

condemnation of the order, derived from witnesses the most competent and credible, though unwilling—even from the very hearts of its adhering members? What! would not a father initiate his son, the pride of his life, the hope of his age, the object of his prayers, into an association of honorable men most exclusively designed, and most wisely adapted, to the inculcation of science, charity, religion? How have good fathers done, who have become freemasons? Let each one look around among his acquaintances, and recall his past observation, for the answer. They have discontinued attendance upon the lodges. They have preferred other schools of science, for their children. They have resorted to better means of impressing the love and practice of charity upon their hearts. They have looked higher, for their religion. Either the best of fathers, who had joined the lodge, were antimasons in the bottom of their hearts knowing the institution to be a base imposture; or they hated their children.

But how have members, who were most distinguished for public honor and private virtue out of the lodge, conducted, in relations to it? Franklin is said to have replied to his brother, who asked his advice about joining the society, "one fool is enough in a family." When the reputable and benevolent Jeremy Gridley, was Grand Master of the Massachusetts-Masons, before the most criminal degrees of the order were known in our country, he was enquired of, by a friend, whether it was worth his while to become a mason?—and he answered NO—with this pregnant addition, "by aggregation to the society a young man might acquire a little artificial support, but that he did not need it; and there was nothing in the masonic institution worthy of his seeking to be associated with it." The enquirer, afterwards, by his bold and freedom-freighted thoughts, and the high bearing of his devoted expression of them was the most prominent agent in carrying the declaration of Independence, in the illustrious Congress of '76.

But, Washington, and his brother officers of glorious memory, were masons. True. They were admitted to three degrees.—None of them went higher, in the early days of our independence. Washington never visited a lodge but once or twice after 1788; and never presided in one. He afterwards in effect, renounced it; and so did a large majority of the officers before alluded to, in their voluntary determination to extinguish the Cincinnati Society. To this Society they were bound by stronger ties than masonry can offer to uncorrupted minds—by those of a natural and generous sympathy, of which the golden links were struck out and forged, in the welding fires of our revolutionary war.

The origin of this society was innocent; its objects were laudable; its laws were published; its meetings were not secret; it administered no oaths, imposed no bloody penalties, had no division into degrees, and its members were respected and honored as the benefactors of their country; but it introduced distinctions between its members and other citizens; its associates wore badges, a ribbon and eagle; it was hereditary; admitted honorary members; and had funds for charity. Thus constituted all the whigs of the country, in civil life, as soon as it was known to them, opposed it, as eminently dangerous to liberty. It had no political objects. The conduct of its members, and the true purpose of the association were excellent. But it was liable to abuse. Political means were resorted to, for its abolition. Governors of states denounced it; legislative bodies expressed their opposition to it, by resolutions; assemblies of private citizens reprobated it; the press sternly and universally rebuked it; the whole country was excited to a flame against it.

Washington soon became sensible that it might produce political evils, which the pure and strong motives, in which it originated, had hidden from the observation of its members. And he attended its first annual meeting determined to exert all his influence for its suppression. He did so exert it.—And the order was on the point of being annihilated by the vote of the great majority of its members. Its complete annihilation was prevented, only by a sense of courtesy and consistency towards their foreign-brother officers, whom the members had officially and formally invited to join it, before they had well considered the abuses of which it was susceptible, and the political tendencies, which it might foster. They did destroy its essential features, by resolving that the order should be no longer hereditary, and that no new members should be admitted. They discontinued wearing its badges, in this country; and left nothing of its existence, but its name, its meetings, which were changed from being annual to triennial, and its charitable funds, which were ordered to be deposited with the state legislatures.—This fundamental modification, with the well known cause of its continuance, in the shape it was made to assume by its own members, appeased the public; though Jefferson, and many others, expressed a decided disapprobation of its continuance at all.

Compare this society with Freemasonry, in its motives, its origin, its degrading ceremonies, its accumulation of titles, its numerous expressive though fantastic badges; its exacting obedience in the lower degrees, and irresponsible authority in the higher; its secrecy; its oaths; its penalties; its means of private recognition, command, and universal concert; its affiliation with members in all foreign countries; its members; its boasted power; its crimes; and the pertinacity with which it is maintained, by its adhering members; and it is impossible not to be convinced, that it is exceedingly dangerous; and

that those, who were willing to renounce the Cincinnati Society, would be compelled, by the same patriotic motives, which controlled them, in that act, if they had lived till now, to renounce freemasonry. They would have insisted upon its total abrogation. It must be abrogated.

