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Joseph Marsh

A

BRIEF REPORT

OF

THE DEBATES

IN THE



ANTI-MASONIC STATE CONVENTION

OF THE

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

HELD IN FANEUIL HALL, BOSTON,

DECEMBER 30, 31, 1829, AND JANUARY 1, 1830.

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED BY JOHN MARSH, NOS. 96 AND 98, STATE STREET

MDCCCXXX.

DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS, to wit :

District Clerk's Office.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the sixteenth day of January, A. D. 1830, and in the fiftyfourth year of the Independence of the United States of America, John Marsh, of the said district, has deposited in this office, the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, to wit :

' A Brief Report of the Debates in the Anti-Masonic State Convention of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Held in Faneuil Hall, Boston, December 30, 31, 1829, and January 1, 1830.'

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, ' An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned : ' and also to an Act entitled ' An Act supplementary to an Act, entitled " An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned : " and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints.'

JNO. W. DAVIS,

Clerk of the District of Massachusetts

9/5/18EM

DEBATES, &c.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 30, 1829.

THE Convention was organized by the choice of

Col. PLINY MERRICK, of Worcester, *President*.
Dr ABNER PHELPS, of Boston, }
MANASSEH KEMPTON, Esq., of New Bedford, } *Vice Presidents*
ELIJAH WILLIAMS, }
NATHAN LAZELL, Jr, } *Secretaries*.
STEPHEN OLIVER, }

Prayers were offered by Rev. ETHAN SMITH.

On the motion to choose a *Committee to report on the truth of the disclosures of Free Masonry, now before the public,**

Mr A. CHURCHILL, of Milton, questioned the expediency of this measure. It was spending time that could be more usefully employed. He thought the Convention might as well choose a committee to report whether the sun was now shining above or below the horizon. He did believe the testimony sufficient to convince any reasonable man, who would take the trouble to examine it, that the principles of Masonry were now before the world. In many instances, in judicial proceedings, the testimony of a single witness of fair character, had been sufficient to establish facts affecting the property and lives of individuals. In this case, there were hundreds, and perhaps thousands of credible witnesses, residing in different and distant places, whose testimony corresponded in every material circumstance. They could have held no communication with each other; they were concerned in no mutual project of profit or aggrandizement; and they could have no common object to deceive. If one individual had come forward after another, and denied the correctness of former disclosures, saying, 'this man has imposed upon you a false statement, I will tell you the truth,' and then varied the testimony so as to give himself a personal and particular claim to attention and distinction, then we might have been thrown into doubt; but when multitudes of individuals, in different sections of the country, testified to the same facts; when they could obtain no possible object by falsehood and misrepresentation, and

* See Proceedings of the Convention, as published by the Committee, page 4

they could have no motive to deceive, but came forward with reluctance and shame, to acknowledge faults and confess errors, we cannot withhold our belief. He questioned the expediency of appointing a Committee to report on the truth of the disclosures of Free Masonry, because it might be thought to look as if we had doubts on the subject, which *he*, and he believed none of the Convention, entertained. He was willing, however, to vote for the motion if others thought it necessary.

Dr PHELPS, of Boston, hoped the motion would prevail. This was an important question. *Are these disclosures TRUE?* It seemed necessary that the Convention should decide on this fact before they could consistently proceed further. If they are true, if we believe them to be true, if we decide they are true, then we could go on. He did not doubt that many members of the Convention were completely satisfied on this point. But the fact should be made to appear in our proceedings. The doings of this convention will go before the public. And the deliberate opinion of this large and respectable body, on the truth of the disclosures of Free Masonry, will have weight on the public mind, provided it should be the result of calm, candid, and thorough investigation. He thought it was important that this Committee should be appointed.

The motion passed unanimously.

IN THE AFTERNOON

MR CHURCHILL, of Milton addressed the Convention on the character and tendency of the Masonic Institution. He said the short address which the limits of our time and his state of indisposition permitted him to make, would be devoted principally to that trait in the masonic character, designated by the Oath of the Royal Arch Mason. Passing over its affronting attacks on the christian religion, and its implied disregard of private rights, we approach that daring vaunting of crime and injustice contained in the two following obligations, viz:—*'In the presence of Almighty God and this Chapter of Royal Arch Masons erected to God and dedicated to the holy order of Saint John, I do most solemnly and sincerely swear, in addition to my former obligations, &c., that I will aid and assist a Companion Royal Arch Mason whenever I shall see him engaged in any difficulty, so far as to extricate him from the same, whether he be right or wrong.'* *'Furthermore, do I promise and swear, that a Companion Royal Arch Mason's secrets, given me in charge as such, and I knowing him to be such, shall remain as secure and inviolable in my breast as in his own, when communicated to me, murder and treason not excepted.'*

The lesson is short, Mr President, and this is all that need be learned of Masonry to blast its reputation with every honest man. Casual difficulties, the effect of accident, are not alone the objects of this obligation; but they are moral aberrations, difficulties in which a perverse mind may have entangled the guilty; for the sequel would else be without import, namely, whether he be right or wrong.

Again, what are the secrets thus inviolably to be guarded? Are they the unguarded expressions, the hasty actions, which are no sooner uttered or executed than repented of? No, they are the first volitions, the maturing process, and the heart rending execution of crime; of crime in all its numerous gradations; of crime against property and reputation; of crime against the peace of families; of crime against that human life which has become obnoxious to masonry or any masonic character, amongst whom no offence is so great as speaking the truth.

Acting under the above obligations, the first duty of such a mason who knows his confederate to have stained his hands with unmasonic blood, is to hide the perpetrator from public suspicion. This is done by extravagant eulogiums and high toned recommendations of his purity and integrity. This failing, he must be enabled to elude the research of the officer, if, indeed, the officer is not previously indisposed to making any search. Or if brought to trial, the witnesses must remember their masonic obligations are paramount to those imposed in court. The jury must listen to the cry of guilty distress.

But if all this should fail, there is fortunately in this commonwealth, no other resource for masonic influence, but to besiege the throne with universal petition for mercy;* or to break the prison bolts and let the blood stained prisoner go free. It is believed that in the progress of premeditated crime there is a period, at which the perpetrator is hesitating; how then are his purposes emboldened by knowing, that every mason will support him, and every such house is a sanctuary into which he may flee and find protection.

The above gradations are founded on criminal process; but the same principles apply to controversy between individuals suitably arranged.

Masonry has the arrogance to claim unbounded antiquity, and many worthy characters borne on its catalogue. Its claim, however, to those characters, has been before confuted. See an address at the first County Convention held in this state at Dedham. With respect to its antiquity, could we once condescend to trifle with truth, we would admit their claim, and then say what has your ancient institution to boast? Is antiquity of folly, of crime, and of punishment too, the shame you glory in? Has Masonry ever hushed to silence the discord of jarring nations? Has the rotundity and diurnal revolutions of the earth been developed by Masonry? Was the trembling needle, which, like the trembling conscience, is ever restless till it has gained its point, directed by masonic science? Did her fallacious light show to us the astonishing powers of gravitation, or unfold the principles on which eclipses are calculated?

In fine, it is believed that no one discovery, that ever blest the human family, was effected or aided by the light of Masonry; for

* See the case of the Ruffians who shot the black man in Malden.

of all the before mentioned improvements, and indeed of all others, except sensual gratifications, and that adoration which nature inspires, the Great Grand Royal Arch High Priest and Grand King, Solomon, was most profoundly ignorant.

But, Mr President, one word as to their real antiquity. Of this we find scarcely any vestige. Through the darkness which covers their mischievous and detestable ancestry, there breaks out here and there a recorded crime or execution, to show that such a race has existed.

In 1424, or 5, an edict of the British government, applying, as I think, to speculative Masons, though some of them might be operative too, denounced their order as guilty, and inflicted the punishment of death on some of their principal leaders; and fine and imprisonment on all that followed them. In latter days, the sudden and unaccountable death of Alexander of Russia, soon after issuing an edict to suppress those infamous assemblies, has marked another epocha in their history.

Mr OLIVER, of Lynn, spoke at considerable length on the character of the Masonic institution. He alluded to the extravagant panegyric bestowed on it by its orators and votaries, its high-wrought claims to antiquity and moral excellence, and to the passive submission with which it had been received by the world. He stated that for a long time, he paid but little attention to the growing opposition against it, nor to the alleged disclosures of its ceremonies and oaths. But when individuals of his own acquaintance who belonged to the society had assured him of the truth of these disclosures, he had investigated the subject, and been convinced that the institution was not deserving of public support. He concluded with an impressive appeal to Christian ministers, who, leaving the open and cheerful daylight of the Gospel, were groping for more light in the dark and gloomy caverns of Masonry.

The Committee on the truth of the disclosures of Free Masonry, made a report.* On motion for its acceptance, Mr BOWMAN, of Cambridge, moved an amendment of that part of the Report which stated, the body of William Morgan had been sunk in Niagara river. He had seen no positive evidence of this fact. He thought nothing should proceed from this body, which was not capable of being fully substantiated, by direct and unimpeachable evidence. He understood the subject was now before legal tribunals in New York, and it did not become us to interfere, and prejudice the case. Whatever might be the conviction of individuals, as no legal decision had yet been made, it was not advisable for this convention to make any statements which were not supported by positive testimony.

Mr HENRY D. WARD was in favor of adopting the report as it stood. He entertained no doubt that the body of Morgan had been sunk in the river, as alleged. He spoke in high and hon-

* Doings of the Convention, page 4.

orable terms of E. Giddins, with whom he had conversed on this subject. Mr G. had the care of Morgan during the first part of his confinement in the magazine of the Fort. In common with several others of the fraternity, he once started for the Fort, for the express purpose of inflicting the penalties of Masonry on Morgan. Before they reached the place, Giddins and another fell back, and refused to proceed. His partiality for the institution began to weaken from this moment, when he found it was leading him to the destruction of human life. His scruples brought him into a dispute with Col. King, one of the party, and he gave up to him the key of the magazine. Finding they were determined to go on with their inhuman work, and fearing to be implicated in the catastrophe, he made business which took him away into Canada, for a few days. When he came home on the 20th his family told him that his ferry-boat had been made use of the night before. The men in whose clutches he had left Morgan, gave him to understand, in the most significant terms, that he had been destroyed. He shrunk from hearing particulars, for he felt the information might be perilous to himself, and unsafe to them. He was directed by them, to walk the shore of the lake, mornings, to watch whether the body floated ashore. Whilst the people afterwards were raking the river, these masons were in the utmost consternation and alarm. They were continually on the shore, watching the result of the labor. A high mason came to him, and told him [G.] to be on the alert, saying with great energy, '*they'll find that damned carcass yet.*' Mr W. mentioned a great number of facts and circumstances, which left not the shadow of a doubt in his mind, that Morgan had been sunk in Niagara river, on the night of the 19th of September, 1826.

Mr S. D. GREENE, of Boston, (formerly of Batavia, N. Y.) followed in support of the Report, and spoke at some length, giving other circumstances which went to prove the fact alleged.

Mr MORTON, of Milton, (who drafted the report) observed that as unanimity of opinion was desirable in this case, the expression of a single dissent, to a part of the report was sufficient for him to yield his own views; and he consented to the amendment.

The amendment was then unanimously agreed to.

Mr WARD then spoke of the truth of the disclosures of Free Masonry as far as his personal knowledge extended. He had taken three degrees, and the work of Morgan was a fair and complete revelation of what he had taken. He alluded to the question so often asked, why seceders remained so long in the society before they discovered its corruption and withdrew. He said many joined it with the solemn belief that the institution had been patronised by Moses and Enoch, by Solomon and Noah, by the holy St John, and all the great and good men since. Masonic orators and historians had said that it came from God, and that it was the foundation of all religion. Individuals joined it with exalted prepossessions in its favor. They could not presume to

judge and condemn in an instant what had been lauded by so many scholars and divines before them. The oaths were not written; they were delivered to them word by word; they swore to them by peace-meal, and knew not what they did till all was done. In fact, they relied on the description of others for the character of the institution, and never examined it themselves. When they found they had been imposed on, and that Masonry was corrupt and corrupting, they withdrew, and raised their voice to warn others. Had such a voice been heard before, they might not have been deluded into the snare.

Rev. Mr THACHER, of Wrentham, could attest to the correctness of the disclosures to the seventh, or Royal Arch degree, which he had taken. He considered the oaths of Masonry neither legally, religiously, nor morally binding, because they were illegal, irreligious, and immoral in themselves. He alluded to the blasphemous personification of Jehovah in the burning bush, and entered at some length into a description of the oaths and ceremonies of the seven degrees he had taken.

The Report* was then unanimously accepted.

THURSDAY MORNING, DEC. 31.

The Convention met according to adjournment.

Prayers were offered by the Rev. PETER SANBORN of Reading.

The Committee on the *Antiquity of Speculative Free Masonry*, made a Report. On motion of its acceptance—

Mr HOBART, of Leicester, conceived that a Report of this nature, containing important facts, ought not to be hurried through the Convention; and if it was in order he would move that its further consideration should be referred to a future hour, in order that we might deliberate and act with deliberation upon it. He moved its further consideration be postponed till 4 o'clock this afternoon.

