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FAMOUS SECRET SOCIETIES

FAMOUS SECRET SOCIETIES

BY
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"FIFTY YEARS OF FREEMASONRY," "PROBLEMS OF THE FAMA,"
"THE TESTAMENTS OF MASTER FRANCIS VILLON,"
ETC., ETC.

LONDON
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON & CO., LTD.

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY FURNELL AND SONS
PAULTON (SOMERSET) AND LONDON

To
WILLIAM JOHN SONGHURST
IN TOKEN OF THE AUTHOR'S
ESTEEM, GRATITUDE AND AFFECTION

FOREWORD

SECRET Societies are as old as civilization itself.

Primitive man had to undergo initiatory rites on attaining the age of puberty; shamanism tended to become an order set apart from the rest of the clan; and the propitiation of the tribal gods could not be undertaken without some preliminary instruction on how to approach them; but quite apart from such practices of prehistoric eugenics, magic or religion, the everyday life of the savage would force the adoption of observances to which a certain amount of mystery was attached; for example, signs by which to know at a distance whether a stranger were friend or foe, pledges to secure support from comrades in battle or the chase, and tests to exclude the untrustworthy from any enterprise that required resolution and courage.

Here we have the germs that have developed into thousands of secret associations of human beings all the world over.

In approaching this vast subject, one that comprises many things, to use Pater's phrase, "about which men have been passionate and expended time and zeal," my design has not been to compile a catalogue of all secret societies that ever had existence, nor even to include all that have ever been of any note; for no volume of a reasonable size could have contained the material available, even had that material been compressed into the most desiccated form. Moreover, I should have been loath to attain brevity at the expense of flavour and human interest; so my task has demanded selection as well as description.

I fully realise that the choice I have made may not be to everyone's taste, and further, that the subject-matter could have been varied by omissions or additions to the *n*th power. To those who on reading this book would counsel

any one of such infinite possibilities in permutation, I have only one excuse to offer: the selection now presented will do very well for a beginning; it is representative, of a wide range, and no one knows better than the author how much unused matter is ready to hand, should readers desire a continuation.

As for the societies which I have described, all are notable, though some have won their place more because of their progeny than for any particular merits of their own, for example, *Les Fendeurs*; others because they are very much in the public eye just now, such as the Irish Societies; others because they are a perennial whet to our curiosity, so here are the ancient *Mysteries*; yet others, such as the *Druses* or *Templars*, because many misconceptions about them have passed current for the truth; in short, each fellowship included in these pages was selected for some very good reason, which the benevolent reader will kindly take for granted, if he finds the account satisfying, but if not, then I would entreat him to seek better entertainment on another page in the company of a different brotherhood.

In describing these very diverse sodalities I have endeavoured, so far as is possible in a mere human being, to avoid partizanship and to allow facts to speak for themselves, so that, as Tchekov advised, the reader may become the only jury and give a true verdict according to the evidence; but it is only to be expected that a chance phrase or word may occasionally express the author's own sentiments, which, after all, need only be taken as a reminder that he, too, is a man.

The system of division adopted is mainly chronological, beginning with ancient societies and progressing on through the centuries to those still in existence; but some appear out of their proper sequence in time, usually because their tendencies or objects make them one of a group whose most important units belong to another epoch. For this reason the still-existent Ansars might have been brigaded, perhaps with advantage, next to the extinct Assassins; and in other instances, too, my judgment in matters of arrangement may seem to be at fault.

' Exact order has sometimes had to yield precedence to expediency.

The influence of one secret society upon another, whether contemporary or successive, is often so marked that two or more may interlock like the pieces of a jig-saw puzzle; and in making the attempt to reconstruct the pattern they presented to the world in their own generation I have found that the unity of the design becomes broken if its component fragments be considered singly and not in conjunction with others which at first sight appear to fall into a different picture. Therefore, now and then, I have disregarded sequence of time in favour of sequence of purpose or influence.

