

to find a half dozen good fellows awaiting my arrival. During the time before tea, our conversation was naturally turned upon Masonic subjects, and I was pained to learn of an accident experienced by George B——, one of the wittiest, brightest and best of the Lodge. He had received a severe blow upon his head, from a falling piece of falling timber in a house he was building, and this, after laying him up for some time, had affected his mind. Although considered harmless he was yet closely watched and confined at home as much as possible. Strange to say his hallucination led him to imagine "that the secrets Masonry had been exposed, and that he was appointed to revenge the Craft upon the traitor." So poor George was continually asking the brethren who it was that had been guilty of so vile a crime? I promised I would go over and see him in the morning. The bell ringing for supper just then changed the subject.

We had an unusually good attendance at the Lodge that night, and did not break up till late. Retiring to my room I had just read my daily chapters in that best of all books, nor shall I ever forget the chapter or the text, for both are associated with that hour. It was where Peter, seeing his Lord walking on the water attempted to go to him. The words of Peter, "Lord save me or I perish," were still ringing in my ears. At that instant a low knock at the door startled me. Thinking it was some brother come to tell me good-bye (for I was to leave at day-light), I unlocked the door and bade him enter. Imagine my amazement when I walked Geo. B——! He held out his hand and expressed his happiness in meeting me. "Learn—that I was in town," he said, "he desired much to see me, but being detained unavoidably he could not meet me sooner; hoped that I would excuse the lateness of the hour, etc." All this was spoken in so quiet a manner that I had begun to doubt the reports I had heard as to his mental derangement. I asked him to be seated by the fire and took a seat beside him. We talked upon various topics for a while, and I wondered what had brought him to my chamber at this untimely hour. Then the conversation began to flag and came to a dead silence. I could hear the ticking of the old two-strey clock below, and the wind sighing through the three cedars in front. I thought of the sprigs I had seen gathered from trees like those for the purpose of symbolizing the hope poor mortality holds of the resurrection, and had wandered so far back in the past that I had almost forgotten poor George.

How long the silence had continued I can never tell, but I was aroused by hearing my companion move, and looking towards him I saw him suddenly draw out one of those most terrible weapons, the deadly bowie-knife, and advanced towards me with the wild maddening gaze of a maniac. I was paralyzed. I sat immovable in my seat unable to utter a word, then George spoke to me and said,

"At last I have found you, vile traitor that you are! You thought to escape me, but a wrathful heaven has hunted you down and now, now I have the long sought opportunity to execute upon you the direst penalties of your treachery. Prepare yourself, for there is no escape."

I attempted to call him by name but my tongue refused to obey my will. It seemed that a horrible nightmare oppressed me. I tried to move but with the same result. George walked the room with his eyes glaring upon me, all the while muttering of my coming fate. Then I closed my eyes unable to look upon him longer. How long I held them so I cannot tell, but when I opened them he was preparing to spring upon me, knife in hand. By an effort of will that at last opened my muscles, I gave that sign known only to the chosen few and at the same time uttered those words that will arrest the attention even of a mind disenthroned. Instantly I saw the mad glare disappear from George's eyes and a bewildered expression come over his face. Then I sunk to the floor unconscious. When I came to my senses again the sunlight was beaming through the window, and the sympathetic face of the hostess was bent over me. I recovered from the shock and was able to go home. Thus I was saved by the mystic sign that even a madman dare not refuse. I learned upon inquiry afterwards that the landlord had been awakened by my fall, and had come rushing in to find George bending over me trying to raise me up, the knife lying on the floor where he had thrown it. He was secured and sent to the asylum where an operation was performed upon him that relieved his brain of the pressure, and effected an entire cure. I have often seen him since, but always feel, while alone with him, as if it would be pleasanter to have more company!"