Dr PHELPS, of Boston, thought an earlier period was preferable. There was much business before the Convention, and the time was short. Many members were a great distance from their homes and it was inconvenient to hold a long session. He wished to proceed with all the despatch which the nature of the case would admit. He was therefore in favor of one o'clock, this day; which hour was afterwards agreed upon.

The Committee on the *State of the Public Press* made a Report. On motion for its acceptance, Mr SIMONDS, of Boston wished to have the names of those editors who refused to publish information on this subject. The public expected newspapers to be the fair and faithful chronicles of the times, and if there were papers, which suppressed information important to the communi-

* See Proceeding of the Convention, p. 4.

ty, the fact should be generally known, and the names of the publishers given. He had no wish to injure the feelings or interests of any individual connected with the press, neither did he think the public should suffer injury by the suppression of facts which strongly affected their interests and rights. He hoped the names of papers would be given, whose editors had been applied to, to publish information on this subject, and who had refused; and he made a motion to that effect.

MR WALKER, of Boston, did not wish that any such invidious distinctions should be taken. He portrayed the delicate situation in which editors and publishers were placed, and gave some forcible reasons why such a course was not expedient.

MR SIMONDS replied that if the fact were true that the press was muzzled, the public ought to know it; and also by whom it was done.

MR HOBART, of Leicester, hoped the motion would not prevail. Printers of newspapers were under the necessity of relying on the patronage of those who supported their presses. They must watch the feelings of their subscribers, and they could not with prudence hazard the excitement which an unpleasant development might make. The time would come when they might express their sentiments on this subject without fear and without injury; but that period had not yet arrived. It was too early to censure these individuals, these editors, and to mark them out in distinguished lines. To do it now was premature; it was bad policy.

MR WHITNEY, of Boston, thought that 'sentinels on the watch-towers of liberty,' as editors had been called, should not be deterred from doing their duty. After the garrison had driven the foe from their gates, there was not much merit in sounding an alarm. It should be heard at the approach of the enemy, and not after the battle was fought.

He, however, was not disposed to ask for names at this time, as a perfect list could not be obtained. The country presses were locked as close on this subject as those of the metropolis; and it might appear invidious to publish the names of a few, and omit those of many who were equally obnoxious to censure; for if the disclosures of masonry were true, the interests of the community must suffer by their suppression. It was a fact, that a great majority of the public presses in this city, were conducted by masons;—men who had sworn not to 'write, print, paint, nor engrave the secrets of masonry, on anything moveable or immoveable under the canopy of heaven, whereby they may become legible or intelligible to themselves or to any others in the known world.' This all masons swear in their first oath. Now if such editors consider the masonic oath binding, they, of course, will not consent to break it by publishing information on this subject, and if they did, they would commit perjury, in his view, just as much as those masons who take other methods of disclosing these

secrets. When the nature and tendency of masonic oaths were generally understood, together with the improper and deceptive manner in which they are administered, editors would not feel so shackled as they do at present. They swear not only 'never to reveal,' but 'ever to conceal' the secrets of masonry. In order to conceal what is already disclosed, they have to suppress, and refuse to publish facts which many of their patrons are interested in knowing. All editors, therefore, who are masons, and who consider their oaths binding, must be presumed as acting under a sense of masonic duty in suppressing information and perverting facts which go to expose the hidden things of their order. To publish their names, might be visiting on their heads, the censure which belongs to the institution. We sought not to injure individuals; our efforts were directed towards the destruction of an institution whose secret principles we believed to be corrupt, and whose power we considered dangerous.

MR RICE, of Northborough, would offer another reason why no sweeping censure should be made against the conductors of the press. Some papers never admitted the discussion of religion in their columns; others never took a decided ground, but abjured politics—many were free for both. From the latter, the public had means for information, and from these there was a sufficient avenue to enlighten the public. He did not wish to do anything which might appear like proscription in any case. He thought the press ought to be left wholly free to publish what it pleased, and the public also should be left free to patronize whom it pleased. There were several religious papers in Boston, which noticed nothing but religious matters; the conductors of these papers might not be aware of the bearing which masonry had on religion, and therefore have omitted to allude to the subject. He should be sorry to do anything which might have a tendency to diminish the circulation of such papers. He thought, however, that they should publish an abridged statement of the masonic disclosures, and of the doings of the people, in the same manner that they described the progress of Temperance Societies, Lyceums, &c. These matters, in his view, did not nearer affect religion than Anti-Masonry did.

MR AMASA WALKER, of Boston, remarked, that he considered the subject now before the Convention, (the report on the state of the Public Press,) the most important that would be presented to their attention, and he hoped it would draw forth a full discussion. It was one of the great objects of the meeting, and was second to none in its practical consequences. The report assumes the position, that Masonry does exert an undue influence over the public press. Mr W. said he need not use an argument to convince the gentlemen of this Convention that the position was true. It was well known to all, but there might be some within the sound of his voice, who might not be equally satisfied on this point, but he believed that the fact would be apparent to every man, if he would for a moment reflect on the

course pursued by the conductors of the public press, in relation to the abduction of Mr. Morgan, and the subsequent atrocities connected with that event. The whole of that transaction, it was well known, was ridiculed and scouted by the editorial corps throughout the United States; and all who manifested a desire to investigate the subject were abused and traduced. It was *not thus* when Stephenson, the refugee, the felon, was wrongfully arrested and imprisoned, in this free country — there was then a high and universal sympathy in his favor — a sympathy honorable to American feeling and American freedom. That sympathy was, and could not but be held, in high and striking contrast with the silence and apathy of the public press, when a free citizen was torn from the bosom of his family, to suffer incarceration and destruction. Circumstances and events, the story of which would form some of the most interesting pages of the history of our country, had taken place, and the public, as a body were wholly unapprised of their existence, while the characters of those who had been nobly engaged in the cause of liberty, had been loaded with reproach, and branded with infamy.—But, said Mr W., the situation of the editorial corps, in regard to this subject, is one of great difficulty and delicacy. They deserve as much, perhaps, of our sympathy as of our censure, and they require of us a strong expression of our sentiments on this subject. He would not assert that all editors were subservient to the dictation or influence of Masonry, there were honorable exceptions to the remark in this city, and he would be happy to designate them, if it might not appear invidious. There were exceptions in the country, and he took pleasure in noticing the editors of the Massachusetts Yeoman, published in Worcester. They had set a noble and fearless example, by coming out, not as the partisans of Anti-Masonry, but as the *advocates of free inquiry*, admitting well written articles, on *both sides* of the question, into their columns. It was a generous example, and one, he hoped, that would be followed. I have said, continued Mr W., that the situation of editors is one of *great difficulty*. They must, like all other men, be governed in some measure by reference to their interest. It is well known that most of our newspapers receive a very scanty support. The withdrawal of a few names would make many an establishment bankrupt. The consequence is, that the editors feel greatly averse to the taking of any step that may subject them to the loss of subscribers; and knowing that some, (and how many they know not,) of their patrons are masons, they dare not incur the displeasure of the brotherhood.

The thunders of Masonry are long and loud in their ears, but the voice of the people they do not hear, and therefore it is not a matter of wonder or censure, that they hesitate; but if, after they shall have been made to hear the voice of a suffering people, they neglect to discharge their duty, they become highly criminal.

These considerations require us, as the representatives of a large body of the people of this Commonwealth, to speak in a

voice they *cannot misunderstand*. It must be obvious to every reflecting mind, that upon the *conduct* of the press is to depend the *character* of this controversy. If it is *free*, the people will become enlightened and all undue excitement will be allayed; but if shackled, the movements of the people will be like the terrific heavings of a boisterous ocean. It may be well, said Mr W., to consider some of the objections usually offered by editors, when requested to insert anything on this subject: and one is, 'that the public, as a body, do not feel an interest in the question.' It may be well replied to this objection, that if the public do not feel interested on the subject, it is only because they have never been suffered to know the true nature and importance of it. But it is an indisputable fact, that in all places, and in every part of our country, where any tolerable degree of information has been diffused, the people have manifested a greater degree of interest and feeling on this, than on any other subject that has been broached since the days of the revolution.

One editor will object 'that he has not room!' But, said Mr W., he can find plenty of room for the wonderful and interesting exploits of Sam Patch! Yes, there is room *enough* for *any* thing and *every* thing but Anti-Masonry, and some find room enough to *abuse* even that.

Another very good man will say, 'Oh! Anti-Masonry is subsiding, it is all dying away in New York, and why do you wish to wake up a similar excitement here?' Now, said Mr W., for the special benefit of such gentlemen, and others desirous of knowing, I will just state at what rate Anti-Masonry is subsiding in New York. The Anti-Masonic votes, in that State last year, were 33,000, and this year there are 70,000. Now as our Masonic friends profess to be somewhat skilled in the abstract sciences, I hope they will just favor us with a calculation, how long it will be, at this rate, before Anti-Masonry will be entirely extinct!

But other editors will object 'If this question is discussed in the newspapers, it will produce an *excitement*.' Mark the great kindness of these guardians of the public weal. They take the people under their parental care, and most humanely conceal from their view a subject which they know will produce *excitement*. They virtually declare that *the people* are not competent to decide on the merits of a question, which, if discussed, will arouse their feelings and passions. This sentiment is in accordance with a certain doctrine, quite in vogue in the despotic courts of Europe, that '*the more ignorance the more peace*'—but however well it might suit the purposes of foreign tyrants, it would not, he trusted, find much favor in this latitude.

'The people will be excited?' Why? Are they not capable of judging whether they have sufficient cause for excitement? And if they *have*, why should they not be? The people were excited at the commencement of the Revolution. Hancock and Adams called aloud on their fellow citizens to *awake* to a sense of their

danger, and the public press echoed their appeals and spread the excitement through the Colonies. But for this the people might have been kept in a glorious state of quietude! There would have been no disturbance! The fires of Bunker Hill would never have blazed! and we, good happy people, might still have been the peaceable subjects of the British Crown. It was safe *then* to trust the people with a true history of the encroachments and impositions of arbitrary power, and it is safe *now*. Lamentable indeed is it, if, after a lapse of half a century, the people of these States are found too ignorant or vicious to be trusted with the care of their own business, the preservation of their own rights.

The doctrine might be true when applied to the slaves of the Russian Autocrat, or the degraded subjects of the Grand Seigneur, but it was a gross libel on the intelligent descendants of those brave men, who fought the battles of our country's freedom. I know, said Mr W., that there have always been found, in every age and every country, a *few kind hearted souls*, that were willing to undertake the *task* of governing and protecting the 'dear people,' who, as they would have it believed, were unable to take care of themselves. Noble kings and grand prelates have, in every age, been ready to watch over the people and take *very good* care of them;—but, said Mr W., in this country we have been taught that the people are the sovereign, and that the only trouble they have, is to get at the *truth*, and rid themselves of their oppressors.

But it may be asked what would you do in reference to the public press? Would you have every editor come out and attack Masonry, abusing its members and denouncing its principles? Certainly not, nothing can be farther from our wishes, we do not call for partizan editors; but we do call, and we would hope in a voice that shall be heard, upon the conductors of the public press to open their columns to a fair and temperate discussion of the merits and demerits of this important question. We only wish that the public may be enabled to form opinions after having an opportunity to hear both sides. It is a very trite, but indisputable maxim, that a good thing will not suffer from investigation; this being premised it is difficult to conceive why the friends of the institution should have any objection to the strictest scrutiny. We believe, said Mr W., that a large mass of information is in existence in relation to the history and principles of Masonry, and our desire is that the community may be put in possession of it; we ask nothing more, and as free citizens of a free republic we can ask nothing less, certain as we are, that this is the only way in which an enlightened public sentiment can be formed. It is what we believe the public have a right to demand and what they must, and will have. It cannot but be obvious to the people that the conductors of the public press are, in relation to this subject governed by some unwonted and universal influence. Their suspicions are aroused, their fears excited, and imagination put upon the stretch for the true causes that produce such unparalleled effects.

It is too late, said Mr W., to talk of putting down this excitement, you might as well attempt to close the crater of a burning volcano. The thing is *out*, the people have taken the alarm, and it now becomes a most imperative duty of all editors to enlighten their constituents in regard to it, allaying all unreasonable fears and presenting such facts and circumstances as will enable them to judge whether Masonry is dangerous or not. Should they not strive to allay the excitement by convincing their fellow citizens in a full exhibition of the institution that it is neither in its nature or effects, hostile to their private or public interests? Are not the sentiments and principles I advance, said Mr W., in accordance with reason, and congenial to the constitution and genius of our government?