The extraordinary family likeness that exists between some secret societies which are separated by long stretches of time has struck every student who has approached the subject with an open mind, and has given birth to theories and arguments without number, to which I have not attempted to add. My sole purpose has been to deal with facts proven or possible, and to leave theories to those who are experts in such weaving—should they find here some new and brightly coloured threads to spread upon their loom, the author will feel that his labour has not been wholly lost. For I am none of those who would dismiss all unprovable theories with a pharisaical sniff; they may vary, and usually do, with every increase of our knowledge, but at the same time they help to increase it—what a potent stimulus to learn more of a subject is that which springs from the desire to upset some popularly accepted theory! Moreover, the theorist is sometimes gifted with a view of the finished structure, while the hodman of science cannot see beyond the bricks he is carrying to form the foundation.

In conclusion, I should like to take this opportunity of thanking those friends who have been good enough to lend me their advice and help while this book was in the making.

First of all my acknowledgments are due to Alastair Murray Wells, who assisted me in collecting material for

the Greek and Egyptian Mysteries. Those portions of the book that deal with ancient religions were read by the Right Reverend Agnew Giffard, Dean of Guernsey, for whose criticism and advice I am much indebted. Other portions were read by Miss Mary Gardiner and W. J. Songhurst, both of whom suggested corrections and improvements. Yet another good friend, Miss Sheila M. Hardie, was kind enough to bring her editorial acumen to bear on the proofs, to the great advantage of the book. To all these kind helpers I return my grateful thanks. *No hay hombre sin hombre*, says the Spanish proverb. ◦

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FAMOUS SECRET SOCIETIES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE ANCIENT MYSTERIES

THE object of all Pagan Mysteries was to explain to the initiate the meaning of this present life; to calm his fears of death; to reassure his soul about its immortality; and by cleansing him from impurity to do away with the necessity of expiating crimes in a future existence.

Such, at least, was the explanation given by an older generation of scholars with a marked tendency to lay stress on the moral and religious teaching given in the Mysteries, and even to attribute to the *mystæ*, the initiated, a knowledge of natural philosophy that had been handed down by sages from pre-historic times, although later overlaid in the mind of the vulgar with incrustations of myth and superstition. Of late years the work of Sir James Frazer has altered our conception of the knowledge of natural science and philosophy possessed by the ancients, and the current trend of thought expresses doubt about the value of the moral teaching given in the Mysteries. It is not the function of this book to decide between the rival schools, each of which may possibly have gone as far astray as the other, though in different directions; its aim is merely to pass on some reliable information about these ancient cults, not by compiling a catalogue of all their manifestations, but by devoting most attention to those which best merit close observance, while giving others little more than a mention.

Those of most importance on account of the influence they exercised on their times are undoubtedly the Mysteries of Eleusis and of Mithra, which have consequently been

treated very fully. Of the rest, those of Egypt are perhaps of most interest; but these have been dealt with so fully by learned Egyptologists in recent years that a mere outline of the religion which evolved them has been deemed sufficient here, though considerably more detail has been included of that branch of Egyptian eschatology woven round the myth of Isis and Osiris.

The practices of such sects as the Gnostics and the Druids have also called for description in this section of the book, mainly because of the general curiosity that exists concerning them.

The reader should bear one thing in mind: the ancient Mysteries seem for the most part to have been not so much separate societies as integral parts of the life of society in general. Their significance may be either entirely religious, or religious and political as in the Eleusinian cult, or administrative as well as containing the other two elements as in the priestly caste of Egypt; but in any case they are not something isolated from the society in which they flourish. They are rather to be regarded as bodies set apart by the nation for some special purpose, of religion or statecraft, or of both. In this aspect they are easily recognizable as differing from the secret societies of our own era, which are often either in conflict or, at the best, largely out of sympathy and touch with important sections of the nation at large.

One more thing has to be borne in mind. Whatever truths or futilities were veiled in these Mysteries behind a curtain of allegory, all of them alike adopted certain symbols to remind the initiate of the lessons he had been taught, and all of them demanded an oath of secrecy from him. This vow was usually particularly well kept; so conjecture and uncertainty hang over the paths travelled by the mystæ of old; in some instances we are enabled to retread a short stretch by their side, but in the main the general direction of the journey is as much as all our researches will enable us to indicate.

