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BURIED ALIVE.

A MASONIC INCIDENT.

My case is not without precedent. Others have been *buried alive before me*, and by good fortune, exhibited evidences of consciousness in time to secure a rescue.

But I presume that I am the first Freemason ever subjected to this discipline. Will the readers of the *Keystone* listen to my story?

My health from my boyhood had been feeble. I am not scholar enough to describe or even name my peculiar ailment; but I was always hard to wake from sleep, sometimes had fainting fits, suffered much from swimming in the head, and the like. I became a Mason at the age of twenty-four, and found the association, in all respects, pleasing and useful. The Lodge worked carefully and well. No erring Brother stood a chance of being overlooked until his sin grew chronic within him. We had no disreputable Brethren among us. Yet we were social, and had *high jinks* whenever the Craft was "called from labor to refreshment." We sung the Masonic songs well and freely. Twice a year a bounteous banquet was spread, which, with the attendant *joyabilities*, was always anticipated by the members with rare relish. In brief, ours was more than an ordinary Lodge.

One afternoon I had gone into the woods to select a piece of timber for a particular work—I am a waggon-maker by trade—and finding a suitable tree, began to cut it down. While doing so a large snake came suddenly out from a hollow place near the ground and passed directly between my feet. I always had an antipathy to snakes, and the suddenness of its appearance threw me into a fit. I fell backward to the ground as if dead. The wood-chopper who was with me took me on his shoulder—I am a very light weight—and carried me directly to my boarding-house, summoning a physician, whose office we passed, to wait upon him.

All efforts to resuscitate me however, failed. Applications of all sorts, even the most pungent vivisections, the hot bath, electricity itself, was tried upon me; but my appearance was that of a dead man, and, at last, the medical practitioner declared that "life was extinct."

It was about this time that my dormant senses returned to me, at least, I cannot remember with distinctness anything which occurred before I heard—and, oh! how distinctly, the voice fell upon my ears—"He is dead." Some one remarking upon my florid appearance and the warmth of my flesh, I heard the doctor explain, with quite a display of erudition, that "such phenomena were not rare in persons of my peculiar temperament; but these were not appearances of vitality." He advised, however, that no steps should be taken for my burial until the plainest evidences of death were apparent. Then I heard the doctor leave the room, and the conversation of the two or three persons around me, expressing surprise (no one gave utterance to grief) at my sudden death. Then my body was laid out in the usual manner, but with what I thought to be unnecessary coarseness and indelicacy, and as I was left alone, nude and alone, in a dark room.

All this time, I confess, my feelings were rather of a ludicrous nature, mingled with some indignation, then of fear. I felt so confident of reviving in a few hours that the