

From the Keystone.

### Buried Alive.

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 boyhood has been feeble. I am not scholar enough to describe, or even name my peculiar ailment; but I was always hard to awake 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 have no disputable brethren among us. Yet we were social, and had high jinks whenever the craft was "called from labor to refreshment." We sang 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 wagonmaker by trade—and finding a suitable tree, I 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 woodchopper 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 me.

All efforts to resuscitate me, however, failed. Applications of all sorts, even the most pungent vivifications, 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, heard the doctor explain, with quite a display of erudition, that "that phenomena were not rare in persons of my peculiar temperament; but that 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 I was left, nude and alone, in a dark room.

All this time, I confess, my feelings were rather of a ludicrous nature, mingled with some indignation, than of fear. I felt so confident of reviving in a few hours that the thought of how droll would be the scene of my unexpected resuscitation was uppermost in my mind. I had that indistinct perception of passing objects common to a state of coma, yet could concentrate my ideas upon a single point with considerable force. The lines,

"Solemn strikes the funeral chimes," rang in my mind. The job on which I had been engaged occupied much of my thoughts, and I computed over and over the measurements of the timber upon which I was reflecting at the moment of my attack.

The night passed rapidly enough, and daylight seemed as plain to me, through my closed lids, as on any other occasion. Then I became a silent witness of a scene never to be eradicated from my memory.

A delegation from the Lodge came to the room, and for a considerable period, stood around me in consultation. Their words were tender and sympathetic. They had telegraphed, as I learned, to my widowed mother, and the funeral would proceed as soon as she arrived. At a called meeting, the evening before, they had assumed all the expenses of my interment, together with those for a monument, which they had already ordered. They had adopted eulogistic resolutions in my honor. They had, in brief, taken prompt steps to assure my mother, my friends, and the entire community, of their respect for my memory.

Now I was laid in the coffin, and my body removed to the Masonic Hall, where a guard of brethren was detailed to stand watch over me through the second night. It must have been one or two o'clock in the morning that a final consultation was held over my body, to decide the solemn question of death. The ruddy appearance of my skin, and the high temperature of my flesh, before adverted to, had excited much surprise, and no less than four physicians, together, with the coroner, several experienced undertakers, and others, stood around me to settle the question.

And now, for the first time, I began to feel some alarm. The reader will, of course, understand that my mind was not in a logical condition. In truth, it must have been in a feeble state of action, so much so that I had not previously contemplated the possibility of premature burial, nor realized the horrible condition in which I was placed. But as one after the other tests failed, when acid substances put under my eyelids, and sharp instruments penetrating my nerves, and great charges of galvanism, throwing my muscles into spasms, failed to elicit a single evidence of real life; when I heard the coroner and the undertakers, one and all, declare me "dead as Julius Cæsar"—in fact, when the last of the experts ceased his experiments, and retired from the Lodge room, a horrible fear began to come over me, to which language is inadequate to give expression, a fear which continued but with ever-increasing intentness until the end of the chapter.

My life was saved by the fortuitous circumstance of a railroad accident, which prevented the arrival of my mother. This necessitated placing my body in a vault, that upon her coming she might once more look upon my face, before my remains were finally interred. In all other respects the funeral services proceeded as though I was to be placed in mother earth. The beautiful Masonic services were performed in opening a Funeral Lodge, my coffin lying near the altar in the center. The appointment of a Marshal, his orderly arrangements for a procession, the beautiful prayer of the Chaplain, the selections of pall-bearers—how well I understand these details! Every word of the Master's eulogy fell upon my ear, and I followed him, mentally, line by line, as he recited that funeral poem, commencing:

"Dead, but where now," etc.

It would be spinning out this subject unnecessarily to describe the procession and the proceedings at the church and receiving vault. Suffice that all things were done with exceeding gravity and decorum. My body was taken first to the Methodist church, where a funeral dis-

course was given, in which my character was tenderly reviewed; then to the graveyard, where I was deposited, as I have said, in one of the vaults, fortunately opened to the air. At the suggestion of one of those who had retained a lurking skepticism as to the fact of my death, the lid of the coffin immediately above my face was slightly loosened, to which circumstance I probably owe my life. The horrors of that night why should I relate? Consciousness fully returned. One by one my muscles yielded to my agonized will, and I moved my feet and hands, and opened my eyelids; I screamed aloud. More than once I must have fainted and recovered. And when my mother, tottering into that horrible receptacle of the dead, came to look upon my face, it was bathed with a clammy perspiration, the eyes were open, an expression of horror overspread it, which was too much for her affectionate heart. She fell upon my coffin senseless, and was long in being revived.