CHAPTER II

THE EGYPTIAN MYSTERIES

OUR main knowledge of the old Egyptian religion which gave birth to so many mysterious ritual ceremonies is drawn from the *Book of the Dead*,¹ which was entitled by that people *The Chapter of coming forth by Day*. The most ancient extant portion of this document dates from about 3500 B.C., but is evidently based on a much older text. It consists chiefly of prayers accompanied by ceremonies of a magical nature to preserve bodies from damp, dry-rot and charnel worms, and it was buried with those bodies as a talisman.

The earliest inhabitants of Egypt disposed of their dead by dismemberment and burial; then by burning; later by burial of the complete corpse; and finally by mummification. This last custom of preserving, as far as possible, the dead bodies, lasted from the earliest dynastic times down to A.D. 640, when the country was conquered by the Arabs.

The original inhabitants seem to have been invaded by a Sumerian tribe, who taught them the use of metals and writing, and introduced new religious thought. The period of this invasion probably coincided with that of the burial of the body whole, instead of disposing of it by dismemberment or burning. The new-comers were never entirely able to root out the old superstitious beliefs of the autochthons, and traces of these outworn ideas are found in the *Book of the Dead*. Its chapters are a mirror in which one can see the various religious beliefs of all the races that helped to make the Egyptian nation, and thus it gives us little help towards forming an estimate of what that nation believed in any one stage of its history.

¹ Wallis Budge's translation has been used for the purposes of this section.

The orthodox held that the *Book of the Dead* had been written by Thoth, the scribe of the gods. The central god of its theotechny is Osiris, whose legend is probably indigenous to Egypt. Osiris was the type of immortality, and countless generations of worshippers believed they should not see corruption, because he had conquered death and would enable them to do likewise. "O thou, who dost make men and women to be born again!" was the ritual salutation addressed by Thoth to Osiris.

A belief in immortality and a judgment after death was an integral part of the Egyptian religion. The judgment of the dead took place in the hall of Osiris; those who were condemned were forthwith devoured by the Eater of the Dead, while others entered into the domains of Osiris. To these happy ghosts was applied the title "Maa Khoru," he whose word is right and true—the signification being that the doors of the underworld "Sekhet-Hetepet," the fields of peace—the Egyptian Elysian Fields were open to the person who possessed the right word; he had power to go where he pleased and do what he liked, and had become the equal of the gods. This idea ran through Egyptian enchantment: the power of the name—that the man who knew the name of a god could invoke and obtain help from him by calling upon him, and that the hostility of a fiend could be defeated by the repetition of his name.

The gods of Egypt, of course, were many, but there is no need to attempt to catalogue them. Moreover, there were different degrees of initiation in the priesthood, and it seems probable that in the higher ranks of it a philosophical outlook discarded the polytheism held by the masses. Porphyry¹ declares: "Under the semblance of animals the Egyptians worship the universal power which the gods have revealed in various forms of living nature." They went, however, even farther than this, as is shown by the following hymn to Osiris,² which indicates at least an approach to true monotheism: "God of many shapes, God of the unknown, thou who hast many names in many

¹ *De Abstinencia.*

² Of the XIXth dynasty, found at Abydos.

provinces; if Ra rises in heaven, it is by the will of Osiris; if he sets, it is at the sight of his glory."

The monotheism was, however, a fitful gleam rather than a steady light, except temporarily in the school of On or Heliopolis. Though there is little trace of moralistic training of the priesthood, which from the time of the XVIIIth dynasty was an influential body whose privileges were guarded by a strict supervision of entrants, there can be no doubt of the moral tendency of the religion they taught. Take, for example, this response from a litany to Osiris: "O grant thou unto me a path whereon I may pass in peace; for I am just and true; I have not spoken lies wittingly, nor have I done aught with deceit." Such was the religion which produced the mysteries of Isis, celebrated on the lake of the temple of Sais.

Here let it be stated at once, that when these mysteries crossed the Mediterranean and were celebrated at Corinth, Rome and elsewhere, they became very different from the original mysteries of Sais. In Greece and Italy the Eleusinian mysteries seem to have served as a model for the re-edited mysteries of Isis, at least as far as exterior practices were concerned¹. Little has been recorded about what went to make up the original initiation at Sais. Diodorus and Plutarch say, that the goddess in establishing the ceremonies introduced to them the spectacle of her sufferings and toils. Saint Hippolytus is more precise, and informs us that in the chief scene of the mysteries, not to be revealed to the profane, Isis appeared in mourning garments searching for the scattered fragments of her spouse, Osiris, and in particular for that portion of his body which the murderers had cast into the Nile.

