

W. W. Bain



Polluting The Ballot Box.

We have read, that "in the lowest deep there is a deeper still." This may appear paradoxical, but whether it is or is not so, if there be any word more mean than *meanest*, then we wish to apply that epithet to the man claiming to be a Mason and a member of a lodge, who deliberately, wilfully, and with malice prepense, determines to destroy the best interests of his lodge, by, on every occasion that offers, depositing a black ball, and for no other or better reason than that a majority of his lodge would not elect him to office. Every Mason should have a laudable ambition, but that ambition, so far as the gratification of the same, should be governed, not by his own desires, but by those of his fellow-members, who, appreciating his worthiness and qualifications, seek to elevate him. To seek office is unasonic; to vent your spleen because your subordinate variety is not gratified, by stabbing the character of worthy and unoffending gentlemen who form a favorable opinion of the Masonic institution, desire to aid in the extending of its benevolence, is not only more than unasonic, it is cowardly, dastardly, fiendish, and hellish.

The man calling himself a Freemason, who deposits a black ball from other than purely Masonic motives, is a *Thug* and though by the Masonic law his base and iniquitous motives cannot be inquired into, yet, if he is possessed of the least fractional part of what is known as conscience, then must he feel that he has a *hell* within his own breast. He must know and feel that he is a murderer of an innocent and unoffending man's character, a character which for manliness, uprightness, and common honesty, is as far superior to his own as light is to darkness.

Indeed, we do not hesitate to say that the man who would be guilty of violating his covenants as a Mason in the manner we have indicated (and we fear there are more than one in this metropolitan city) would not hesitate to commit a murder were it not for the fear of the gallows. In committing the latter, the greatest of all crimes, though he confessed it not, suspicious, or suspicious circumstances, would place him under at least confinement until it was cleared away, and he would therefore hesitate before rendering himself amenable to the hands of justice; but in committing the former, he, in his coward's heart, knows that neither suspicion or suspicious circumstances can reach him, and though suspected, and he knows that he is suspected, he continues in his infamous career, and shelters himself, coward like, behind the sanctity of the Masonic ballot-box, to the injury of his lodge and the stigmatising of the character of men as far above himself as heaven is above earth.

If the days of miracles had not passed away, we should pray that the devil which dwells in the clayey tabernacle of such wretches should by a miracle be cast out, and those features which bear the impress of manhood and manliness should not belie themselves.—*N. Y. Square*

Royal Masonry.

We learn from our English exchanges that Prince Leopold, the brother of the Prince of Wales, was installed Grand Master of Oxfordshire, England, on February 22d. It is somewhat strange that this ceremony should take place on the anniversary of the birth of one of the most noted Masons of America—the immortal George Washington. But the principal point that we have to consider is, the "royal road" on which Royal Princes travel to the highest honors in Masonry. In this country, it requires years of service in Masonry to reach the honorable position of Grand Master. In his Lodge, the aspirant has to serve as Warden and Master, and in the Grand Lodge he has to serve as District Deputy Grand Master, or in some other office, perhaps for years, before he can ever hope for the exalted position. But a Royal Prince can pass all the subordinate grades, and rise "from the floor" of a Subordinate Lodge to the position of a Grand Master with very little trouble. The Prince of Wales became a Past Grand Master of England without ever serving as a Master of a Lodge, or even becoming a member of a Subordinate Lodge in the English Jurisdiction. He was then elected Grand Master of England, and was duly installed as such with very imposing ceremonies. As Grand Master he had the power of conferring Masonic rank on whosoever he pleases, and it is not at all surprising that he should have conferred on his brother, who was only made a Master Mason a very short time, the rank of Provincial Grand Master, such offices being in the gift of the Grand Master, and not of the Brethren who are to be governed. It may be that the Prince of Wales has in view his probable succession to the throne in England, when he would have, of necessity, to resign his position of Grand Master of Masons. By making his brother Leopold a Provincial Grand Master, he opens the door for his succession to the office of Grand Master of England; and thus the office, which is an honor to him who is elected by the will of those who are to be governed, becomes a hereditary heirloom of the Royal Family, and loses that character which applies to the office here. The Prince of Wales will doubtless hold the office of Grand Master until he becomes King—as did George IV; then it will go to his brother, as was the case with the Duke of Sussex. If Prince Leopold is as good a representative of the Masonic principle as was the Duke of Sussex, we shall hail the day when he reaches the highest office in English Masonry, although, at the same time, disap-

proving of the plan by which he so rapidly attained the high rank, which was made the stepping stone for reaching the Grand Mastership.—*N. Y. Courier.*

Masonic Divinity.