We propose no violent measures, we only wish to express the feelings of the People, that those who conduct the public press may know what they wish and what course of conduct they will approve and sustain. Are we to be branded as seditious and held up as 'political incendiaries?' We make no threats, we will not kidnap any editor, we will not fire any printing office; we leave such business to those who have had experience in it, but we will bestow our patronage when it shall *tell* on the cause of free inquiry and liberal and honest investigation. We ask no editor to be a partizan, but we do ask for fair play, and a fair hearing; and this is what we hope to obtain by the measure now to be adopted. The gentlemen of this Convention, many of whom are aged and venerable men, have come from a great distance at much labor and expense, and they have not come for amusement. They have come here *to do something* in a cause which they believe vitally important. They have come here asking and expecting no reward but the consciousness of having served their God and their country. They would raise their voices in behalf of the freedom of the press. They would call on every editor to decide whether he will espouse the cause of the people, or of Masonry. In the language of the prophet they would say, 'How long halt ye between two opinions, if the Lord be God, follow him, but if Baal, then follow him.'

DR THOMPSON, of Charlestown, said he would embrace the present opportunity to make a few remarks.

It was frequently asked what were the objects of Anti-Masons, and how were they to be carried into effect? The question would admit of being answered in various ways. He remarked he felt much pleased with the course the Convention had taken. For himself he could say with the utmost honesty and sincerity of heart that he felt no prejudice against any Mason living. This Convention had not assembled against anything of flesh and blood but to contend against principalities and powers; against the spirit of wickedness which dwelt in high places; it was to contend against a vast engine of power which might be made to act against the dearest rights and privileges of our native land; an engine which, though possibly it never had, yet still might be turned to

the most dreadful harm. Our fathers never stopped to inquire whether the royalists around them were quiet and peaceable men. They believed them to be such. Yet when they saw that it was possible or probable that they might do injury they did not lie still. They snuffed tyranny in the breeze afar off; and they crushed it in the germ. He asked, 'have the descendants of these mighty minds degenerated?' Has the spirit which animated them, become in these latter days extinct? Do not men of mighty minds exist among us who may turn this vast engine to the destruction of liberty? He continued, that among this gifted and enlightened people, the only power was mind; mind could only be acted upon by mind. It was the lever of the enthusiastic philosopher who said, 'give me a place whereon to stand and I will move the world.' This, and this alone was the lever by which public opinion could be acted upon. In the business before the Convention he wished everything to be based upon the rock of truth. He would that the public should be fully enlightened concerning the dark secrets of Masonry. The Press, instead of doing this, had endeavoured to quiet public apprehension, but all such attempts would prove vain. It might as well essay to quiet the rockings of the Sicilian sea when it was shaken by the convulsions of Etna, as attempt to check examination. He did not wish for excitement; he wished for investigation. He had watched the conspiracy of blood, of treason; but still it was not necessary to have any excitement. If the facts alleged were untrue it was easy for a grand-encampment of the Masons of Massachusetts to declare publicly the falsehood of statements so publicly made by those who had attacked the foundations and principles of their order. If they were false they could be easily confuted. In the absence of such confutation the inference was plain that these statements were true. They (the Convention) stood as guardians of their children's rights. As fathers, as protectors of the rights of unborn millions, they grasped the interests of posterity with a deep intensity of feeling.

If these statements were false, why should the Masons of this Commonwealth withhold information of their falsehood, when it was so easily given? Why should even the Lodges of Boston hesitate to give such information? They alone might have stayed the excitement; but as yet they have remained passive. The excitement so easy to have been quelled, still goes on notwithstanding it is in the power of the Masons of this city to silence it forever. Instead of this, their actions have been but the mere song of lullaby. They are silent concerning the shocking oaths and ridiculous and blasphemous ceremonies imputed to them and the enormities sanctioned by the laws of their order.

They should direct public opinion, not follow it. They should join in this emancipation of the human mind from the thralldom of error. When the mind shall be freed by truth, then it will be free indeed. If those who are under the influence of these awful and terrible bonds could be freed from their chains, it would be to them an act of mercy.

He continued: I am aware that those who have gone forward in this warfare of truth against error, will, must suffer. I mean no disrespect to the chair, but you, Mr President, have suffered; I have suffered; others have suffered. But may we not say, Mr President, that 'we reckon the sufferings of this present time as not worthy to be named in comparison with that glory which shall be revealed' to our country, when this unrighteous and blasphemous institution, which assumes to itself the high prerogatives of government, and whose enormities are written in characters of blood, and every other fetter which binds the human mind, may be broken.

The motion to amend, by inserting names, was withdrawn, and the Report unanimously accepted.

The Committee appointed to draft an *Address to the People of this Commonwealth*, expressive of the views of this Convention on the character and tendency of the Masonic Institution, made a Report.* On motion for its acceptance—

Mr BOWMAN, of Cambridge, moved, that the word *must* 'must bring us into unpleasant collision,' be stricken out. He did not, for one, wish to involve the private friendships which had existed, and did exist, between those opposed to Masonry and Masons, themselves. Although he could not exchange the masonic grip, he still wished to give the friendly squeeze. He preferred using the word *may*, instead of 'must bring us into unpleasant collision,' because he would not anticipate the consequences of the acts of this Convention. He hoped no such bad consequences would follow. He wished for peace, not excitement and animosity. He believed the time would come when Masons themselves would look with candor on our proceedings, and applaud the result.

Mr RUGGLES, of Troy, said he came not to bring peace but a sword where error was the enemy. Those who had opposed masonic principles had been traduced. In this contest for right, he should not shrink from the discharge of a sacred duty. He held his charter of rights from a higher source than that of masonic lodges. It was from the constitution of his country, won by our fathers. He did not wish to smooth over this matter. This Report was but a second declaration of independence, and we were about to prove whether we were worthy of our sires. The subject should not be treated with mealy mouths. Vigor was to be expected and used. Our opponents exclaim, 'why trouble ye me?' They cry peace, peace, but 'there is no peace for the wicked.' The question was, whether our liberties were to be destroyed or not. A citizen had been abducted from his home, wife, and children, and the perpetrators had been succored and sustained. His cause had become that of the constitution and the law. On this head he would carry the war into the enemies'

* See Proceedings of the Convention, page 9.

camp. He did not care to please; he expected to displease them. He thought we had come into this hall to erect an altar on which to place our lives and liberties. No question of greater moment had been agitated since the assembly of our fathers in this same hall, to oppose the wrongs of British aggression. The flames kindled on this altar would burst across the Atlantic—reach the Pacific, and light up the dark secrets and midnight meetings and unholy rites of Masonic conclaves. This question, like every other, has two sides. On this he had assumed his. The vast extent of Masonic influence was not yet known nor appreciated. It grasped at everything valued and honorable. It had sought to identify itself with the glory that consecrated Bunker Hill. It was by the rites of Masonic irreligion that the corner stone of the monument now erecting, was laid.* Better were it to remain as it now is—a wreck—than be an insult to freemen. He asked pardon for his zeal; but he felt as if he was in part a champion for this cause; as such, with pure aspirations for justice, and for his country's rights, he could not but exhibit zeal. If one citizen had been illegally abducted and murdered with impunity, another might be. The life and liberty of one had been assailed, would not those of others be equally in danger? Why has not the order of Masonry defended itself from the charges made against it? They say Free Masonry is the handmaid of Religion. It is false. It is its opposite. If Free Masons can prove their order to be of Divine origin, let them try; and if they did do it, he (Mr Ruggles,) would not be found fighting against God.

[The remarks made by this gentleman are but a slight sketch, as the Reporter was situated in the gallery, where he could not hear distinctly, and he (the Reporter,) knows he has done him imperfect justice.]

Mr THACHER, of Wrentham, who drafted the Report, was very willing, and indeed preferred to adopt the amendment proposed by the gentleman from Lexington. And it was adopted by the Convention.

Col. BURBANK, of Worcester, complimented the able Report which had been made by the Committee. He would suggest, however, another amendment. He alluded to that paragraph which contained the expression 'dumb dogs that cannot bark.'

The President read in the Report the following sentence. 'Who are our sentinels and watchmen but those who manage the Public Press. But our editors with a few honorable exceptions relative to this subject have been "like dumb dogs that cannot bark."''

*The corner stone was laid masonically by Most Worshipful John Abbot, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, in presence of the Grand Lodges of New England. Lafayette was a spectator of the ceremony.

Publisher.

3
 This was a gross anonymous Interposition.! not a man was at
 there, on the 4th, on that Day [17 June 1835] except the few who
 were in the Secret, that had any other Idea, than that Genl La-
 Fayette was to lay the Corner Stone, as a just Compliment to him
 for the part he took in our Revolution. But alas! the Ceremony was
 performed by an Obscure Country Attorney! Lafayette only a Spectator!!

Col. BURBANK said, the proposition before the Convention was of a dignified nature and should be treated in a dignified manner. He thought that the expression used lessened the dignity of the address and might excite resentment. He was, therefore, in favor of such amendment as would make it more worthy of the sober principles and feelings of that body.

The President suggested as a substitute, the words, 'as it appears to us unreasonably reserved;' which Col. BURBANK, approved.

Mr RICE, of Northborough, was opposed to the amendment. The application of the words, he did not think improper, and they were taken from that Holy Book which we all were taught to reverence. We read they were spoken by Jehovah * of his unfaithful servants, and he thought what that Great and Infinite Being spoke of his prophets, could not be considered disrespectful when applied by this Convention to those editors of newspapers who refused to print the truth on this subject.

Col. BURBANK, replied that he took no exception to the words, but he doubted the expediency of the application. He thought it advisable to adopt nothing that might have a tendency to irritate the feelings of the conductors of the press; it was better to persuade and conciliate. He hoped the amendment would prevail.

The vote was put and the amendment was rejected.

Mr BOWMAN, of Lexington, moved a reconsideration of the vote.

The Convention refused to reconsider by a large majority.

Mr WALKER, of Boston, moved for another verbal amendment.

Dr PHELPS, of Boston, thought it a preferable course to recommit the Report to the same Committee. Considerable time would thereby be saved to the Convention. He said unanimity of opinion was highly desirable in this case, and he did not doubt when it came before them again, it would be unanimously excepted. He was gratified with the ability displayed in the Report and warmly approved of its general sentiments.

Dr THOMPSON, of Charlestown, said that in justice to his own feelings he could not permit this subject to pass away in silence. The only object before this honorable body was the public good. He would express to the committee the high sense which he had of the justice which they had done to the cause in which we were engaged. The cause of christian charity was advocated by an able document in the exposition of a subject intensely interesting in the public view. He had before observed that it was frequently asked what was the object of this Convention? To this, the

* Isaiah lvi. 10 v. 'His watchmen are blind; they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs that cannot bark.'

address had given a complete, a satisfactory answer. They (the committee) in their address had presented to the public the information needed, a clear exposition of the facts required. They had not, neither would he, impeach the motives of any one. He would use, and the committee had used, due charity in relation to the motives of all. But why should such an order grasp such a power, and the community look on with such silent unconcern? The people were ignorant in this matter. Of those with whom he had conversed many were totally blind to their danger; this would enlighten them. Those who were bound in the toils of masonic influence would look to the address for authority, to free themselves from those toils. They would feel, as this Convention felt; they would participate in all their honest measures and act as they had acted. For himself, he gave his most heart-felt approbation of its language and its sentiments. Inquirers would now be no longer ignorant of what we came up hither to do. It gave to opponents of our views a direct opportunity to confront them. If the assertions of the Convention were false, now was the time to prove them so, and let this Convention be considered as a set of low, disorganizing men; a time-serving collection of office-seekers, who were lost to a sense of what was due to Americans; a Convention who wished to turn the world upside down for their profit. But if, on the other hand, they were correct and honest in their purposes, they should be deemed patriots, and not time-serving politicians. It was a mighty question; one which would be deeply pondered by American citizens. If the allegations of this Convention were false, let them be exposed; if true, they were of vital, yes, of tremendous consequence.

The motion for the recommittal of the address was then adopted.

The Report of the Committee on the antiquity of Speculative Free Masonry, now came up, by previous appointment.

MR HOBART, of Leicester, said that in relation to the alleged antiquity of Free Masonry, he would offer a very few remarks. Masons had claimed Saint John the Baptist as a patron of their order. Whether this was the case, he could not tell; but he thought he could discover in the New Testament something which looked like the existence of Masonry in those times. We read that in the days of Herod the Tetrarch, on the celebration of his birth-day, the daughter of Herodius danced before him and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised, with an oath, to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being instructed of her mother, said, 'Give me John the Baptist's head in a charger.' And when Herod heard it, he was exceeding sorry; nevertheless, for his oath's sake, he commanded it to be given her. And by his order John was beheaded in prison, and his head brought in a charger to the damsel. After this Herod stretched forth his hand to vex certain of the church. And upon a set day, arrayed in royal apparel, he sat upon his throne and made an oration

unto the people. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory; and he was eaten of worms and gave up the ghost.

Now there is much in this that looks like Free Masonry. Whether Saint John belonged to the order, does not satisfactorily appear. But if the Masons had claimed Herod for their Grand Master, many would have thought it as near the truth.