So thus we have indicated a ritual drama, much like the mystery plays of medieval days, portraying events in the history of the god and goddess.

The myth as told by Plutarch² relates that "Rhea having accompanied with Saturn by stealth, the Sun found her out and pronounced a solemn curse against her . . .

¹ Ouaroff, *Essay on the Mysteries of Eleusis*.

² *Of Isis and Osiris*. William Baxter's translation is used.

that she should not be delivered in any month or year"; but Hermes gambled with the moon goddess, and won from her five new days to the year, observed by the Egyptians since as the birthdays of their gods. On the first of them the great and good king Osiris was born; on the second, Arueris, otherwise the Elder Horus; upon the third, Typhon, "who came not into the world either in due time or by the right way, but broke a hole in his mother's side, and leaped out of the wound"; upon the fourth, Isis; and upon the fifth, Nephthys, sometimes called the End, sometimes Venus, sometimes Victory. Osiris and Arueris were begot by the Sun, Isis by Hermes, and Typhon and Nephthys by Saturn. Nephthys became the wife of Typhon: Isis of Osiris.

Osiris taught the Egyptians the use of grain and made them civilised, and then travelled all over the world instructing all nations in a like manner. When he returned home Typhon formed a plot against him in this way. "Having privately taken the measure of Osiris's body, and framed a curious ark, very finely beautified and just of the size of his body, he brought it to a certain banquet. And as all were wonderfully delighted with so rare a sight and admired it greatly, Typhon in a sporting manner promised that whichever of the company should by lying in it find it to be of the size of his body, should have it for a present. . . . Osiris at last got into it himself and lay along in it; whereupon they that were there present immediately ran to it, and clapped down the cover upon it, and when they had fastened it down with nails, and soldered it with melted lead, they carried it forth to the river-side, and let it swim into the sea."

When Isis heard of the murder, she cut off a lock of her hair, put on a mourning garment, and went in search of the ark. She had tidings of it from the god Anubis, the son of Osiris and Nephthys, and learnt how it had been cast upon the coast of Byblos and become enclosed in the trunk of a tree. Having recovered the ark after some further adventures which need not be recited, Isis carried it home to Egypt and mourned for her dead spouse, guarding the

body carefully in the ark. Typhon, hunting by moonshine, "by chance lighted upon it, and knowing the body again tore it into fourteen parts, and threw them all about." Isis then went in search of them in a barge made of papyrus, and made a particular burial for each member as she found it, for which reason there are many places in Egypt claiming to be the sepulchre of Osiris. "But of all Osiris's members Isis could never find out his private part, for it had been flung into the river Nile," where it was eaten by the pike and sea-bream; "but Isis in lieu of it made its effigies, and so consecrated the Phallus for which the Egyptians to this day observe a festival." After these events Osiris returned to the earth from the underworld, did battle with and worsted Typhon, and performed many other feats as though he had never been slain.

This outline of the main theme of the Osiris myth will be enough, but two curious details are included in it which show a correspondence between the mysteries of Egypt and Greece. "And they say that Osiris when he was king of Egypt drew them off from a beggarly and bestial way of living, by showing them the use of grain, and by making them laws, and teaching them to honour the gods." Then it is related of Isis, when she had arrived at Byblos in quest of the ark, "she sate her down hard by a well, very pensive and full of tears, insomuch that she refused to speak to any person, save only to the queen's women . . ." Both these incidents were later transferred to Demeter in the mysteries of Eleusis.¹

There is little doubt that the search for the body of Osiris was the main theme in the mystic drama celebrated in the mysteries of Isis; but all that we know about the cult with certainty is confined to certain exoteric matter. Thus some ritual observances are described by Plutarch.

The priests of Isis shaved all the hair off their bodies, were clad only in linen, and avoided wool. In their diet they abstained from pulse, pork, mutton, pike, and sea-fish in general, salt at certain seasons of fasting, and drank very little wine.

¹ *Vide* pp 18, 22.