The unavoidable inference drawn by every prudent man, from observing the conduct of its best members, in all past time, is, that its character is bad. This inference is greatly strengthened, by the intelligible hints and friendly advice of the most trust worthy among them. It should be ripened into unhesitating conviction, by a consideration of the secrecy, which it enjoins. *Standing secrecy always implies shame and guilt.* It is utterly inconsistent with social improvement, confidence, and happiness. All the descendants of Adam inherit his nature.—While he was innocent, he was ingenuous, communicative, without the need, or the desire, of concealment. For the first crime he committed, even before the sentence of banishment from Paradise, was pronounced upon him, he sought concealment.

But we are not left to our own reasonable inferences, or to hints and a few honest but guarded expressions, from its best members, to decide upon the character of freemasonry. That character has been revealed, under oath, by its adhering members, and by a great band of seceders. And how does it stand? Infamous beyond all parallel in human annals. Its principles are vicious, murderous, treasonable; and so far as they prevail, fatally hostile to those of our government.

In the first degree, the candidate pledges himself under oath, and upon forfeiture of his life if he does not redeem the pledge, to ever conceal and never reveal the secrets of freemasonry, which he has then received, is about to receive, or may thereafter be instructed in. Among the secrets, which the candidate may, and must be instructed in, if he takes the second degree, is that of his pledge of passive obedience to the laws of the lodge, and all regular summonses sent him by a brother of that degree. If he takes the third degree, among those secrets are pledges to fly to the relief of a brother of that degree, when masonically required so to do, at the risk of life, should there be a greater probability of saving the life of the brother requiring, than of losing his own to apprise a brother of all approaching danger if possible—and to conceal the secrets of a brother master mason, when communicated to him as such, murder and treason only excepted, and they left at his discretion. And if he takes the Royal Arch degree among those secrets are pledges—to extricate a brother of that degree from danger, if he can, whether that brother be right or wrong—to promote his political preference before that of all others of equal qualifications—and to conceal his secrets, murder and treason not excepted. Thus is the concealment of crimes made a masonic duty; and the candidates expressly disclaim all equivocation, mental reservation, or evasion of mind, both in the first degree, and in the last.

How do these parts of masonry affect the moral character of its members? In the first degree, and every other, no man knows any of its obligations, till after he has sworn to conceal them. It is a first principle in morals that there is no accountability without knowledge and free will. Such oaths, therefore, are not binding, and no forms, or objects, or solemnities, can make them so. But what is the purpose of the order, in the ceremony of imposing them? Can it be good? It is certainly such as can be accomplished only by men divested of all sense of accountability. The less of this sense the better, for all the purposes of fraud and crime—and the more of it the better, for all the purposes of integrity and virtue. These are truths, which nobody can gainsay. All the history of piety, on the one hand, and of sin on the other, asserts them. They are obvious to the common sense of all men.—This proceeding of freemasonry, is therefore, obviously in hostility to good morals. It is more than that. To take such an oath deliberately and with an intent to perform it, is an attempt at the voluntary extinguishment of the highest rights of the soul, and a complete foreclosure of the source of every duty. It is not possible to imagine a more aggravated crime—Rape, murder, treason, may be repeated of, and their perpetrators reclaimed. But to forego the rights of knowledge and volition, in regard to every proposition, which can be offered to a moral agent, amounts to a desperate erasure of the image of God from the breast. It would necessarily preclude repentance, reformation, pardon hope; and be death, in its most unutterable horrors. It would be as much worse than common suicide, as the value of the immortal spirit is greater than that of the corruptible body.

In the degrees, higher than the Royal Arch, the members swear to oppose the interest, derange the business, and destroy the reputation, of unfaithful brethren, though life—to prefer the interests of a companion of the order, and of a companion's friend, for whom he pleads, to those of any more man of the world, in matters of difference submitted to them—never to engage in mean party strife, nor conspiracies against the government or religion of their country, whereby their reputation may suffer, nor ever to associate with dishonorable men, for a moment, EXCEPT it be to secure the interest of such person, his family, or friends, to a companion, whose necessities require this degradation at their hands—to follow strictly every command of the Illustrious Knights, and Grand Commander, and especially, to sacrifice the traitors of masonry.