I need not say that no time was lost in releasing me from my confined situation, and restoring me by the aid of hot baths and tenderest care to strength. A handsome sum of money was made up, by which I was enabled to travel for several months in the company of my mother, and until the horrible impressions of that premature interment faded from my mind.

### What I Have Seen.

An old man of experience says:

I have seen a young man sell a good farm, turn merchant, and die in the insane asylum.

I have seen a farmer travel about so much that there was nothing at home worth looking at.

I have seen a man spend more money in folly than would support his family in comfort and independence.

I have seen a young girl marry a young man of dissolute habits, and repent of it as long as she lived.

I have seen a man depart from truth where candor and veracity would have served him to a much better purpose.

I have seen the extravagance and folly of children bring their parents to poverty and want, and themselves to disgrace.

I have seen a prudent and industrious wife retrieve the fortunes of a family when the husband pulled at the other end of the rope.

I have seen a young man who despised the counsels of the wise and advice of the good, and his career end in poverty and wretchedness.

### The Shah's Strong Box.

The strong box of the Shah of Persia consists of a small room 28x14 feet. Here, spread upon carpets, lie jewels valued at £7,000,000. Chief among them is the Kaianian crown, shaped like a flower-pot, and topped by an uncut ruby as large as a hen's egg, and supposed to have come from Siam. Near the crown are two lamoskin caps adorned with splendid aigrettes of diamonds; and before them lay trays of pearl, ruby and emerald necklaces, and hundreds of rings. A Mr. Eastwick, who is reported to have been allowed to examine the collection, states that conspicuous among the gauntlets and belts covered with pearls and diamonds is the Kaianian belt, about a foot deep, weighing perhaps eighteen pounds, which is one complete mass of pearls, diamonds, emeralds and rubies. One or two scabbards of swords are said to be worth a quarter of a million each. There is also the finest turquoise in the world, three or four inches long, and without a flaw; also an emerald as big as a walnut, covered with the names of the kings who possessed it.

### SCRAPS.

We should never play with favor; we cannot too closely embrace it when it is real, nor fly too far from it when it is false.

Humility is a grace that adorns and beautifies every other grace; without it, the most splendid natural and acquired acquisitions lose their charm.

Prejudice lurks in hidden corners of all minds over which knowledge has not shed its penetrating light, and prejudice is the natural foe of magnanimity.

Sloth makes all things difficult, but industry all easy; and he that rises late must trot all day, and shall scarce overtake his business at night; while laziness travels so slowly that poverty soon overtakes him.

Far from the crushed flowers of gladness on the road of life a sweet perfume is wafted over to the present hour, as marching armies often send out from beneath the fragrance of the trampled plants.

A pious cottager residing in the midst of a lone and dreary heath was asked by a visitor: "Are you not sometimes afraid in your lonely situation, especially in the winter?" He replied: "Oh, no! for faith shuts the door at night, and mercy opens it in the morning."

Ingratitude is too base to return a kindness, and too proud to regard it; much like the tops of mountains, barren, indeed but yet lofty; they produce nothing, they feed nobody, they clothe nobody, they clothe nobody, yet are high and stately, and look down upon all the world about them.

A CLOSE CALL.—A Detroit boy surprised his father the other day by asking:

'Father do you like mother?'

'Why, yes, of course.'

'And she likes you?'

'Of course she does.'

'Did she ever say so?'

'Many a time, my son.'

'Did she marry you because she loved you?'

'Certainly she did.'

The boy looked the old man over and after a long pause asked:

'Well, was she as near sighted then as she is now?—Free Press.

"My son, I hope you won't make a fool of yourself and drink brandy Christmas—will you?" asked a widowed mother of her little son.

'No, ma, I gis tell you the truth—I don't drink brandy.'

'That's right, my son, you are a good and truthful boy; and I'm going to get you some fire-crackers,' commendingly said his mother.

'If I can't git whiskey,' he continued, 'I won't drink brandy.'

In the United States Court at Indianapolis, a man was tried for passing counterfeit money. The evidence was conclusive, and the Judge, when about to sentence him, thinking to impress upon the prisoner a realizing sense of the enormity of his guilt said: "I think you are a bad man and deserve a heavy punishment for your crime. I will sentence you to the penitentiary for two years." Imagine his disgust and surprise when the prisoner jumped forward, seized his hand and shook it warmly, saying: "Well, now, Judge, do you know that under the circumstances, I think that's mighty kind of you? Let's shake!" And shake they did, although there wasn't much warmth in the Judge's manner.