The cult was rich in symbolism. Black was considered a sacred colour, red unlucky. The sacred garment of Isis was supposed to be particoloured, but that of Osiris "no variety of colours, but one only resembling light" . . . "They represent their king and lord Osiris by an eye and sceptre . . . And the heaven, because by reason of its eternity it never grows old, they represent by a heart with a censer underneath it."

Plutarch refrains from telling us all he might about the mysteries, and we have to be content with an occasional hint, as of a cord being cut into pieces in allusion to a serpent that pursued one of Typhon's concubines, or with such a discreet evasion as: "I pass by their cleaving of wood, their peeling of flax, and the wine libations then made by them, because many of their secret mysteries are therein contained." The *sistrum* or rattle was the instrument used *par excellence* in the Isiac mysteries, and an emblematical meaning was attached to its construction: "Moreover, as the sistrum hath its upper part convex, so its circumference contains the four things that are shaken . . . for all things are moved and changed (in the world) by the four elements, fire, earth, water, and air. And upon the upper part of the circumference of the sistrum, on the outside, they set the effigies of a cat carved with a human face; and again on the under part below the four jingling things they set on one side the face of Isis, and on the other the face of Nephthys; symbolically representing by these two faces generation and death (for these are changes and alterations of the elements), and by the cat representing the moon, because of the different colours, the night-motion, and the great fecundity of this animal."

The account given by Apuleius of his initiation into the Mysteries of Isis deals merely with externals, but since it illustrates the matter is here condensed from his *Metamorphoses*.¹

He was first taken into the temple where a priest produced from a secret place certain books written in hieroglyphics, "thence he interpreted to me such things as were necessary

¹William Adlington's translation of 1566 has been used throughout.

to the use and preparation of my order." This meant the purchase of various unspecified things, which appear to have cost a considerable sum. The neophyte was then bathed, brought into the temple before the feet of the goddess, given a "charge of certain secret things unlawful to be uttered," and told to abstain for ten days from wine and flesh.

"Then behold the day approached when as the sacrifice of dedication should be done; and when the sun declined and evening came, there arrived on every coast a great multitude of priests, who according to their ancient order offered me many presents and gifts. Then was all the laity and profane people commanded to depart, and when they had put on my back a new linen robe, the priest took my hand and brought me to the most secret and sacred place of the temple. Thou wouldst peradventure demand, thou studious reader, what was said and done there: verily, I would tell thee if it were lawful for me to tell. . . . Thou shalt understand that I approached near unto hell, even to the gates of Proserpine, and after that I was ravished throughout all the elements, I returned to my proper place: about midnight I saw the sun brightly shine, I saw likewise the gods celestial and the gods infernal, before whom I presented myself, and worshipped them."

There is little doubt that Apuleius is here referring darkly to some dramatic ceremonies in the Mysteries and that his allusions would have been understood by the elect.

In the morning he was displayed to the congregation crowned with a wreath of flowers, wearing a magnificent embroidered robe, and bearing a lighted torch in his hand, perhaps typifying the Sun-god.

The subsequent feasting lasted for three days—probably at his expense.

Apuleius was later initiated into the Mysteries of Osiris, which were distinct from the former degree. For this he had to fast another ten days and to shave his head; but except that the ceremony took place at night that is all he says about the matter. Later still he became a Pastophorus,

one of the select college of the priests of Osiris, vowed to chastity, and wearing the tonsure openly in token of his new dignity. In alluding to these degrees our author is so discreet in his language as to be quite unrecognizable as the frank reporter of the adventures of the Golden Ass.

Just one more hint from Plutarch to make an end of suggestions about the ritual.

"In like manner they affirm that the likeness of a dead man which is carried about in a little box and shown at feasts is not to commemorate the disaster of Osiris, as some suppose, but was designed to encourage men to make use of and to enjoy the present things while they have them, since all men must quickly become such as they there see; for which reason they bring it into their revels and feasts."