\*This pledge is sometimes omitted in the Royal Arch degree; and sometimes included in the master's degree.

Have these points of masonic obligation any political bearing? All the rights of man are founded in his moral nature. It is the intention of free government to secure him in the possession of these rights. Whatever is hostile to good morals is therefore opposed to the civil policy of freemen. We have seen large numbers of the most intelligent, wealthy, and respectable freemasons in New York, deliberating in their lodges and elsewhere, on the means of suppressing a written disclosure of their secrets, by one of their number—we have seen notices of a slanderous character, simultaneously printed, a few days before the seizure and murder of Morgan, in newspapers a hundred miles apart, warning the public against the designs of the author of this disclosure and especially directed to the masonic brotherhood—about the same time we have seen masons set fire to a building prepared by them with peculiar care for sudden combustion, because it was supposed to contain this disclosure in manuscript—we have seen them employ a masonic printer, who was a stranger and an alien, to go into the office where it was printing, with the offer to aid in that work by labor and money, for the sole purpose of stealing the manuscript—we have afterwards seen them kidnap the writer of it, carry him hoodwinked and bound, with the greatest secrecy and caution, through a great extent of populous country, to a fort of the United States—unlawfully and forcibly imprison him there—collect together in frequent deliberation, upon the means of his final disposition—communicate, while in this situation, with several members of a chapter of their body, then numerously attended in the neighbourhood—and resolve unanimously, though with painful reluctance, on the part of some, that their masonic obligations required them to murder him; not for any offence against the state, but for the sole cause of his attempting to publish the secrets of the order, which he had a lawful right to do, and which, considering their character, he was bound to do, by every consideration of private morality and fidelity to his country. On the night of the 19th of September 1826, they accordingly murdered him. To this fearful consummation none were privy, but those who had as masons, sworn to assist each other, right or wrong, and to conceal each other's murder and treason. After the murder, all the precaution possible was taken for concealing it; but this not being wholly successful, and legal prosecutions being threatened, the criminals frequently met and consulted together, for their mutual safety. The most influential among them insisted, that if called by the legal authorities of our country to testify, they one and all must swear they knew nothing of the matter; otherwise they would be forsworn to masonry and might lose the life they would thus forfeit. As witnesses, as magistrates, as sheriffs, as grand jurors, as petit jurors, as legislators, these masons and others with whom they were intimate, would know nothing of it. In all their civil relations they violated their oaths and the most sacred duties. They flew to each other's assistance knowing their criminality. They gave each other notice of the approaching danger of legal prosecution. They spirited away witnesses who, they feared, would disclose too much. They perjured themselves in court. They contumaciously refused to answer questions decided to be legal. They declined to answer, on the ground, that if they should, they would criminate themselves in relation to the murder. They prevented the judicial ascertainment, and punishment of the foulest criminals. They made common cause in behalf of these criminals, against the rights of the citizen, and the laws of the land. Thousands of them were acquainted with some of the steps of these crimes against the State. Hundreds of them know the leading malefactors.

A good citizen cannot look on with indifference and see a fellow freeman kidnaped and murdered. He cannot know that such crimes are successfully protected, by an extensive, artful, and powerful conspiracy, without being excited against it. The sympathies of a patriot embrace his whole country.—The poorest man, the most defenceless woman, the weakest child in it, cannot be assailed with unlawful violence, without quickening his pulse, and stiffening his sinews, with indignation. His blood is up in every case of high crime; and it keeps up against the aggressor, till the law performs its office upon him. To the law he is willing to submit, because he knows it is the deliberate expression of the public good; the great shield spread by the hands of all, over the rights of all.

Individual rights are, separately considered, of immeasurable and indefinable worth. They partake of the infinitude of moral existence and responsibility. As contemplated by our government, a single individual, and one as much as another, is an august being, entitled to inviolable reverence, and bearing upon him the badges of a most majestic origin, and the stamp of most transcendent destinations. His safety, his liberty, his life, his improvement, his happiness, it designs, at all times and places, faithfully to protect, by the application of all its delegated means. The law is the beneficial instrument of this protection, and should be appreciated by every reflecting man as the sacred, living, and most venerable expression of the national mind and will. Break this, and the nation has but one right left, which it can peaceably enforce, the right of suffrage.