Mr CHURCHILL, of Milton, said that he admired the spirit and ability evinced in the Report, but that he was not prepared to assent to some of the facts asserted in it. He had strong doubts whether the Masonic institution was not in existence before the beginning of the last century. The inception, or root of the evil, he believed, was of earlier date than that stated by the Committee, out of which the iniquity complained of had grown. He had read a book or statute, in the Norman French, against Masonry; premising that it had passed more than two centuries since, and that the language was one of the badges of servitude left by William the Conqueror upon the subjects of England. This statute spoke of Masons meeting in '*Chapters and Congregations,*' and ordered that they should not be so holden under the pains and penalties of felony. He was willing to allow Masonry this claim to antiquity, and all the credit they could derive from the circumstance. But what credit did they receive from it? It appeared that at this distant glimpse we have of them, they were employed in disturbing the public peace, in plotting against the rights of the community, in subverting justice, so that the government was compelled to pass a special act to suppress their proceedings, under the pains and penalties of felony, which was death. He had no doubt they had been exterminated by this statute; perhaps they were mostly hung, and possibly the order renovated and began to appear again in 1717, the date of their antiquity as stated in the Report. He had not a copy of the statute with him; he had seen it in the Law Library at Dedham; but he was sure of his facts.

Mr WARD, who drafted the Report, replied that he was well acquainted with the statute referred to by the gentleman from Milton. In examining into the pretended antiquity of speculative Free Masonry two years ago, it had attracted his attention, and he now had in his hands a copy of the act, then taken. He was prepared to show that that act referred to *laboring* masons — to *operative*, and not speculative masons; and was intended to suppress their meeting in congregations and assemblies, to combine for raising the price of wages. With permission he would proceed to read it.

Mr CHURCHILL asked for the date of the statute before him.

Mr WARD replied that it was 1350.

Mr CHURCHILL rejoined that it was not the one to which he alluded.

Mr WARD explained that he was aware of the fact, but that it was necessary for him to read this statute, as it was alluded to in

the statute to which the gentleman did refer. He would premise in explanation, that in olden times Edward the Third dealt with Englishmen of that day, as George III. would have dealt with Americans of his day — as if they were his slaves. A plague had swept away a fearful portion of the English population; and the scarcity of laborers caused all classes of mechanics to demand higher wages. Edward had several castles and magnificent edifices in building; and to make his money hold out, must compel the masons and mechanics to work at the old rates. To effect this he issued an ordinance and enforced it by his sheriffs, who returned masons for the king's buildings as they are wont to return jurors for the king's courts. This was equally agreeable to the Lords of Parliament as to himself; and accordingly it was enacted A. D. 1350 that 'as servants unwilling after the pestilence to serve without taking excessive wages had been required to serve in their accustomed places at the rate they had received in the 20th year of Edward III.; and as it is given to the king to understand in this present parliament, that the servants have paid no regard to the said ordinance, but to their ease do withdraw from the service of great men and others, unless they have livery and wages to the double or treble of that they were wont to take in the said 20th year and before, to the great damage of the great men, &c. be ordained and established the things underwritten.

CHAP. 1 Fixes the day and year wages of *Farm Servants*.

CHAP. 2 Fixes the price of threshing all sorts of grain by the quarter.

CHAP. 3 Prescribes the wages of several sorts of artificers and laborers to the number of 30, amongst whom carpenters and masons are particularly specified.

CHAP. 4 Requires artificers to make oath that they will use their crafts as they had done in the 20th year of the same Edward III. See *Ruffhead's English Statutes*, vol. 1, p. 251.

And now, said Mr WARD, we come to the act mentioned by the gentleman from Milton. Seventyfour years after the enactment of this statute which is plainly applied only to handicraftsmen and servants, Henry VI. in parliament at Westminster ordained

'3 Henry VI. cap. 1, A. D. 1424.

'*Masons shall not confederate in Chapters or Congregations.* Whereas, by the yearly congregations and confederacies made by the Masons in their general assemblies, the good course and effect of the *Statute of Laborers* [25th Edward III., the statute above alluded to,] be openly violated and broken, in subversion of the law and to the great damage of all the Commons; our sovereign lord the King, willing in this case to provide a remedy, by the advice and consent aforesaid, and at the special request of the commons, hath ordained and established that such chapters and congregations shall not be hereafter holden; and if such be

made, they that cause such chapters and congregations to be assembled and holden, if thereof they be convict, shall be judged for felony: and that the other masons that come to such chapters or congregations be punished by imprisonment of their bodies, and made fine and ransome at the king's will.' 'Chap. 3, Just. p. 99.

This [turning to Mr CHURCHILL, who assented,] is the statute to which the gentleman alluded. It plainly refers to working masons or stone masons. I challenge any man to turn its edge, or break its point, or show one particle of evidence to the contrary, except it proceed from the vainglorious boastings of the mystic order itself; which is not evidence, the witness being confessedly interested, and now stands publicly convicted, of shameless duplicity and of atrocious falsehood, in its book of Constitutions and its authorized publications. The hour for adjournment had now arrived, and he would not proceed.

Mr CHURCHILL remarked that the statute quoted was of the same date and reign, and read like that he had seen. He presumed it might be the same. He had not the statute at hand to refer to.

Mr WARD suggested that the volume containing it could probably be found in the Boston Law Library, and he (Mr C.) could examine it before the Convention met in the afternoon.

The Convention met at 3 o'clock, according to adjournment. The consideration of the Report of the Committee on the antiquity of speculative Free Masonry, was resumed.

Mr BOWMAN, of Cambridge, spoke at some length on the subject. He alluded to various secret societies, orders, and combinations, mentioned in history; the Crusaders, Jesuits, Knight Templars, Illuminees, Carbonari, and Jacobin clubs, &c. He thought secret and selfish combinations, with the spirit and principles of Masonry, had existed in all ages. He mentioned several kings and great men, who were said to be Masons. The Duke of Orleans was Grand Master of the Masons in the time of the French revolution. He was interrupted several times as wandering too far from the question, and finally sat down without coming to a regular conclusion in his remarks.

Mr WARD now called on Mr Churchill for the volume containing the statute to which he had referred.

Mr CHURCHILL replied that he had not sent for it, but any gentleman of the Convention might. He did not wish to retard their proceedings.

Mr WARD then observed, that as all reference to the volume had been withdrawn, he would state that the mysteries of Masonry must be dated back no farther than the year 1717. In that year four companies of stone masons, who were left of those associated in rebuilding London after the great fire of 1666, met, the

lodge that worked on St Paul's Church being at the head, and formed the Grand Lodge of London, in February, and elected their officers June 24, A. D. 1717. With a view to fill up their ranks, and to increase their importance, they voted to accept men of other trades and professions as members. See *Preston, Laurie, Hardie, Tannehill*, and *Dermott's Ahiman Rezon*, Masonic writers. Three years they struggled, accommodating the Rosicrucian pretensions to the emblems of a handicraft Mason, and then in 1720 burnt their papers for the benefit of the mystery. See each of the mentioned writers. They give out that this bonfire was made 'by some too scrupulous brethren,' who feared the secrets of Masonry would be exposed in the book of constitutions about to be published. But the smoke of that fire was not thick enough to envelope the origin of the mystic order in impenetrable obscurity. This volume of mock constitutions, is the basis of all Masonic history; and its delusive statements have been copied and magnified until the mystic wonder has grown beyond the size and power of the fabled monsters of antiquity. From the time of its birth, the lying wonder began to run to and fro in the earth, wherever British commerce could convey it, and charters for holding Masonic Lodges were everywhere sold at a cash price, and an annual stipend, by the Grand Lodge of London. In A. D. 1729, Free Masonry was first introduced into the East Indies; 1730 the Grand Lodge of Ireland was formed; 1731 a patent from England was sent to erect a Lodge at the Hague; 1733 it was introduced into North America, at Boston; 1736 at Cape Coast in Africa, and at Geneva, in Europe. The first Grand Master in Scotland was elected in the same year. The higher degrees are first heard of in France, in 1740, by one Alexander Ramsay. They were introduced into the United States, through the medium of the Jews, in 1760. They first assume a tangible shape here, in 1796 and 1797. It had been said, that the deluded Henry VI. was a Mason, and that Oliver Cromwell was. Nebuchadnezzar might also have been a Mason, and he believed one story was about as true as the other. The history of Free Masonry was fruitful in interest, abounding with stories and tales, but when fairly examined and understood, would be found filled with error and falsehood.

Mr CHURCHILL stated that he should not be tenacious or refractory upon the subject; he had rather give up an opinion in the present case, than be obstinate. But he would offer some reasons to show that he had not been entirely mistaken in his views. The statute stated that there should be no assemblages of Masons in *Chapters* and congregations. He did not recollect the allusion to *laborers*, but the statute might have been variously stated at different times; he read it in the Norman French. If the phraseology was different it was not irrelevant to his purpose of explanation.

Well then, Masons *did* then labor, and suppose the statute

was made against working masons, who assembled together secretly for unlawful purposes. The statute was 405 years old, and it was hard to say that Masonry had not existed 150 years. That statute did not refer to all such qualities of Masons as now exist. The principles and forms of Free Masonry might have then existed, and been confined to the working Mason. If the labor of these Masons were innocent, what was the necessity for the punishment of death? If they were not merely working or operative Masons, then, of course, the penalties of felony would be inflicted. The term Chapter, also was peculiarly applicable to meetings of Free Masons; churchmen also might possibly use it, but he knew of no other assemblies of persons which were designated in this manner.

He had said more about this point, because he wished to go no further than he was sure. He was cautious of making a misstep. Of the detestible character, the iniquitous principles, the evil tendency of Free Masonry, he was thoroughly convinced. Of its possible antiquity he had no certain opinion, and to him the fact was comparatively unimportant. Vice though hoary was not less hateful, nor virtue less lovely for being youthful. If antiquity could render crime respectable, murder was most illustrious, for it could trace its origin to the first born of the human race. He thought it not important for us to decide that Masonry was but about 100 years old; but it was important that we should not make a wrong decision.

Mr WARD thought it was important to know whether Masonry was of Divine origin; whether it received the patronage and sanction of the holy, wise, and good of all ages from the beginning of the world, as their approved authors, orators, and divines had asserted; for it was a powerful argument, that what the patriarchs and apostles practised and taught could not be evil. That a society, claiming the glories of Free Masonry, should have existed for ages, unnoticed by any writer, sacred or profane, noble or contemptible, is wholly incredible. To say nothing of former centuries, but confining our attention to the three last, the Puritans, Presbyterians, Cabalists, Rosicrucians, Gypsies, Necromancers, Alchemists, and the Jesuits, are liberally, and often noticed, by various authors; but Free Masonry has not so much as a name until the eighteenth century, when it is frequently discarded on, with an interest and copiousness increasing to this day. This fact, to a sound historical scholar is enough to dissolve the airy castles of Masonic pretension to antiquity. Of this same tenor is the fact, that Free Masonry and Papacy cannot dwell together in peace; but we hear not a word of their disagreement till the eighteenth century. Certainly the Catholic religion is older than 100 years; and if Free Masonry be much above that, how did it previously escape a conflict, which has never ceased since it first commenced, A. D. 1730 to 1740? The canons of the Romish church require full and free confession to the priests from every good Catholic; the oaths of Free

Masonry require absolute secrecy upon the transactions of the brethren of the lodge room, from every good Mason. These canons and oaths nowhere abide without discord. Therefore the time when they first fell out and contradicted each other, must have been near the beginning of one or both of them. That time is determined by the Pope's bulls, A. D. 1738 and 1739.

In regard to the statute of Henry VI., Mr W. stated that the term *chapter*, in that age, was commonly used as synonymous with congregations or general assemblies. It was not then necessarily applied to Masons or churchmen. There might be a chapter of carpenters; if this Convention had been held in those days, we should have been called a chapter of Anti-Masons. That this statute referred to stone masons or laborers, he thought was clear. It alluded, in its body, to a former statute regulating the prices of wages; it therefore intended operative masons,* and not speculative Masons; not men who had a tyler to stand at the door of their hall with a drawn sword; not men who had taken such horrid oaths; not individuals who professed to see three great lights; not those who called their order the handmaid of religion. The order of speculative Free Masonry was grounded in the year 1717, and from thence originated all the chicanery of the matter. He should submit it to the Convention.

The vote to accept the Report on the antiquity of speculative Free Masonry was then put, and passed unanimously.

EVENING SESSION.

The Convention met at 6 o'clock, P. M. according to adjournment. The committee raised to take into consideration the expediency of sending delegates from this Commonwealth to the NATIONAL CONVENTION, reported in favor of the measure.

On motion the Convention resolved themselves into a Committee of the Whole, Dr ABRAHAM R. THOMPSON, of Charlestown, in the chair.

* The views of Mr Ward are fully adopted by Judge COKE, who gives the following opinion on this ancient statute.

'3d Henry VI. 1424.