One is tempted to suggest that the explanation was invented to gloss over the similarity between the custom and a mystic rite not revealed to the profane, and to quote from one of the Fathers in illustration:

"Let us set forth another symbol . . . whereof we must detail the whole order, that all may see that the law ordained by God has been perversely imitated and corrupted by Satan. On a night an image is placed recumbent on a bier, and is bewailed in measured dirges. Then when they have sated themselves with fictitious mourning, light is brought in. Thereafter the faces of all the mourners are anointed by the priest, and he whispers in a slow murmur: 'Take cheer, ye initiated, the god being saved, for we shall have out of toils deliverance'."¹

This symbolism, doubtless, was common to many of the mysteries of antiquity; and no useful purpose would be served by further conjecture about the ritual. Not without reason the temple of Isis at Saïs, which was the chief seat of the cult, had upon it this inscription: "I am whatever was, or is, or will be; and my veil no mortal has ever raised."

¹Julius Firmicus Maternus, *De Erroribus Profanarum Religionum*, A.D. 345.

CHAPTER III

THE MYSTERIES OF ELEUSIS

- THE most important of the Greek Mysteries are those of Demeter Koré, of which the type *par excellence* is to be found in the mysteries of Eleusis, and the Bacchic mysteries. The latter were of a cruder and less exalted type, being spoken of with contempt by many writers of the philosophical age of Greece, whereas the former were regarded with universal reverence and respect.

It seems certain that the Greek cult of Demeter Koré is a modification of the Egyptian legend of Isis and Osiris, which in itself was an adaptation of an Eastern idea, altered by the Egyptians before being transmitted to the Greeks in the early dawn of history, and modified again by the latter to a form more consonant with the beauty-loving soul of the race. These transmissions of the religious idea have been confirmed by excavations¹. The historic period of Eleusis begins not earlier than the sixth century B.C.

Since the mysteries formed part of the corporate life of Greece, and especially of Athens, and since the deities of the mysteries, Demeter, Koré or Persephone, with the ravisher Plouton (Pluto) in the background, are members of the pantheon of Greece in much the same way as other gods and goddesses, it may be difficult to understand why their worship should be shrouded in mystery. The answer probably lies partly in the folk customs of ancient and pre-historic times, and partly in the nature of the gods and goddesses worshipped. The rites of initiation, by which the youth of a tribe are admitted to manhood or citizenship, are of very ancient origin and are found in almost every

¹ See specially G. Foucart, *Les Mystères d'Éleusis*, Paris, 1914.

civilization of which we have knowledge. The mysteries of Eleusis were almost certainly at first a tribal rite of the latter kind. Then Eleusis was conquered and absorbed by Athens, and the conception of the kinship necessary for initiation was extended to include Athenians and, later, in the days of the Athenian hegemony, all Hellenic races. It is worth noting at this point, however, that by the time of the conquest the mysteries must have already enjoyed more than merely local prestige, or they would almost certainly have been either absorbed or suppressed in favour of the worship of Athena, instead of which they persisted and became the official religion of the Attic state, tending rather to displace this worship than to be absorbed by it. This probably arose from the fact that the worship of Demeter, who is regarded as the earth-mother and the patroness of fertility of all kinds, was general in some form throughout the Hellene states, and blended with or absorbed the even older worship of Gæa, or Ge, an earlier form of earth-goddess. Athena, on the other hand, was too localized and too attached to the interests of a particular state to render her cult capable of wide extension.

The other principal reason for the secrecy of the cult lay in the connection of its deities with the underworld of the departed spirits, and the consequent danger which might be supposed to lie in incautious approach to them. Quite apart from its magical significance as an agriculture myth, the rape of Koré by Plouton, her descent into and resurrection from the lower world, gave to her and her mother a peculiar connection with that world and a peculiar right to influence over the lot of the human soul after death.

The mysteries were exoteric and esoteric, the Lesser and the Greater. The *mysta* received the Lesser and six months later the Greater. If he wished to become an *epopt*, he took another degree at least a year later. Every Greek, whatever his social class, might be initiated as a *mysta*, and in the later times of the cult this privilege was also extended to barbarians, but the number of *epopts* was always very limited.¹

¹There is some evidence that at one time, after the conquest by Athens, the city attempted to render the Eleusinian mysteries the centre of a Hellene

Even when Christianity became the state religion the initiations were continued. After the death of Julian the Apostate, Valentinian (ob. A.D. 374) wished to destroy the mysteries, but revoked his order at the request of Pretex-tatus, proconsul in Greece, "who represented to him that the Greeks would consider life as insupportable, were they not permitted to celebrate those most holy mysteries which bind together the human race."¹ This was but a short reprieve, however, for the mysteries were finally suppressed in the reign of Theodosius the Great (ob. A.D. 395).

