instance, their wearing aprons,—sashes I do not like, but aprons are unbearable."

"Both of which, take my word for it, have some religious meaning attached to them, as have all their rites and ceremonies, believe me."

"I never knew you to utter an untruth yet; and as such really is the case, take my hand—there, you have made a convert of me. Aye, laugh on, I can bear it. My motto always was, that it was better to confess an error than remain in one."

"Assuredly my adamant friend. But there is one more incident in favour of Odd Fellowship, which I forgot to name, and which convinced me more than ever of the good they did. Of course, amidst such a large body of men we cannot expect all to be perfect—there are some scape-goats undoubtedly: besides, to look for true perfection of character is wrong, when we know there never was but one perfect: but to my tale. Shortly after my Eustace became in Mr. Goodwin's service, in one of his commercial journeys, when within a few miles of home, he was attacked with a violent fit of the spasms, to which he was subject at times. The pain was so severe that he drew up to a small roadside public-house, and requested some warm brandy and water; the good woman of the house (for her husband it seems was absent) was alarmed at her visitor's condition, and aroused a young man, who was lodging there for the night, with the account that she feared a gentleman below was dying. He instantly arose, proffered his assistance, and after my dear husband had partially recovered, he jumped into the gig with him, although a very wet night, and drove him to his own door. Struck with such unusual humanity, after he had taken some refreshment, I ventured to thank him for the great kindness he had shewn an entire stranger, and to offer, if I should not offend him, some little remuneration. 'Put up your purse, madam,' said the young man, 'I should scorn to receive a farthing for having done my duty; we are not strangers, as you may imagine, we are brethren, the tie of Odd Fellowship unites us, and in rendering Mr. Wilton this trifling service, it is no more than any other brother of the Order would have done.* I suppose, Sophia, I may use the word now?'"

"As much as you please, dear Mrs. Wilton, and I will exclaim once again, that 'Order is Heaven's first law.' But here comes Augustus."

"Let him hear your recantation; nay make it now, and let me be witness of your reconciliation."

"Dear Augustus, behold in me a convert. Pardon. I beseech you, the warmth I shewed yesterday. Mrs. Wilton has this evening removed all my scruples; be

as much of an 'Odd Fellow' as you please, provided you are not odd to your Sophia."

"That dearest, I shall never be, whilst you so sweetly acknowledge your errors. I was a true prophet—I knew those prejudices originated in the head, not the heart. Mrs. Wilton, I proffer you my thanks for the conquest you've achieved."

"None, Mr. Goodwin, are my due. I am so convinced of the utility of the Order that I am always ready to become its advocate; and I only wish a society of odd females was formed, with our gracious Queen for its patroness, and I prognosticate "Odd Fellowship" would become triumphant the globe around.—*Thretford, Norfolk.*

DUES AND BENEFITS.

One of the most beautiful features of the Order of Odd Fellows, is the pecuniary relief it affords brothers, when sick, or unable to pursue their usual avocations. It is not unfrequently the case, that their sick brothers are poor, and have no other resources, during their illness, than the little sums they receive from week to week from their Lodges. To them, therefore, and to nearly all Odd Fellows, these benefits are of immense importance. Mechanics and other labouring men, have come into the Order with the expectation that, in case of sickness, their wants will be supplied. Now it is of the last importance that our beloved Association have the ability to answer all these demands, and accomplish faithfully all that she has pledged herself to do. But it is evident the Association cannot meet all its liabilities, in the way of benefits, without funds; and where will these funds come from? Of course, from the premiums, or *dues*, as they are called. But are we certain that the present rates of dues, are sufficiently high to cover all losses?

It is true, the amount of dues, as well as benefits, is regulated by particular Lodges, and, consequently, varies considerably, in different localities. But in nine-tenths of the Lodges, the established rates of premiums will not exceed three dollars per year; or about six cents per week: while the benefits average, perhaps, *four dollars per week*. Now it is clear, that with this low rate of dues, the Order will not *always* be able to meet its liabilities. We say *always*; for at present, having abundant revenues from other sources—the fees of initiation and degrees—the treasury of the Association is overflowing. But their extra revenues will, at length, gradually diminish; and the time will come, when we shall have nothing to depend on but our quarterly dues. Even now, with the *present* small number of our beneficencies, it may be questioned, whether the ordinary dues would be equal to the demand. But if there is this disproportion between the dues and benefits *now*, when the sick among us are comparatively few, what will it be, when our sick lists become vastly more extensive, as must be the case hereafter. Now we are all young, and strong, and in health; but we shall become old, infirm, and sick. Twenty years hence, there will be a far greater proportion of sick members, than there is at present. The very fact, that now we are all generally young and well, seems to indicate that a time will come when we shall be old, and many of us sick together. And if, now, the quarterly dues alone will not cover all losses, what shall we do when these losses come to be increased ten or twenty fold? It is all-important that our Lodges should have just and clear views of this matter. It would be well if the Grand Lodge of the United States would appoint a committee of competent men, to prepare a *table of premiums and benefits* for the guidance of Lodges and Encampments. Such a table, based upon sound calculations, like those of our Life Insurance Companies, might be prepared with very little labor; and we are sure it would be of incalculable advantage to the Order. Now, there is not one Odd Fellow in a hundred, who has any knowledge at all of the principle upon which this system of benefits is founded. We sincerely hope that this subject will be brought before the supreme tribunal of the Order, and there receive that attention which its importance demands.—*Gazette of the Union.*

* A fact.