'All the statutes concerning laborers, before this act, and WHEREUNTO THIS ACT DOETH REFER, are repealed by the statute of 5 Elizabeth cap. 4, about A. D. 1562, whereby the cause and END of making this act is taken away, and consequently the act is become of no force; for *cessante ratione legis, cessat ipsa lex*: and the indictment of felony upon this statute must contain, that those chapters and congregations are to the violating and breaking of the good course and effect of the laborers; which now cannot be so alleged, because the statutes be repealed. Therefore this would be put out of the charge of justices of the peace.'

INSTITUTES, Part III. fol. 19.

Col. MERRICK, of Worcester, (President of the Convention) then addressed the Chair. He said that the Report, and the resolution accompanying it, now submitted to the Convention, suggested that there was existing a great evil in the land, and it proposed a remedy to be applied for the purpose of effecting its removal. He should not discuss particularly the details of that Report, but should offer some observations vindicating the opinion that the community were now oppressed with the existence of an institution, evil and dangerous in its tendency, and that the remedy proposed in the resolution was appropriate to the difficulty which it proposed to remove.

He considered speculative Free Masonry to be a great evil; for all its claims to our support, our respect and our affection, rested upon assumptions which had no foundation in fact. The lofty pretensions of that institution to our veneration, our respect, and gratitude, could scarcely fail to be known to us all, for its praises had unceasingly swelled from the lips of its orators, and its enchantments sent home to the heart in the song of its poets. We are told alike by its eulogists and its historians, that its origin was coeval with man's habitation on the earth, and we find it accordingly arrogating to itself, that it has been the nursing mother, holding in its wide embrace the exalted patriots, the learned scholars and reverend divines, not only of this land and age, but of every land and of every age. It claims to go back to the dawn of creation, and that its root was planted in the garden of Eden by the father of our race: that, unwithered by time, and unscathed by age, it had ever since continued to grow and flourish, stretching forth its spreading arms and branches, till it had embraced and overshadowed the world — till all mankind might be gathered as brethren in peace and affection beneath its pervading influence, and sit down rejoicing, protected, and comforted, in the beauty and safety of its shade. That, favored of heaven, it had gained new strength from every assault, and had been able to spread wider and richer bounties as it overcame and conquered every new opposition. If indeed these assertions were not the mere extravagant assertions of thoughtless enthusiasm and rapturous credulity, if they were facts as certain as its pretensions were lofty, then indeed would Free Masonry be a blessing to mankind, and its existence would be secure against all the violence with which passion might assail or hostility attack it. The strongest efforts of us, creatures of a day, would be too feeble to shake its firm foundations, far less sufficient to rock it to its ruin. The humble strugglings of humanity would faint away before its almost eternal strength.

But all the assertions of the boasted antiquity of speculative Free Masonry are false. That institution was not born in the olden time. It sprung not up amidst the happiness and primitive purity of Eden; nor did it originate with the venerable patriarchs and reverend prophets of old. They never thought of those pretensions with which they are now said to be familiar; and little

did the royal monarch of Israel, when he erected and dedicated to the Most High that celebrated temple of Jerusalem, which was the pride and glory of his own age as it is the wonder of this, foresee that an institution like that of speculative Free Masonry would be palmed off upon remote and distant generations, as the offspring of his exalted mind, aided by the princely counsels of Hiram of Tyre, and of Hiram the son of the widow. They had nothing to do with its origin, nor had the saints of a later generation, whose natal days are now selected as the hours of masonic festivity and celebration, anything to do with its transmission to their posterity. No! Speculative Free Masonry was of modern origin. It sprung up amid the fictions and contrivances of the century which has scarcely now closed, and the date of its beginning could be ascertained and fixed, with as much ease and certainty as any other historical event. This Convention, by the adoption of a report on this subject, had already, for themselves, determined this question; and there could be neither occasion nor propriety in spending much time upon a topic upon which the deliberate sense of the Convention had already been expressed. Yet, perhaps, he might be permitted to advert to the singular fact, that in the Mark Master's degree, which professes to have been expressly founded by King Solomon at the building of the temple, that monarch is represented as rehearsing to his discontented workmen one of the parables of our Saviour to assuage their murmuring and induce them to submission—as if it were possible that he could express himself in language which never was uttered till centuries after his body had crumbled to ashes in the royal cemetery. Yet this gross absurdity was adopted, sustained, continued, and supported by the members of the Fraternity, with a gravity which would do honor to truth, and, he must say also with a credulity which ought to be tolerated only in the profoundest ignorance.

There was no foundation in fact for their claim to venerable antiquity which this institution had so constantly, so proudly, but so falsely set up; and instead of longer paying respect to an institution which pretended it had come down through the long lapse of hundreds and of thousands of generations, we ought to evince our indignation at the imposition which had palmed off a bloated and profitless creation of the eighteenth century, as the work at least of the age of King Solomon, if not of our progenitors in the land and the time of human innocence.

If Free Masonry be not the ancient and venerable institution which its advocates have claimed that it is, what is it in truth? and how is it to be estimated by men of inquiring and dispassionate minds? These, said Mr M., may be seen in the volumes which contain the disclosures of those members of the Fraternity who have abjured their connection with an institution which they believe fraught with danger to the best interests of themselves here and hereafter—with danger to the cause of patriotism and religion. These disclosures have laid bare the secrets of an asso-

ciation which has held and still claims to hold the power to guard, protect, and defend its own rights, and to repel and punish all its aggressors. But, are these disclosures true? You have expressed in terms which cannot be mistaken, your convictions on this subject. In the adoption of the report of one of your committees upon this subject, you have expressed that no doubt can remain, that the institution of Free Masonry has been fully opened to the public gaze. It is well that you have done so. The evidence that the disclosures of Masons who have separated themselves forever from the craft and from the institution, are true, is of the most full and satisfactory character. Their representations are supported by every consideration which is calculated to give weight, and are corroborated by a variety and fulness of proof which ought to force conviction on the mind of scepticism itself. In every quarter of the country, members have broken away from the bondage in which they have hitherto been held, and there is an entire uniformity and concurrence in their testimony. These witnesses do not belong to one class of men, nor to one denomination of Christians. They are found among the educated and the humble — the bench, the bar, the pulpit, and the field, have all sent witnesses forth in this holy cause, who have testified, like the saints of old, with one accord, and like them, too, their testimony is true. You have done well in believing them. After all that has been disclosed — after the full declarations of the members of the Le Roy Convention, men whose reputations are above and beyond the reach of impeachment; after the frequent and various disclosures in various and distant parts of our country; after the solemn assertions of witnesses testifying under the responsibility of every legal and moral responsibility in courts of justice, there is no longer occasion for additional proofs or further evidence. Though I know that those disclosures are true, I feel how feeble must be the testimony here of a solitary individual like myself, when added to that great mass of proofs which the public already hold in their possession; yet I would not that this occasion should pass without solemnly pledging myself in the midst of this crowded audience, that those disclosures are substantially correct. Do I not know, that this attestation will arouse indignation, and create hostility, which sincerity cannot disarm, nor honesty of purpose protect, from rudeness, violence, and perhaps vengeance. It will assuredly come; vindictive adversaries will arise to impeach our motives and to blast our reputation; but with the same love of freedom, with the same devotedness to liberty, with the same hatred of a bondage dishonorable to freemen and to Christians, with which in this consecrated hall our fathers invoked the independence of their country from the shackles of foreign despotism, I too disdain the bondage which Free Masonry has put upon me; and even as he, the beloved and honored father of his country, whose manly and commanding form stands almost living on the canvass before us, broke the oaths of his allegiance to the foreign potentate, from whose tyranny a glorious revolution delivered us,

do I, with the most conscientious confidence in a hallowed cause, burst away forever from the bonds in which Free Masonry has held me; and I declare, that, as far as my knowledge of that institution extends, the publications which I have seen of its secrets are substantially true — drawn and exhibited with a fidelity, which deserves all praise and all confidence. In the most odious characteristics of the oaths and obligations of Free Masonry, those disclosures are true. It is true, that a Royal Arch Companion, to which degree I have been admitted, or as it is termed, exalted, and the highest office of which I have sustained, does swear, that he will espouse the cause of a companion when engaged in any difficulty, so far as to extricate him from the same, whether right or wrong — and that he will keep his secrets inviolable when communicated to him as such, and he knowing them to be such, murder and treason not excepted. I know that these most odious and obnoxious clauses are part of the obligation of that degree, for I believe that I received that obligation; and I know that I have so heard it; and, as High Priest of a Chapter, have so myself, administered it to others.

For these disclosures, and these declarations, am I a vagabond and an outlaw? and is my reputation for veracity and integrity blasted and ruined forever? and am I to be sacrificed as a '*perjured villain*,' because I will not suppress the beating passion of the heart, which will hold no longer in its recesses the vile and corrupting secrets of this unhallowed institution? Do you believe that the base motives which have been attributed, and which will be again repeated with exaggeration hereafter, could have wrought with me either to fabricate gross falsehoods, and palm them off upon you for truth, or break solemn and binding obligations for the poor and miserable reward of some petty office, or for paltry popularity? Miserable indeed were the man, who for such ends could weigh himself down to everlasting infamy, by proclaiming falsehood for truth, or by breaking oaths which he felt to possess one particle of binding force? But it is not so. I trust that neither the wealth of worlds, nor the misery of ages, should have torn a hallowed secret from the bosom, if patriotism, duty, and religion, required it to be kept sacred and sleeping there. But even if I could have been subdued, by false delusions, to the dreadful degradation of sacrificing myself in irredeemable infamy, are there not other ties which should have held and restrained me from such an awful immolation? Who are the husbands and the fathers of these wives and daughters which sit beside me and crowd around us? Could they consent to mar the hopes and blight the prospects of the partners of their bosoms and the idols of their affection? I too have my associations, far dearer to me than the selfishness of my own ambition; and far rather would I spend the last life drop of my heart, than that the blood which flows in the veins of those who are connected with me, should be chilled and frozen with the horror of my infamy.

And what, then, is this institution, whose secrets have been so amply disclosed, and of which I have spoken thus freely? It is

that, which, in its rites and ceremonies, can scarcely rise above the contempt of the intelligent, and which ought to be repudiated alike by patriotism and virtue. Of its rites and ceremonies, it is scarcely fit here to speak. They hardly deserve the notice of even a passing observation; yet I will venture to submit the single observation, that he who has been initiated as an entered apprentice of speculative Free Masonry, and thence proceeded through the several degrees, till, in the words of the order, he has been exalted to the sublime degree of a Royal Arch Mason, has passed through a series of scenes of as ridiculous degradation, as it seems possible for human ingenuity to devise.

But passing away from ceremonies to principles, how can it be otherwise, than that philanthropy and piety should alike condemn an institution, which adopts those baleful obligations to which I have alluded, and imposes the sanction of their obligations in the imprecation, by every candidate who crosses the threshold, of the penalty of a most horrid and barbarous death? Is it to be tolerated, that in an age of enlightened learning and beneficent religion, an association shall be formed of men, linked together by ties the strongest which solemn obligations and awful penalties can create, for the purpose of affording aid and assistance to each other in every difficulty, right or wrong? of concealing the secrets of the basest crimes? There is no need of dwelling upon a topic like this. The universal manifestation which shall burst from every man not manacled and shackled with the most dreadful of all obligations, can give but one answer, and that must be an answer of condemnation.

Those parts of the obligations of the craft, to which I have just referred, are sometimes disputed and denied by members of the fraternity: but there are other portions of their obligations, not so glaringly obnoxious upon their very face, which have never yet been contested, which seem to me to demand the most earnest and severe rebuke and condemnation. I allude to that portion of the oaths which are administered in the course of the degrees, whereby an initiate swears, that he will support the constitution of the grand chapters and grand lodges, and conform to all the by-laws, rules, and regulations, of the chapters and lodges of which he shall be a member. These obligations are in the broadest terms, and no mention is made, nor reservation inserted, in favor of the laws of the government; and if it shall be the pleasure of the high powers who regulate the grand chapters and lodges, so to arrange their constitutions, or even of the limited association of a single chapter or lodge, so to enact their by-laws, rules, and regulations, as to conflict with the statutes and the laws of the land, we find the liberal terms of Masonic obligations requiring its members, under the penalties of their own imprecations, of a cruel death, to disregard and disobey the legal and constituted laws of the government — the enactments of its legislature, and the customs which have been inherited from their ancestors, as a sacred legacy, and a safe rule of action, are all to give way be-

fore the legislation of the lodge room, and the unfeeling despotism of Free Masonry. And considering the terms of those obligations, I do not see why he, who should refuse to support the constitution of a grand chapter, or to conform to the by-laws of a lodge, because of their conflict with the requirements of law, would not as effectually violate his Masonic oath, and expose himself to the penalties for transgression, which he has imprecated on his own head, as he who has dared to communicate to the world any of the secret mysteries of this audacious order.