The science of divine things—that unfolds the character of the government of God in relation to man, in his morals duties and relationships, is a prominent portion of Masonic study.

In the ancient charges of the Craft we are taught that "a Mason is obliged by his tenure to obey the moral law, and if he rightly understand the art, he will never be a stupid atheist, nor an irreligious libertine. In ancient times, Masons were charged in every country to be of the religion of that country or nation, whatever it was. Yet it is now thought to be more expedient only to oblige them that religion in which all men agree, leaving their particular opinions to the themselves—that is to be *good men, and true* or men of honor or honesty, by whatever denominations or persuasions they may be distinguished—whereby Masonry becomes the *center of union*, and the means of conciliating *true friendship* among persons that must have remained at a perpetual distance."

This ancient Masonry professes as a fraternal society, holding to the faith that all men are known by their spirit and by their deeds, no matter what they believe.

In this respect it differs from all other societies of a moral order, and maintains its ancient prestige and unity, with a mystic success which commands the reverence and respect of all good men.

In its devotions to God, it guards with solemnity the name as well as the laws of the great supreme ruler, and as He is infinitely above them in life and power and happiness, they worship Him in serving their fellow men. Hence Masonry is eminently humanitarian in its practical faith instead of being sectional or dogmatic in doubtful and speculative theologues.

It is too simple in its organism to yield to the false philosophy, that belief in any dogmas is essential to goodness. It believes that God is good because His nature is good—that He, as the father of creation, is neither selfish nor arrogant—that He lives for the benefit and blessing of all his creatures, and that his example should be the guide of our practice in all love and in all charity.

With Masonry there are never any controversies with the churches, or with any other societies. What they teach or believe it concedes to be their right, and if they are bigoted or intolerant the conservative spirit of Masonry will not quarrel with them, for this would only dishonor the Craft, and sooner or later bring Masonry into contempt.

The charge is often made by ignorant and fanatical people, that Masonry is an anti-Christian society, because it does not embrace the faith of Christ as the churches do. True, it does not, in the theories

of their theological speculations—but in the practical philosophy of a broad humanity it teaches *truth* and *charity*, as the governing attributes of the divine will among all men.

In these respects it has made a record along down the line of ages, which any church might be proud of, and which any society may well imitate.

Masonry has never planted infidelity in the face of the Supreme Deity—nor has it ever endeavored to pluck a single star from the diadem of Christ the great teacher, for the *truth* of the one and the *charity* of the other have long been demonstrated as cardinal among Masonic landmarks. Masonry has never made a dissembling creed of theologues for its members, as it embraces the whole brotherhood of man in the circle of its humanities. It could not stultify itself in its eminent catholicity by adopting any speculative doctrines which would exclude from its fraternity good men of any faith or of any religion. Antagonistic to no creed of religion, and conservative toward all the different biases of religious connections, it rejects no man from its fraternal bodies who is of good report and comes well recommended, no matter what may be his creed, his church, his politics, or his lawful business.

"Well, but," says one, "Masonry is not a christian institution. It does not teach the christian divinity. It does not hold to the necessity of a change of heart—the new birth." To all such casuists we respond—that Masonry does not profess to be a church at all. It is no theological seminary, nor is it a dogmatic school of speculative or prospective fanaticism. It is simply an ancient fraternity of good men, of honorable men, of honest men, who have taken for their motto "Brotherly love Relief and Truth." Their aim is to fear God and keep his commandments. Is this not enough? Is their relationship to society inconsistent because they have no dogmas, and deal in no prescriptions? They make no controversy how, or where, or when, a man puts off the old man and becomes a new creature, which he is apt to do if he studies and imbibes the philosophy and spirit of Masonry. At least they know that this is the legitimate tendency of the organization, and there is no man who is acquainted with the body but will admit that the standard of morals and of respectability among them will compare well with the best citizens of the country in every particular.—*Masonic Advocate.*

One of the greatest bulwarks for the preservation and perpetuation of Masonry is harmony. Unity of sentiment among the fraternity is essentially necessary to social and intellectual pleasure. Without it, our institution would not long stand; but with it, the edifice rests upon an enduring basis. How important then, is it, that the several members who constitute a Lodge, should dwell together in peace, harmony and brotherly love, which would diffuse itself through the order like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garment.—*Enterprise.*