

Christ.

Knight Commander of the Temple; twenty seventh degree.—This is the first of the really chivalric degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. A Mason is not only a moralist and philosopher, but a soldier, the successor of those knights of the middle ages, who, while they wore the cross, also wielded the sword, and were the soldiers of honor, loyalty, and Deity.

Knight of the Sun or Prince Adept, 28th deg.—Teaches that God is the author of everything that exists, the Eternal, the Supreme, the Living and Awful Being, from whom nothing in the universe is hidden; make of Him no idols, and no visible images, but worship Him in the deep solitudes of sequestered forests, for He is invisible and fills the universe as its soul, and liveth not in any temple. He is the infinite mind and supreme intelligence; that man was created pure, and God gave him truth as he gave him sight. He has lost the truth and found error; around him sin and shame hover ever more; that the soul that is impure and sinful and defiled with earthly stains cannot again unite with God; until, by long trial and many purifications, it is delivered from the old calamity, and light overcomes darkness and dethrones it in the soul. In the beginning the universe was but One Soul—He was The All—alone with Time and Space, and infinite as they.

Grand Scottish Knight of St. Andrews 29th degree—A miraculous tradition, something like that connected with the *labarum* of Constantine, hallows the Ancient Cross of St. Andrews. John Leslie, Bishop of Ross, says that this Cross appeared to Achaius, King of the Scots, and Hungus, King of the Picts, the night before the battle fought between them and Atheestane, King of England as they were on their knees at prayer.

Knight Kadosh, 30th deg.—The name Kadosh is Hebrew and signifies holy, consecrated, separated, and is designed to denote the elevated character of the degree and the sublimity of the truths which distinguished it and its possessors from both degrees. The candidate is here taught that "we often profit more by our enemies than by our friends; we support ourselves only on that which resists," and owe our success to opposition. The best friends of Masonry in America were the Anti-Masons of 1826, and at the same time they were its worst enemies. Men are but the automata of Providence, and it uses the demagogue, the fanatic, and the knave, a common trinity in republics, as its tools and instruments to effect that of which they do not dream and which they imagine themselves commissioned to prevent.

Central Park Desolate.

In consequence of the amount appropriated for the care of the Central Park, N. Y., having been exhausted, it was determined last week to discharge all the guards and men not absolutely necessary. The menagerie was closed up, and the armory likewise. The men engaged upon the lakes and who care for the shrubs and fountains were notified their services would be no longer required, and now the entire number of men in the employ of the department is eight. These are to remain in the stables and keep the horses from starving, and look after the zoological collection. The Superintendent thinks the Park will be in a desolate condition in the spring, as there is so much that should be done now in trimming trees, arranging lakes, etc.

Dimitted Masons.

BY ROB. MORRIS.

For thirty years I have been, in my feeble way, deprecating a practice that has been still growing upon the fraternity, that of withdrawing from the membership of the Lodge, which is ordinarily termed *dimitting*. The arguments that were good thirty years since are as fresh and unanswerable now. Three quarters of all the Masons initiated during that period have dimitted, died out of Lodge affiliation. Three quarters! It seems incredible. I would not believe it without the figures. But the facts are incontrovertible.

In my visits to Lodges, after an interval of ten years, there is scarcely ten per cent of the members remaining who welcomed me ten years before! Where are they? Moved away, dead, suspended for nonpayment of dues, dimitted; and of the four classes the latter exceeds all the rest. Is there not something in this worth a column of your good paper? In your last you told us of the improved features proposed for the *Journal*. Will you not give a place to articles deprecating this wretched habit of dimitting?

As long ago as 1854, Grand Master Todd assured the Grand Lodge of Kentucky that "the proportion of dimitted Masons in this jurisdiction had become so large as practically to control the legislation of the subordinate Lodges." Is not this a sad fact? By every principle of justice, a dimitted Mason has forfeited this grand and crowning honor. Yet when a Mason dies, Lodges, especially country Lodges, ask no questions, but travel the long distance and vote the heavy expense to give him the last honors as freely as though he had not, by his wretched parsimony, long since forfeited the privilege. The present writer refused to walk in the Masonic procession at the funeral of Henry Clay, because that distinguished statesman had for thirty years persistently neglected all Masonic duty implied in affiliation. But at his home, when a neighbor dies who was once a Mason, though he may have dimitted years before, he cannot, without giving offense, refuse to join in the funeral rites. This proves the assertion of Todd.

Take the case of Masonic charity. By every principle of justice a dimitted Mason has forfeited the right to demand aid from the craft. Yet the Masonic tramps and dead beats are always of this class, and of the really honest applicants for Masonic relief, the largest part are of the same class.

So dimitted Masons are fast being relieved of the responsibilities of the order, while yet they claim and receive all its advantages. This monstrous perversion of justice cries aloud against us. I fear the multitudes of this class feel themselves absolved from their Masonic obligations. With a boldness and effrontery hard to be borne, they claim participation in Masonic privileges with us who bear the burden and heat of the day. Some deny the right of the Lodges to criticize their conduct, however immoral. Conclusions so loose and misconduct so glaring may well make us pause and ask, is there no remedy for this?