Let it not be said, that these things are not so; that the members of the fraternity are peaceable men, faithful to their fellow citizens, and loyal to their country. All that may be; but what are the lessons which are taught, and the principles inculcated by the institution? The well instructed moral sense, and the love of country, may, and unquestionably have, with most of the fraternity, set aside, as a nullity, the obligations by which they have been bound; but if these principles, which are the unavoidable inferences of the oaths which they have taken, oftentimes, even as if they were the whisperings of virtue, serve to govern this life, that integrity of character which has given distinction would be thrown away, for the devices contrived in the dark conclaves of a secret conspiracy; and influenced by his mystical obligations, if a brother were urged to expose a felon, whose secrets had been communicated on the square, or to give up to merited punishment, the criminal whose cause, as a companion, he had espoused, or if besought to forbear his opposition to the laws of his country, because of their conflict with the by-laws of his lodge, might he not, and ought he not, upon Masonic principles, to answer, I cannot expose my companion; my house must be a castle for his body, as my bosom is the repository of his secret; I must oppose the enactments of my government, because they infringe on the by-laws of that companionship to which I am bound by the penalties of death?—And would not his justification be held forth in the language, as well as in the spirit of the merciless Jew, ‘An oath, I have an oath in heaven.’ Painful as these results are to reflecting and candid minds, are they not the sound and unavoidable deductions from those obligations, which have been disclosed by seceders from the Masonic fraternity, as the bonds of their fellowship?

With such an institution existing in the midst of us, what, sir, shall be done? And what is the state of the public mind, even now, when these disclosures are before the people, and they are besought to read, and examine, and determine for themselves? It is little else than a dread to look at the evil, lest the community shall be roused to excitement. The members who yet cling to this institution all say, that we must be *still*:—excitement is fearful and alarming. And this grand pass word of the craft is adopted almost simultaneously by the people, and it spreads and is repeated in every portion of the country. It was the last word

which I heard uttered in the village where I live, as I left the door of my dwelling to attend this assembly; I have heard it murmured in the streets of your city; it is whispered at the table where I take my food; it is circulated through the community by the presses, which ought to stand, as watchful sentinels, for the safety of the nation, and its dearest, noblest institutions— all, everywhere, the admonition is ‘BE STILL! AVOID EXCITEMENT.’ What! Mr Chairman, when this Convention has asserted that 100,000 Masons are in this land; and when you say, that you believe that the disclosures of the principles of the institution, which you have before you, are true, shall all be silent as the grave, and speechless as the tomb? the felon be saved? the victim of Masonic vengeance weltering in his blood? principles unopposed, corrupting the integrity of thousands and hundreds of thousands of your citizens?

‘A nation’s rights betrayed, and all content?’

No Sir, no! This silence, this stillness will not do. The voice of instruction must be lifted up. The careless must be roused from their indifference; the uninformed must be enlightened; opposition must be vanquished; and the lion must be bound in his den. We few have been sent into this Convention by our fellow citizens, to aid the great cause of our country—not to denounce the Masonic fraternity as individuals, but to assist in demolishing that tremendous fabric, and to knock off the manacles in which it had bound its members. We bring no weapons of warfare against them, but we hold forth to them the olive branch of peace. We invite them to unite with us in a common cause. We feel that their cause is ours, and that all should join in aiding its accomplishment, since it is none other than a struggle for national and personal redemption.

Is it safe to listen to these wide spreading admonitions to be still? It has been said, that the institution of Free Masonry was silently dying away of itself, and that we ought not to come in to disturb its gasping agonies of death with our reproaches. Never was a prediction less founded in fact. It has given way, indeed, before the storm which it felt was approaching; but it seeks, in its seclusion and repose, for renewed strength to baffle the tempest which is beating upon its walls. How is it that it is dying away? In a neighboring State the violence of its members awakened the indignation of the people, and inquiries, which would not be stifled, were began and prosecuted, till even the hardihood of Masonry stood abashed. It then shrank, as well it might, from the public gaze; while the progress of free investigation went on its course. Already that investigation has pierced the depths, and it is heaving, like the waves of the ocean, in a sister Commonwealth. The momentum could not be repressed; and the voice of expostulation and remonstrance, which first raised itself on the borders of our western lakes, has swelled across the country—has sent its tones through New England;

and at last it rings its joyful and exalted echoes here, along the vault of this glorious Cradle of Liberty.

Let us not be silent—let us not fear to disturb the public repose by excitement. If we do so, this institution will rise again, like the Phoenix from her ashes, with renewed strength and vigour. It will boast that it sustained the severest shock which aught earthly can endure—the shock of a nation of freemen's indignation—and has triumphed over it, and all future opposition it will laugh to scorn. Even now, with all the excitement which can be roused against it, in the great State where opposition to it first began, it still exists, scarcely shorn of the gigantic measure of its pretensions: and the titled dignitaries of the order are still hoarding their gains for the institution, and still binding new victims by the administration of its most barbarous obligations. And here, in our own Commonwealth, what evidence have we that Free Masonry is giving ground and surrendering her pretensions? In the course of the last twelve months, some charters may perhaps have been surrendered, but it is doubted whether as many were given up as had been surrendered in other periods of the same length, from accidental circumstances. No! the charters are neither given up, nor has the spirit or influence of the institution been abandoned. Both are in full force; and even now, we ourselves assembled here, feel the effects of that Masonic spirit and temper which is abroad. Its shafts are levelled at our bosoms; and if we were not bound in that panoply of a good conscience, which always was and will ever be, an effectual shield against slander and reviling, they would wound and destroy us. If the cause which we advocate were not strong in justice, and based upon the rock of solid principle, it would have been, in its infancy, crushed and strangled by the weight and strength of Masonic power, now exerting its force upon us.

So far from there being any disposition on the part of the Masonic fraternity to permit that institution to perish and die, I have been informed by testimony to which I give credence, although it is not that which I could readily produce, that the Grand Lodge of this Commonwealth, in this city, on its recent communication, only a few days since, for the annual choice of its officers, the question was distinctly presented, whether the institution should be permitted to sink or be sustained at all events, and it was decided upon grave deliberation that it *should* be sustained; that it would stand the battle and the breeze, and in defiance of that just, sentence of condemnation which a more enlightened state of the public mind is preparing to pass upon it, it should be borne up, going on as it has gone, 'conquering and to conquer.'

It is right then, sir, to take active measures to stay the progress of this presumptuous and overbearing power. Let it never be said that the patriotic jealousy of freemen for their sacred and inestimable rights, was put down by a timid and time serving fear of awaking the people to an excitement upon a subject which appeals to their dearest interests. It ought not to be forgotten that

one citizen has been already torn from the bosom of his family; nor should the shrieks of murder which mingled with the winds above the waters of Niagara, be drowned in the boisterous opposition of interested partizans, nor in the clamorous approbation of an institution whose members achieved that ignoble, dreadful deed of darkness, treachery, and crime.

It is well that Conventions should assemble. Their object is to accumulate and diffuse information. Let it not be forgotten, that we have not been gathered together to establish a new sect, or to disseminate new doctrines. The principles we inculcate, are the same which have made this land the glory of the nations, an asylum for the oppressed of all people. We seek for the common good in the universal diffusion of that knowledge and information which will apprise the whole of our fellow citizens of their rights and afford them the best means of defining and of perpetuating them. We disclaim all hostility to the members of the Masonic fraternity. No animosity towards them has brought us into our consultation. We believe they are mistaken; led away by errors which we would be glad they should see and reject, as we see and reject them; that they should be brought forth from the darkness in which false doctrines have immured them, unto pure and clear light of personal independence.

There is no great political party to be prospered by the labors in which we are engaged. It is not the cause of men, or of faction, which warms our hearts and animates our exertions. If we know ourselves, there is no other object in view than the emancipation of the captives, and the destruction of a bold and dangerous institution, which has allured by its outward graces many of our best citizens, and fastened them in the awful obligations of its despotic bondage. There is but one danger of the formation of a party, and for that, surely we cannot be responsible. We assail no man; we seek to injure no man; but the great law of nature, which bids every man remember, that self-protection, is a duty which is required of every one by the constitution of his being, will rouse us to union and to common efforts in our defence, if neither our persuasions, our arguments, nor our entreaties can secure us from reproach, from injury, from destruction, through the assault of the Masonic fraternity or its advocates.

The great end to be accomplished is the diffusion of INFORMATION. If that be thoroughly done, we hold that the event is sure. It is painful to look forth into this community and see how those organs of communications, the newspapers, have been and still are closed against the great truths, which we trust are yet to redeem this people, to restore them to a state of freedom from the presence of an institution which has insidiously grown with their growth till it bids defiance to all efforts for its extermination. But the press must be moved onward, public opinion can and will control, even that mighty engine of power. If they who now stand at the portals of the press are not faithful to their trust, a new generation shall rise up and take their places. New presses

shall be established, new editors will be called forth into the vineyard to bring in the great harvest of conquest, which is yet to be gathered. In every form which can be devised, information shall be sent forth. It must spread through the streets and squares of this great and enterprising metropolis, it must pass the threshold of poverty, and walk in amidst the luxury of wealth. It must go beyond this mart of commerce, and shall yet enter the lofty walls of our seats of learning; it must stretch over the green lands of the country, and find its way into every village and hamlet, every palace and every farm house and cottage in the land. Truth, thus diffused, will wake the sentinels of the press, who are now sleeping on their posts, and they too will join, though it be after the toil is over, in the high services of this regeneration. There shall then be, let us trust, no party, no unholy triumphs on the part of those who began and struggled in this cause in the day of its weakness; but one common thanksgiving, that we have all aided in improving ourselves and our country; and are able to send down to our posterity, purified, regenerated, and exalted, the noble inheritance of liberty which came to us from our fathers.

FRIDAY MORNING, JAN. 1, 1830.

The Convention met according to adjournment, at 9 o'clock.

Prayers were offered by Rev. MOSES THACHER, of Wrentham.

Mr MANN, of Dedham, spoke at considerable length on the origin, rites, principles, and tendency of Free Masonry. He alluded to the object for which this Convention had convened, namely, to calmly deliberate on the evils created by this institution, and upon the most suitable means for removing them.

He combated the arguments used by Free Masons in justification of their institution, and shewed them to be fallacious. He described it to be opposed to the genius and spirit of the constitution and laws, and as an engine that might be turned against the liberties of the people; and as of no present general utility. In fine, he went over the whole ground of the subject; but as his remarks will probably be published, *in extenso*, (for we observed he used notes) and as they are too lengthy for this brief sketch of the debates, we omit further particulars.

The committee chosen to nominate delegates to the National Convention made a report. On motion for its acceptance, Mr SIMONDS of Boston observed that he objected to the nomination of one of the individuals named—a distinguished citizen of Middlesex. That gentleman had been chosen to attend this Convention at a county meeting. He was not here. Perhaps it was owing to some irregularity in notifying him of his election, and perhaps otherwise. As he had not attended here, he doubted whether he would be able to attend the National Convention. He moved a recommittal of the report for the purpose of substituting another candidate.

Mr WHITNEY, of Boston, approved of the suggestion. The object of the National Convention was, like this, to devise means for diffusing light and information on the dangerous principles and power of the Masonic order; a gigantic association, which grasped in its embrace the whole Union, as well as the humble village. At this period of party contention, we should be cautious of exciting their jealousy! By sending distinguished politicians to that Convention, we might be suspected and accused of sinister political views. The cry would be raised that it was a political manoeuvre, and the prejudices and suspicions of partisans might be enlisted against us. The votaries of masonry were on the alert to seize on any questionable act, and to interpret it to our disadvantage. With no feelings of disrespect for the gentleman named, he should prefer sending men who were not particularly identified with any political party.

The report was re-committed.

Mr CLEVELAND, of Boston, moved that the vote accepting the Report of the Committee on the public press, be reconsidered.

He was necessarily absent from the Convention when it passed, and he wished for the privilege of making a few remarks on this subject.

The motion for a reconsideration prevailed.

Mr CLEVELAND then moved, as an amendment to the Report, that the words 'excepting religious papers,' be inserted after 'such presses as boldly open their columns to the Masonic subject,' &c.

The PRESIDENT explained that the words of the Report were 'to extend patronage to such papers as boldly opened their columns' to this discussion. By inserting here, the amendment, 'excepting religious papers,' the gentleman's object would not be attained. He would observe, in explanation, that the Report did not advise a withdrawal of patronage from any paper; it simply recommended, that *additional* patronage be extended to such papers as opened their columns to this discussion.

After altering the amendment so as to read, 'excepting religious papers from a recommendation to discuss this subject,'

Mr CLEVELAND observed, that gentlemen would recollect the petition offered up at the commencement of the business, that 'every plant, not of divine planting, might be rooted up.' He considered the *object* which had called the meeting, as of high importance, connected with the welfare of the community; that to aim at the overthrow of evils, existing through the influence of Free Masonry, involved duties of solemn and interesting moment. The weapons, which religion recommended to its friends, were not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the putting down of strong holds—casting down imaginations, and whatsoever exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into subjection to the principles of the Gospel of Jesus

Christ. Her watchmen, then, and every man employed to extend her happy influence, should study great care and circumspection, while engaged in the holy warfare. Were presses professedly established for the blessed object of encouraging a growth of grace and knowledge in the hearts of Christians, and the dissemination of divine truth through every grade of society, to open their columns to the discussion of the subject of Free Masonry, he apprehended most deplorable results from such a course. He feared that the spirit of God would depart from establishments where such controversy should be introduced. The remarks of Mr C. were predicated upon a resolution, having for its object the encouragement and patronage of such public prints as should *boldly* admit into their columns the discussion of the subject of Free Masonry. He saw the bearing of this resolution upon papers professedly of a religious character—that, *if they* should decline such controversy, and other papers of a religious character were set up with a view, 'BOLDLY' to admit the discussion, the present papers would be dropped, and the new ones taken — and, that immense injury to the cause of the Redeemer would inevitably result from such proceeding. To transfer encouragement from one religious paper to another, on the grounds named, would root up many plants of our Heavenly Father's planting.

