

"Because," returned Eda, "once, when mother was blaming father for being a Freemason, father told her that you were also one, and that ought to reconcile her to his being one. He told that Masons helped each other, and now father is not here to ask you to help him, so I came to ask for him. Mother don't know I have come. You will send for my father, won't you?"

"Yes," replied the Judge, "God will not permit the father of such a child to die in prison. If your father survives he shall be brought home."

Eda clasped her arms around the Judge's neck, kissed his cheek, and, burying her face in his bosom, sobbed aloud, while the big tears stole down the cheeks of the Judge and hid away in his iron-grey whiskers.

On that night Charity Lodge of the Free and Accepted Masons was opened in due form, the members of which having been summoned for a special communication. The business especially claiming the attention of the Lodge was presented by Judge B——, by producing the short letter from the army of the Potomac in relation to Captain Arthur. The impossibility of obtaining passports into the confederate army, with the danger attending such an enterprise even with passports, were fully discussed. The improbability of Captain Arthur still being a survivor, the difficulty attending his exchange, the danger to him on account of his wounds, if still surviving, attending his removal, if removal were permitted, the danger of his remaining without proper attention and medical treatment in the enemy's hospital, were also discussed. Another important question arose: Who will go? A thousand dollars had been raised to defray the expenses of the journey, and the removal of the invalid or his mortal remains; but who shall go? There were enough to go; many had offered to assume the responsibility of the task, but the ardor and impulsiveness of youth were the obstacles in the way of settling upon several of the younger brethren, while the Lodge was slow to select one from several who held the responsible positions of heads of families at home.

"I will go," said Brother H——, rising in his place. He was a venerable old man. He was tall and straight. Although old, his brow was well knit, his cheek was as fresh as youth, while in his deep keen eye could be read the experience of many years. "I will go," said he. "Should I not return, there are none but you, my brethren, to mourn my loss. I stand alone in the world; I have seen the loved ones perish around me, and like a blighted tree, I stand alone. I have encountered many dangers in my time in foreign lands, and amid the hordes of savages in our northern wilds; in every exigency of danger I have found our beloved Order and its mystic language sufficient for each emergency. I will go and bring our brother home, if living; if not, I will bring his remains to his wife and child."

Every eye in the Lodge moistened as this venerable old man resumed his seat. There he sat, the minister of mercy. The light rested softly upon his quiet and placid features, while a halo appeared to encircle his venerable brow.

How grandly beautiful—how like an angel of light towers before us the minister of charity! How like the pitying angel of humanity he bends over the afflicted, and pours in the oil and wine of healing?

Here let us draw the veil over the deliberations of this secret order, as it plans ways and means in behalf of suffering humanity.

On the morrow, brother H——, the tall, old man with white hair and beard, at whom the reader had a passing glance in the Lodge, surrounded by his brethren, took his seat in the morning express eastward. By his side was seated the little Eda Arthur; no entreaties, dissuasions, injunctions or commands could move her from her purpose of "going to her father," as she said she was in accompanying brother H——. Hands were shaken, blessings were pronounced, adieus were exchanged, the bell was rung, the cars were off and soon out of sight and hearing.

A few days passed. In the valley of the Shenandoah lay the belligerent forces of the federal and confederate armies. A battle was inevitable. It had been expected from day to day for more than a week. The forces on either side had been massing for a decisive blow. The day had at last arrived for the fearful collision of arms. The order of attack had been given, and Stonewall Jackson was advancing upon the left wing of the federal line. His line of battle was well formed and bristled with arms. The stout infantry stood shoulder to shoulder within musket range of their enemy. A battery in the rear of the line had already opened its thunder of fierce defiance. A low hum of whispered voices arose from the serried ranks like the growl of a beast of prey. Stonewall Jackson dashed swiftly along the front of his line, while the huzzahs of twenty thousand soldiers arose like a fierce battle-cry. He turned the left wing of his line, and guiding his fleet charger to the rear, took position near its centre, surrounded by his staff. A moment more, and the whole line is to relieve the order which will precipitate the whole mass of armed warriors upon the masses of the federal line, there to grapple in the death-struggle.