The masonic institution is answerable for the crimes to which we have referred. They were committed in obedience to its prescribed and specific oaths, and in fear of its penalties. The man-stealing and murder, were for no other than a masonic offence. The whole array of its frightful crimes, out of court, and in court, were no other than

necessary means of carrying into effect the obligations it has deliberately and universally exacted of its members. All who uphold the crimes. No adhering mason has afforded the least willing assistance to the exposure and punishment of them. No lodge or chapter has called the criminals to account. Many of them are known to the public.—Chesbro, and Sawyer, and Lawson, and Bruce, and Whitney, have been convicted of the conspiracy to kidnap, and have been condemned and suffered infamous punishments; and the very murderers are known with moral, though not with strict judicial, certainty. Not one of these men has been expelled. The grand lodge, or grand chapter, of which they were members, has the power of expulsion, but has declined to exercise it in relation to them; and such of them as are still living, are, in masonic estimation, worthy members of the order.

But the fraternity have gone much farther to make that crime their own. In 1827 the grand lodge gave \$100 to one of its members then under public accusation for kidnaping Morgan, and afterwards convicted of that offence; and the grand chapter, by its vote, placed \$1000 at the control of another of its members, ostensibly for charitable uses, of which a part has been proved, in a court of justice, to have been applied for the benefit of other kidnappers; and the trustee of the charity has never been called to an account by the grand chapter, for any part of the sum, though in all other cases such accountability is enforced by the chapter. The records of this last body, apparently relating to this transaction, have been produced in court, and were seen to be mutilated.

The fraternity have also employed and paidable counsel to defend the criminals. In this way, while the chief magistrate of the state of New York was, by proclamation, offering money, for the conviction of the offenders, the highest masonic bodies, in that state, were offering, and in their associate capacity actually paying, money to protect and support them. Can it be justly thought surprising, then, that so few convictions have followed upon such enormous offences, and that no more of the facts have been ascertained in legal form;

The criminals, in all these atrocities, testified their devotion to the institution, and by its own laws are only the more entitled to its guardian care, by all the hazards they involved. That care has been extended to them in every form of expression tending to their relief and comfort. Besides the exertions of their brethren already alluded to, adhering masons have, at great expense, established and circulated newspapers to vilify all who were engaged in exposing the crimes, and to call into action the entire resources of the fraternity, in behalf of those who committed them. These newspapers have, with the most unblushing hardihood, asserted the innocence and praised the virtues of the convicts, several of whom they knew to have confessed their offences.—They have commended the most stubborn refusal in court to reveal the truth by masonic witnesses, as *manly firmness*. They have in every form of misrepresentation, which they could devise, labored to darken all knowledge of the facts relating to the outrages; and to blot out the moral sense of the community.

Hundreds of the brethren in different counties in the state of New York, have published addresses, under their names, in which they have deliberately contradicted facts established judicially, by many of their adhering brethren and by many seceding masons; and which under the sanction of a lawful oath, and subject to cross examination before the public, they would be compelled to admit. Similar falsehoods have been published in an address of a committee of the grand lodge of Rhode Island—and the grand secretary of the grand lodge of New York has recently issued an official letter, in which he represents that body as extending its dependants, confident in its strength, and determined to outbrave all the consequences of their detected guilt, and the public indignation. Nothing could account for this universal course of falsehood, but the unhappy truth, that the men who are engaged in it, have sworn, under the penalty of death, to conceal the secrets of freemasonry, a most essential branch of which consist in the crimes of its members. This course is countenanced by the President of the U. States, who is a mason, and who has recently appointed as heads of the departments in the national government, a majority of distinguished masons. One of these heads of departments—the Post Master General, the only one retained of the late cabinet, has removed a large number of his most competent and faithful deputies, in New York, for the sole cause of the zeal and patriotism with which they sought to bring into just disrepute the crimes and institution of freemasonry.