Dr THOMPSON, of Charlestown, said he was taken by surprise, by the suggestion to excuse religious newspapers from the operation of the resolve. He had voted in favor of reconsidering the resolve, to accommodate the gentleman from Boston, though he thought that gentleman's absence from the Convention, during the discussion, if he had felt hearty in his duty, could hardly be excused. But, said Dr T., while he expected that the vote to reconsider, would be followed by some new views on the subject, from the gentleman from Boston, or the proposal of some more vigorous combination of means, to engage and direct the influence of the press, in favor of a righteous cause — he was utterly astonished to find that the whole object of the gentleman was to exempt religious newspapers altogether, on the ground that religion had nothing to do with the investigation of Free Masonry. What, said Dr T., is the design of religion! Of the Christian religion? It is to 'bring men out of darkness into light.' It is to 'break every yoke' — to 'open the prison doors' — to 'bring forth the prisoners out of the prison house, and say to the captives, go free.' It is to make men 'free by the truth, that they may be free indeed' — to 'pull down strong holds' — to 'cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God.' And what is Free Masonry? Is it not a dark prison house; shutting men up by bolts and bars of mysterious secrecy, and chaining them down to terrible obligations by awful oaths? Is it not a 'vain imagination,' a 'high

thing,' 'exalting itself against the knowledge of God,' or rather arrogating to itself the holy attributes of the Most High! And what is the purpose of Anti-Masonry, and of this Convention? It is to break these bolts and chains—to release our fellow-men from this ignoble bondage of error, and bring them out into the glorious liberty of the truth. It is to restore those holy titles, which, with sacrilegious hands, have been torn from the 'King of Heaven,' to deck the brow of this earthly idol. Is not this a task befitting religious newspapers, and religious men? Surely, if mortal man can ever be co-worker with the immortal God, it must be in the sublime duty of defending His sacred name from earthly pollution, and in the noble labor of emancipating his fellow-man from the thralldom of error, darkness, and sin.

Mr CHURCHILL, of Milton, said that the apparent difference betwixt the report and the motion might be easily reconciled. The mover assumes to come forward in aid of religion. We all profess to be engaged in the same exalted pursuit. Is it possible to identify with religious principle an institution which boldly commands her initiates, '*to crush the head of that serpent, adored by the vulgar, and called RELIGION!*' The report, however, does not invite any one to abandon his connexions with any public newspaper whatever, but only to patronize those which tell the whole truth to the public; and if the gentleman wishes any favorite paper to share the benefits of this recommendation, he has only to induce such paper to give warning of the wounds and poisonous drugs prepared for the destruction of religion, as well as to paint her beauty and utility. Should he fail in this effort, he may transfer his patronage to other religious papers, which afford unqualified support to that cause.

The Anti-Masonic Christian Herald advocates sentiments and principles, nearly the same, to my understanding, as those entertained by the gentleman. But if some are determined to support publications, masonic to every intent; though they may retail the mint and cummin of religion, while neglecting the weightier matters of irreligion, masonry not excepted, can they complain that we should invite support to newspapers as pure in principle, and more universal in their application?

If the objects of the present motion cannot be effected by any of the above propositions, I should be in favor of sustaining the present report; though sorry to disagree with a member who comes in the name of Jehovah, in whose cause we thought we were all engaged.

Mr RUGGLES, of Troy, said that that religion which would not suffer a sparrow to fall to the ground without its cognizance, most certainly was interested in the question before them. There should be no exception made of religious papers. They were especially involved in the examination of an institution which pretended (and it was all a pretence) to a divine origin. Was religion not concerned in this question? Most assuredly it was.

Mr THACHER, of Wrentham, observed, that he was not in favor of adopting this amendment for several reasons; one or two of which he would state. He was not in favor of making any distinctions among newspapers. He was ready to admit that the christian warfare was spiritual, not carnal. He was also in favor of the elicitation of truth, however elicited. There were two ways in which Masonry might be viewed—first, religiously; second, politically. It should have a religious discussion and a political discussion. It might be investigated in religious papers so far as it was connected with the interests of religion, and in political papers, on those points where it related to politics. He did not ask religious papers to discuss its bearings on politics; nor political papers to discuss its bearings on religion. Both could investigate its character so far as it affected their peculiar interests; and in his view, it did exert an alarming influence over both. If a destructive evil had crept into the church, how could it be purified? Ought the corruption to be suffered to remain, and to extend its deadly influence, because it could not be touched without producing pain and excitement? Were not the same objections urged against Luther, the great pioneer of reform. How was the reformation effected, but by ascertaining facts which absolved the consciences of those hitherto bound, from the ties connected with the Catholic church? No carnal weapons were then nor now need be used. It was now, as then, with the church, a spiritual warfare. The Convention had convened to elicit truth and prevent a great evil; to break down the impediments of truth. They were not called upon to make any distinguished difference between newspapers of any kind. They should be all open to a free and impartial inquiry on this great question. He knew that the principles and tendency of Free Masonry were at war with the christian religion. He alluded to the higher degrees of masonry as disclosed in Bernard's book, and particularly to that degree entitled the Adepts, or Knights of the Eagle, or Sun. He observed that if the gentleman who made the motion, would peruse that degree, and not acknowledge that it injuriously affected the cause of religion, he would return to the flock to which the Lord had made him overseer, and forever hold his peace. He thought it the duty of every pastor of every flock to sound the alarm when danger approached—to strip off the fleece of the lamb, when under it might be seen the features of the wolf. It was most of all, the duty of the religious watchmen, and he hoped they would not shrink nor be excused from doing their duty.

Mr RICE, of Northborough, said he had seconded the motion of the gentleman from Boston to reconsider the vote, because he wished to give every member of the Convention an opportunity to express his views on any subject before it. His own opinions, however, did not coincide with those of the mover. He thought religious papers should not close their columns to the admission of facts respecting masonry. Several ministers and professors of

religion had seceded from the institution, and their characters and motives had been impeached for so doing. They ought not to be debarred from expressing their reasons to the religious community, who could only be reached through the medium of religious papers.

The motion for amendment was then unanimously rejected, and the Report accepted.

The committee appointed to examine the laws of this Commonwealth in relation to Extra Judicial Oaths, made a report, which embodied a petition to the General Court, praying for the enactment of a law, prohibiting them from being administered and received. On motion for its acceptance

Mr THACHER moved several amendments, which were agreed to.

After some discussion on the nature and tendency of the Report, in which several members of the Convention took part, Mr HOBART moved that it should be laid on the table.

Mr WALKER preferred, that, as it was an important document, it should go to the State Committee, who might, at a convenient time, forward it to the Legislature.

Mr WHITNEY hoped it would be accepted, and sent by this Convention to the Legislature. It contained facts, of which many of the members of the General Court were ignorant, and which they should know. There were individuals of the community, who thought the correction of the evil which had occupied the attention of this Convention, should be corrected by the Legislature. There were those who affected to complain that we were building up one combination to put down another; that we were taking the power into our own hands to redress grievances instead of appealing for justice to the constituted authorities of the land. For one, he thought this a proper subject for legislative interference. He wished to have the subject investigated in our halls of legislation, and if the unauthorized administration of such oaths of blasphemy and death were not now contrary to law, it was high time to pass an act making them so. He knew that a great proportion of our representatives were members of the institution complained of. He expected they would treat our petition with neglect. But if this was the most proper and least objectionable course, no anticipations of failure should deter us from pursuing it. If Masonry was what it is described to be, and what it could be proved to be, he thought there was no impropriety in calling the attention of the Legislature to the subject.

Col. BURBANK, of Worcester, thought it a document which might be useful to the community, and that it ought to be laid before the public. He did not think it expedient to send it to the Legislature at this time. He thought the people were not sufficiently acquainted with the nature and tendency of Masonic oaths to render this step advisable.

Mr RUGGLES, of Troy, appreciated the arduous labor of the committee, which had given unusual satisfaction. That report ought not, and would not be lost. The people would be convinced; and after they were read and known, we should never again be troubled with the oaths and obligations of Free Masonry, any more than we should by popish bulls. He thought that any application to the Legislature upon this subject would be idle and futile. Oaths, and secret oaths, might be administered, and who was to know anything about it? The Legislature could not break down the doors of lodges, and if they could not, how were they to get proof or testimony upon the subject? It was not only impolitic, but improper. A statute of this kind would lie dormant upon the statute book, like that of sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, et cetera. The only tribunal before whom this subject could be settled, was the people. To them, then, should this report be sent. Light should be spread over our land, and the people's will would, in masonic language, 'defy a world in arms.'

Mr HOBART, of Leicester, was in favor of the indefinite postponement of the whole subject of petitioning for the purpose of procuring a law respecting extra judicial oaths: it was premature to act upon this thing; the state of the public mind would not warrant it. It was clear that the great body of the people were as yet uninformed on the question; they were enveloped in the fogs and mist raised by the order to blind them. Send this petition, and the whole masonic camp would be alive. It was bad policy to drive them to desperation, for 'skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life;' and when the fraternity were aroused and exasperated, they might do much. Conciliatory and persuasive methods were the best. The number of seceding Masons already was large, and growing every day more numerous; there were many left, among Masons, of high and honorable feelings; he should dread the consequences of an attempt to force them, by the measure proposed; they would call it proscription. The people could not long be misled; they will investigate, and public opinion was more powerful than legal enactments. He thought the measure of applying to the Legislature, at this period, to be premature, at least.

Mr MORTON, of Milton, observed that the operation of the proposed law would bear upon the future, and not affect that which is past. To prohibit the administration of oaths not authorized by law, could hardly be considered as an encroachment on the rights of individuals. Oaths not necessary for legal purposes, may be considered as profane and immoral. The multiplication of unnecessary oaths must have an evil tendency, in weakening the binding effect of those administered in courts of justice.

Mr PAINE, of Boston, said, though he had been unable, from indisposition, to undergo the labor of reading the report, (which had been kindly done by his colleague, Mr Walker,) yet as he had the honor of submitting it, he felt compelled to attempt, at least, to explain and defend it. He was aware that it might em-

brace broader ground than the Convention, at first view, were prepared to occupy; but, however broad his positions, they were all supported by facts and authorities. He was aware that he might have gone farther in his investigations, than others, differently situated from himself, might consider expedient; but he had been constrained, from necessity, and for self-defence, to make himself acquainted with the history, as well as the principles and the practices of Free Masonry, in other governments as well as our own, and he had given the result of his labors in the report.

He urged the expediency of submitting the memorial, reported by the committee, to the Legislature, at the coming session. He entertained views of the Legislature very different from some gentlemen, who supposed that they were our enemies, and that they would disregard our supplications. He had too much charity to suppose that they would treat the wishes of their constituents, and the appeal of this Convention, with neglect or contempt. If Free Masonry was so dangerous an evil as this Convention had decided it to be, ought we not to take all fair and lawful means for its suppression? The argument that it was not time to bring it before the Legislature, because they would oppose it, did not satisfy him. He thought there could be no better time for doing what they had deliberately decided ought to be done, than the present. If Free Masonry was immoral in its nature and tendency, and unjust and oppressive in its effects, we could not arrest it in its career too soon. The Legislature were the proper authority to appeal to in this case; they were the guardians of the people's rights, assembled for the sole purpose of devising measures for public safety and public welfare. They represented every party, every calling, and every interest in the community. Even the order of Free Masonry could not plead, that it was not amply represented in this honorable body.

Where can we find a tribunal better qualified to try this interesting question? Would they call it proscription to refer its decision to their own justice, intelligence, and wisdom? If they would, what effectual method could we adopt to which they would not object? This was not simply a political question. It did not solely relate to matters of *opinion*; it related to matters of *FACT*. If a portion of the community arrogated to themselves the right of administering oaths contravening the laws of the land, and of inflicting the severest penalties on their associates—even death—for offences unknown to the constitution, surely this ought to be a subject of legislative cognizance.