I do not see any remedy, except that each Lodge might pass a by law positively asserting that no dimitted Mason shall be admitted to the charities of the Lodge or to its social enjoyments, or be entitled to Masonic burial. Such a bylaw would protect the Lodge from its own weakness.

for a by law cannot be dispensed with. Let a man know when he is initiated into Masonry, that this is not Odd Fellowship, nor the Knights of Pythias, nor the Red Men, nor any society of easy affiliation, but that its fundamental principle is, "Every brother should belong to a Lodge and be subject to its rules and regulations." Other societies may be as good, or better than ours, but ours is the only institution based upon the rule, "Once a Mason always a Mason."—*Louisville Masonic Journal*.

Vanderbilt.

The anxiety to prove Vanderbilt dead must be very uncomfortable to that gentleman. It is not because the world has any particular spite against him that the demise of this great railroad magnate is so desirable, it is simply the rage for speculation, and the anxiety of certain operators in New York to make a "big thing" by the fall of stocks which would inevitably ensue. Then, also, the metropolitan newspapers wish a sensation, and if we may believe the correspondents who write letters from that city, the Commodore's house has been besieged for months by a small army of reporters, all eager to get the first intelligence that the richest man in America has paid the debt of nature. The avenues to the telegraph offices are so guarded that it is almost impossible to get a bogus dispatch over the wires; but in this case the attempt succeeded, and the forgery bore a no less respectable name than that of Rev. Dr. Deems, a gentleman as old as the sick man himself, and his lifelong friend. A similar dispatch was sent from Troy, N. Y., a few years ago, announcing that Vanderbilt had been stricken down with apoplexy at Saratoga, and bearing the forged signature of one of the editors of the *Times*. This message was handed to a messenger boy while bearing night dispatches to a morning paper, and was never traced to its rightful source. Of course, railroad stocks took a tumble and somebody was made rich. Sometimes old men die who, through poverty or long illness, have been burdensome to themselves and friends; but here is a man who through his riches has become a burden to the world. He shows a wonderful hold upon life, this physical giant among men, but die he must at no distant day, and then his immense wealth will take new directions, and much of it will be scattered for the benefit of thousands against whom it has been for years locked up. Astor, Stewart, Vanderbilt, Lick, all dying within a year, must inevitably let loose a vast amount of capital that rightly belongs to the world.

DISRAELI AT THE TOP OF THE TREE.—"The determined and the persevering need never despair of gaining their object in this world." Thus wrote the author of "Lothair" (vol. 1: 247), and his own career is a notable illustration of the truth of the saying. From boyhood he had the ambition of becoming famous, and the feeling was fostered by a fond and admiring mother, who said, as he stood on a chair spouting poetry, that "Ben would some day be Lord Chancellor or Prime Minister." His long struggles to get on the first round of the Parliamentary ladder, and his subsequent triumphs are well known. And now, as Prime Minister and peer of England, his words in "Lothair" are recalled with force.

Australian Blacks.

The Rev. G. King, of Australia makes the following interesting statement: "The Australian black has no notion of a Supreme Being. He knows nothing of a moral Governor of the world, nor has he any idea of a moral government in the universe. But he is very superstitious, and timid at night, and fears shadows. He has a vague notion of an evil spirit which he calls Gvngar, and employs one of his tribe, who acts as an exorcist, to expel the shadowy enemy, and remove the curse which they suppose to accompany the presence of the unwelcome spirit. These blacks also believe in the transmigration of bodies, and often fancy some stranger has the life and spirit of some departed black friend, and treat him as a brother. They imagine that a departed black fellow after burial rises from the grave, and finds his way to a small star, called the 'Emu star,' which will be seen in a dark field near the southern cross (*crux Australis*), and that the region there abounds in kangaroos and emus, and all kinds of game. And when asked how he finds his way thither the native raises his finger slowly up towards the horizon, and asks you to look at the Milky Way, and all the bright stars there, and solemnly avers that the chain of stars from the horizon to the 'Emu' is a spiritual ladder to conduct the departed home. They are very acute observers of nature, and might be styled astute naturalists. They are naturally truthful, but soon learn from Europeans to invent a falsehood. They are also gentle and hospitable by nature, but when injured very revengeful. They are very active and enduring; and one grand trait of their character is gratitude for benefits conferred on themselves or their children. They are capable of much moral and intellectual improvement, and learn quickly to read, write, and to commit to memory. The girls, when taught, work beautifully." On referring the matter to Mr. Dunkin, of the Royal Observatory, he says: "The star alluded to by the Rev. G. King is evidently an unnamed star alluded to by the late Sir John Herschel in the following words: 'After this it (the Milky Way) immediately expands into a broad and light mass, inclosing the stars *a* and *B* Crucis and *B* Centauri, and extending almost to *a* of the latter constellation. In the midst of this bright mass, surrounded by it on all sides, and occupying about half its breadth, occurs a singular dark pear shaped vacancy, so conspicuous and remarkable as to attract the notice of the most superficial gazer, and to have acquired among the early northern navigators the uncouth but expressive appellation of the coal sack. In this vacancy, which is about eight degrees in length and five degrees broad, only one very small star visible to the naked eye occurs, though it is far from devoid of telescopic stars, so that its striking blackness is simply due to the effect of contrast with the brilliant ground with which it is on all sides surrounded.' I have no doubt whatever but that this small unnamed star in the 'coal sack' is the Emu star of the Australian black. This small star is almost the sixth magnitude, or perhaps a little fainter."

Sixty four new Lodges have been consolidated in England during the past year. Masonry in Great Britain was never in a more flourishing condition than now.