The course of these transactions is rapidly corroding and wearing away the very basis of all public and private virtue in our country; and eradicating that mutual confidence, upon which the business of life, its peace, and its enjoyments essentially depend. When men refuse to bear testimony in court, to public offences, of which they know the perpetrators, and are praised for it when they perjure themselves, and are not disgraced—when they are convicted of a conspiracy to kidnap a free citizen, and are applauded as victims to the prejudices of their countrymen—when the distinctions between right and wrong are practically superseded, by the systematic and solemn injunctions of a wealthy, intelligent, numerous and powerful society, diffused and sustaining itself in all the places of social influence and honor—when in pursuance of this injunction, the laws of the land, in the

solemn places of their judicial application for the admonition and punishment of the most flagrant offences, are fully baffled, set aside and scorned—then, the social fabric is trembling—then there can be but one alternative, that of reform or ruin—then, looking beyond, but not forgetting, all the considerations of attachment to the policy of encouraging this or that branch of national industry—this or that scheme of financial management,—this or that exposition of the principles of our political organization—this or that object of all our foreign and domestic policy, the considerate friend of his country will govern himself primarily, by the obvious necessity to which is he reduced of persevering for his country the power of determining for itself upon any course of policy, and of disengaging the heart of the body politic from the fangs of a monster more blood thirsty, remorseless and insatiable, than any, which has ever come to prey upon the hopes of man.

There is a bearing of freemasonry, not yet embraced in this address, which is replete with the most distressing apprehensions. There is located, in Boston, a masonic body denominated the African grand lodge, which dates its origin before the American Revolution, and derived its existence from a Scottish duke. This body acknowledges no allegiance to any of the associations of American masonry. Its authority is co-extensive with our union. It has already granted many charters to African lodges. We are afraid to intimate their location to look in upon their proceedings, to count their inmates, or to specify their resources.

What are the means of removing these dangers? The dangers are confined to no one place in our country, and to no one department of our social interests; but extend to all places, and infect every department. Common prudence demands, that the means should be capable of reaching them, wherever they exist, and susceptible of a safe application, in their utmost extent. Such means we have; and we are familiar with their use. They consist in the honest exercise of the right of suffrage, and the most patriotic employment of official patronage. The evils of freemasonry operate upon the moral and political condition of the nation, and can be removed only by moral and political means. It is the exalted excellence of our political institutions, that they are especially designed and adapted to secure our rights, all of which pertain to us as moral beings. In voting, every elector should always be governed by a knowledge of his rights, and the desire of preserving them. There can be no higher political duty than this.

But the use of our right of suffrage against freemasonry is termed proscription. Proscription cannot be imputed to a party, because it justly opposes what is wrong. It is not proscription to be resolute and active in detecting and denouncing opinions of which the obvious tendency is to unhinge society; or to resist, by every lawful means the influence of men, who commit crimes & confederate to support each other in their commission. To call such detection, denunciation and resistance, proscription, could never satisfy an honest mind. It would be like stigmatizing with an opprobrious epithet, those public benefactors, who teach men, that all violations of duty are criminal and disreputable and make their best exertions to discourage them. Proscription can apply only to those who oppose and lessen the influence of their fellow citizens, because they innocently and with good motives, think and act differently from themselves. Such proscription deserves reprehension, because it invades the equal rights of others, and is averse to the improvement and happiness of all.

The offences of freemasonry upon our individual and national rights, if they had been committed by a foreign nation would, by the law of nations, have justified a public war to avenge them. Shall we fall in love with crime because those who commit it are near us? Shall we spare the destroyer because we can subdue him peaceably? Freemasonry can be destroyed by the votes of freemen, and by nothing else. All who are truly opposed to it, will always vote against it. And they deceive nobody but themselves, who profess opposition to it, and yet dare not express that opposition by their vote.

No good reason has been rendered, or can be rendered, why a freeman, who is opposed to freemasonry, should not vote against it. The application of the rights of suffrage against it is just, peaceable, effective, and may be as comprehensive as the evils which alarm us. And no other means can be described, or imagined, which unite these characteristics. Voting is the only decisive means by which public opinion can be distinctly ascertained upon the subject. And since many persons not initiated into the society, openly connect themselves with its fortunes, and make every exertion in their power to sustain it, by their votes, we cannot safely, if we would, betake ourselves to any other resort but the ballot boxes for its destruction. These persons affect to consider themselves as entitled to the praise of all candid and unexcited minds, by the course which they adopt; and profess to be neither masons nor antimasons; claiming the respect of the community for their indifference to its rights and welfare. If it had not been for the support of the order, by interested and prodigal politicians, who were not members, the forfeiture of public confidence justly incurred, by its crimes, would have been so carried home to the minds of its most worthy members, as long ago to have induced its entire dissolution. It is an undoubted fact, that the men, who are neither masons nor antimasons, are answerable for the