Is it not time for us to bring this cause before the constituted tribunals of our country? What better time can we have for this purpose, than the first moment that we have been convinced of the facts of the case? How long shall we remain satisfied of the iniquity of this powerful institution, and refrain from making any efforts for suppressing it? How long shall we expose the lives, property, and characters, of our fellow citizens, to the mercy of such a confederacy, without remonstrance or complaint? How

long shall they be suffered to go on, administering oaths to 'de-range the business,' traduce the characters, and take the lives of the citizens of this republic? If an appeal to the Legislature is ever to be made, where can we find any sufficient reason for delay? Have we not become satisfied of the origin of Free Masonry? its opposition to all other governments—its direct agency in the revolution of France—the rebellions it has caused in the British government, (particularly in Ireland, between 1792 and 1798)—the correspondence it maintained between the rebels of England and the revolutionists of France? Robinson and Barruel have made these things matters of history.

Barruel shows that 283,000 of the fraternity were organized in Ireland alone, to cooperate with France, to effect a revolution in the British government. Robinson's Proofs, and Barruel's Memoirs, were simultaneously published to the world in 1797, both treating on the subject of Free Masonry; and these publications, doubtless, sounded the alarm to the British government, and produced the act of Parliament which was passed in 1798, suppressing all secret societies. This act prohibited the organization of any new lodges of Free Masons, under a penalty of transportation for seven years; forbidding likewise the receiving or administering any secret oath unknown to the laws, or any obligation in the nature of an oath, for the purpose of concealing truth or keeping secrets, under the like penalty of transportation. This act also prohibited the meeting of any Free Masons' lodge, unless two of its members should go before the clerk of the peace, before the 25th of March, in every year, and, under oath, give in the names of all its members, their places of abode, and their occupation; likewise the time and place of holding each meeting of such lodge; and any lodge was liable to be suppressed, upon the complaint of any individual, sworn to before a justice of the peace, whose duty it was to issue a warrant for its suppression; and if any meeting was holden afterwards, it was to be deemed an unlawful confederacy, and its members were liable to the penalty of the act.

Such is the remedy England has applied to Free Masonry. But let us look at home for some of the effects of this institution. Look at the insurrection of Pennsylvania, during the administration of Washington. The part which the French minister, Genet, took in this drama, demanded and produced his recall, as the like cause in Mexico has produced the recall of Mr Poinsett.

Mr P. then passed to Burr's conspiracy, in 1806, to show that he carried on his treasonable correspondence in the cypher of the royal arch degree; and then called the attention of the Convention to what had been passing on this subject in New York and other States, since 1826, which was too fresh in their memories to require repetition. If such were the history of this institution, he thought it was high time that Free Masonry should meet the same fate in this country, that it had in 1798 in England, the country from which we had derived its charters; that we ought

to learn wisdom even from an enemy, and our Legislature ought to follow the example of the British Parliament. But, after all, if we were wrong in our course, we could not too soon be convinced of our error, by testing our doings by the good sense and wisdom of the Legislature, and thereby stopping what was called an excitement. But if we were right—if the evil complained of was true as well as grievous, we ought not to lose a moment in applying the remedy. The present time was the only time to cure any evil; of the future, who could have any pledge? Is it objected, that the 'excitement' will embarrass the deliberations of the Legislature? We can never have less excitement than at the present moment, for it has been increasing since the first moment it was awakened, and it will continue to increase. If we therefore wait for it to subside, in order to apply a remedy to this flagrant evil, we shall wait till all relief is beyond our control, and all remedies out of our power.

Mr RUSSELL, of Taunton, was opposed to presenting any memorial to the Legislature on any subject relating to Free Masonry; first, because it was our duty to endeavour, for a while longer, to induce honest and good men, who have thoughtlessly connected themselves with that institution, to reflect on the subject calmly, and follow the example of others like them, whose reflections have induced them to break their bonds, and reunite themselves to their fellow citizens. Anything which seems like coercion, would, it appeared to him, have a tendency rather to confirm such men in their error, than lead them to renounce it. We need the help of as many more such men as we can induce to join us.

Secondly, because it behoves us to proceed with caution. Any defeat in any one of our measures, would injure us far more than delay. The public mind is daily becoming more informed on this subject, and the time *may* come, when it will be proper to present to the Legislature such a memorial. At present, he was satisfied, that our memorial would be rejected, and furnish the Free Masons with an occasion to triumph over us. He could not but hope that the force of public opinion will, by inducing the Free Masons to abandon their system, render all measures that savour of coercion unnecessary; and at all events, such measures should not be resorted to until all milder measures have failed.

Mr THACHER complimented the committee on the ability and labor displayed in the report. The facts they had presented were irresistible; it embodied satisfactory evidence, to convince any candid mind of the dangerous character of the masonic institution, and of the necessity of taking all lawful measures for its discouragement. He hoped that, whatever might be the views of the Convention respecting the expediency of memorializing the Legislature at this time, it would not be lost, but that it would be published with the doings of the Convention.

Mr RICE, of Northborough, was opposed to the committal of this report to the State Convention for the purposes specified, and to bringing in the aid of the strong arm of the law. The time had

not yet arrived; the public were fast coming to a knowledge of the facts of the case, and there was, at present, no necessity of going to the General Court about them. True it was, that this report ought not to be lost. He presumed the committee would publish such parts of the report as they considered expedient. But there was in his view no necessity of going to the General Court upon the subject.

Rev. Mr SMITH, of Hanover, was in favor of mild and conciliatory measures. He could, however, safely trust this subject with the state committee.

Mr BOWMAN, of Cambridge, was opposed to applying to the Legislature for the enactment of a law discouraging this institution. Public opinion was first to be reached, and enlightened, and concentrated—for laws, not sustained by public opinion, were of no use; they had no effect. The Legislature could not prevent Masons from wearing aprons, or drinking out of human skulls, or calling themselves Grand Kings, Grand Priests, Grand Princes, and Grand Sovereigns, if it was to their taste; public opinion alone could regulate the practice.

Mr CONGDON, of New Bedford, argued that it was best to endeavour to regulate matters of opinion without legislative interference.

Gen. HOYT, of Deerfield, was much pleased with the dignified and harmonious manner in which the Convention had proceeded. We had conducted this matter like citizens of Old Massachusetts—without passion, without excitement, and without violence. We had proceeded calmly, firmly, and understandingly; everything had been examined in all its bearings, discussed fully, and adopted or rejected, as seemed best to our deliberate judgment. Wherever we had put down our foot, it stood firm; for consequences had been thoroughly understood before we hazarded the step. It was his fervent wish that this able and masterly report should go forth to the people. It embodied nearly all the facts upon which the opposition to Masonry was based. The people in many places were locked in a deep and death-like sleep; this would arouse them from their slumbers. He wished the information it contained to be wafted across the Connecticut; he wished it to be sent over the hills and through the valleys of Berkshire, and light up the dark and benighted corners of the land. He wished that the voice now issuing from the 'Cradle of Liberty,' should ring throughout the State, as in days of yore; that every rocky hill and every green valley in Old Massachusetts, would now, as then, send back an answering echo! He hoped the report would be printed.

Mr RUGGLES, of Troy, had no objection to referring the report to the state committee, for them to publish if they thought it expedient. This was a question for the people to decide, and not the Legislature. At any rate, if a memorial is sent, let it come direct from the people, and not from this Convention.

The Report was then referred to the State Committee, with instructions not to forward it to the Legislature until so directed by this Convention.

FRIDAY AFTERNOON.

The Convention met according to adjournment.

The Committee raised for the purpose, reported RESOLUTIONS, which were accepted by the convention.

A resolution was then offered, censuring the course pursued by the Masonic fraternity, in vilifying the motives, traducing the character, and deranging the business of those who seceded from their institution.

MR THACHER opposed its adoption, on account of some harsh expressions contained in it, towards the fraternity in general. There were some great and honorable exceptions to the course of conduct attributed to the order.

MR ALLEN, of Braintree, was in favor of adopting the resolution offered. Masons were in the uniform habit of stigmatizing seceders as 'perjured villains,' 'drunkards,' and as destitute of moral honesty. The slanders coined in the lodge room were circulated throughout the land; everybody heard them, but nobody could detect the original utterer. Those who had presumed to break the bonds of Masonry, were nearly overwhelmed with the floods of Masonic calumny; they sometimes despaired of being able to stem the torrent, raised to sweep them into the abyss of infamy. He felt that a resolution of this kind would be of use, as explaining to the public the origin of the slanders circulated.

MR SANBORN, of Reading, suggested that some of the objectional parts of the resolve could be amended. It was certain that seceders suffered much from the malicious fictions of Masons, and an expression of our views on the subject might be desirable.

DR THOMPSON, of Charlestown, thought it beneath the dignity of the Convention to speak of this matter. All attempts to handle the subject would do more harm than good. He would repeat what he had already said, that he had no prejudice against any Mason on earth; he would wish to proceed in every measure so as to carry conviction, that no spice of hostile or vindictive feeling mingled with our purposes. He rejoiced to see many breaking their chains, and coming out of this more than Egyptian bondage. It was from seceding Masons that this Convention, and the public derived very important information. And it was, in a great measure, through them, that other Masons were to be convinced, that the greatest happiness of their fellow men demanded the abandonment of their order. The institution was unfriendly to the moral rights of the community. The proofs of this, were embodied in an able 'Address to the People,'

which would go out before the world in evidence of the fact. If the facts in that address were true, they certainly were important; and the people would consider them. If not true, let the Masons, with uplifted voice deny them; let them confront the Anti-Masonic statements, and if they prove them false, let this Convention be consigned to the lowest depths of shame and degradation, and let their names be blotted out forever.

But, if the statements in that address be true, it is of vital importance that the people should know them. The real question, then, is not how seceding Masons are treated; but have they told the truth? It is our solemn conviction, that they have; and that the people have a deep concern in the truth they have told. What the feelings of Free Masons may be towards those, who have had the integrity to prefer the good of their country to the favor of Free Masonry, can be of but little consequence to this Convention. What the feelings of the great body of our fellow-citizens are, may be learned from the irrepressible burst of approbation, which thrilled through these walls last evening, when a distinguished seceder, in all the pathos of repentance, and with the pure eloquence of truth, portrayed his own tremendous struggles, and *his joyful* escape from the powerful grasp of this gigantic institution.

The resolve was withdrawn.

A motion was then offered, that the thanks of this Convention be presented to the SECEDING MASONs present, for the important information and aid received from them, by this Convention.

Dr PHELPS, of Boston, observed, that to these, the Convention was under immense obligations; equal, perhaps, to those due the patriots of the revolution, who, at the risk of their lives, property, and reputation, had stepped forth to save their country. They should be held in grateful recollection, and their memories forever blest.

The vote was passed unanimously.

A motion was then offered, that the thanks of this Convention be presented to PLINY MERRICK, Esq., for the important information which he has frankly communicated relative to the interesting subject of Free Masonry and also for the able, dignified, and impartial manner in which he has presided over its deliberations during its session.

Unanimously accepted.

Col. MERRICK, in returning thanks, observed, that he felt honored by the favor with which his humble efforts to serve, had been received. He had done no more than an act of duty, for which he claimed no credit—no thanks. He felt, that he had the best interests of his country at heart. He felt that the cause, in which we were engaged, was a great and patriotic cause; and he hoped that they would continue in it until all opinions became as one opinion; until all could engage in one general thanksgiving for their country's common and universal REDEMPTION.

Mr WALKER, of Suffolk, said, that before offering the resolution he held in his hand, he would ask the indulgence of the Convention, while he made one or two suggestions, which he thought of some importance at the present moment. We are, said he, about to separate to our different and distant places of abode, and we have delegated to the State Committee a supervisory care of the cause in which we are engaged. It will be important that this Committee be well informed in regard to all occurrences which may take place throughout the Commonwealth relating to this subject; he would suggest, therefore, that the members of the Convention, during its recess, should consider it a duty to communicate, from time to time, all the facts that may come to their knowledge, and all circumstances which may have a bearing upon the interests of the cause, to the State Committee. This would enable them to discharge, with proper intelligence, the duties we had assigned them at this time. Mr W. said, he would take the further liberty to notice one of the most incumbent duties of all Anti-Masons, and, as he thought, one especially devolving upon the members of this Convention. He meant that of endeavouring to overcome the prejudices which many of our most respectable and worthy citizens had imbibed in relation to Anti-Masonic efforts. Nothing was more common than to find very good men, who regarded everything appertaining to this excitement, as contemptible and wicked. This prejudice arose from one cause, and one only, and that was, an ignorance of the nature and extent of the evil we oppose, and of the means which we use as a remedy. Never having examined Masonry, they know nothing correctly of its dreadful influence; and having heard of Anti-Masonry only by the exaggerated and distorted accounts that have come through those channels of intelligence which are entirely ex parte, and unfair; they have been led to regard it as an explosion of infatuated passion, kindled by the torch of political demagogues. Our great object must be, to convince such of our fellow-citizens of their error, and induce them to read and examine for themselves, as to the nature and pernicious character of Masonry, and the means by which we expect to accomplish the end we have in view, the subversion of the institution, and when we shall have done this, we shall have effected one of the most important objects; we shall have removed the greatest obstacle to the present success and future triumph of a cause, which we believe to be the cause of truth, of religion, and of civil liberty. I move, said Mr W., that this Convention do now adjourn. The motion prevailed.

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