• This persistence of the cult in face of Christian opposition is one sign of how deeply it had entered into the national life; another is that if the secrets of the mysteries were ever revealed the traitor thereupon became liable to death and his goods to confiscation. Æschylus, having been accused of revealing some part of the mysteries, only escaped punishment by proving he had not been initiated. Aristotle was forced into exile on an accusation of having committed the same crime. Of a certain philosopher, one Diagoras, more will be heard later.

The preparation of a candidate for initiation consisted for the most part in abstaining from certain kinds of food. Moral and physical purity was required, but a not too exacting connotation of the term accorded with the Greek ideas.

The Lesser Mysteries took place in the spring at Athens. The Greater Mysteries lasted for several days at Eleusis, and it was impossible to attend these ceremonies in any other place. This law had its advantages and disadvantages for the cult. It added to the fame of the temple and to its revenues, but restricted the initiates to the classes which could afford to dispose of a certain amount of time and money. It rendered propaganda impossible, so that the mysteries could not become a world religion, and were handicapped in competing with those of Isis, Mithra, and the Mother of the gods, Cybele.

cult. Two inscriptions of B.C. 450 or earlier announce one a three-months' truce to allow the journey to Eleusis to be made in safety, and the other that offerings for the mysteries are invited from all the Hellenic communities. The universal character of the mysteries, however, survived the Athenian hegemony.

¹ Zozimus, *History*, Bk. IV.

The administration of the mysteries was in the hands of two families, the Eumolpidæ and the Kerykes, of whom the former at least, in spite of the fact that the mysteries had become the state religion of Athens, were certainly Eleusinian. They survived as a hieratic caste down to the time of Plutarch, and the offices held by them, including that of hierophant, who alone could enter the inner shrine of the mysteries and exhibit the holy symbols to the mystæ, were more important than those held by the Kerykes, and moreover carried with them a broad jurisdiction in social and religious offences throughout the Attic state.

The principal officers directing the ceremonies were the Hierophant, always chosen from the Eumolpidæ, and holding his office for life; the Dadoukos, the Torch-bearer, chosen from the Kerykes, also for life; the Hierokerux or Sacred Herald; and the Priestess of Demeter, who was chosen from the family of Philleides, and always resided at Eleusis within the temple enclosure.¹ There were many others who call for no notice here. Considerable revenues were attached to all these posts.

As for the public part of the ceremonies, there were processions in which statues of the goddesses and various sacred objects were carried from Athens to Eleusis, the march being delayed and diversified by many ceremonies of a religious character. Finally, in the evening the uninitiated were called upon to withdraw from the precincts of the temple, and the mystical rites began. All we have been told by witnesses is that the mystæ and epopts assembled outside the hall in the darkness, and waited for the doors to be opened. They were left waiting for a long time. At last light appeared shining through orifices in the temple-roof, and then the Torch-bearer appeared to bid them enter. The rest was silence.

This silence has, however, been broken by the researches of scholars. Clement of Alexandria (ob. 220) devoted a long passage to describing the mysteries, and since it has formed

¹ It has not been determined whether the Hierophant and Chief Priestess had to be celibate. If this was not the case, they were on occasions, as will be seen later, obliged to enforce a temporal impotency by the use of hemlock.

the basis on which much constructive criticism and research have increased our knowledge, it will now be quoted in full.

“Now, for it is time, I shall attack your orgies, full of deceptions and magic spells. If you are numbered among the initiated, you will the better recognize the ridiculousness of the fables for which you profess so much admiration. Why should I hesitate to declare openly what you conceal? Why should I blush to speak of what you are not ashamed to adore?”

“Let us begin with Aphrodite, the goddess born of the foam of the sea, or if you like, the daughter of Cypre, the lover of Cinyras, of whom the poet says that *she loves that from which she has sprung*, alluding to the mutilation of Uranus and to that lascivious power which, even cut from the body, was able to do violence to the floods. Let us speak, then, of Aphrodite, worthy fruit of this impure seed. In the mysteries of this sea-born voluptuary, a lump of salt bears witness to the origin of the goddess, and the phallus is the emblem which teaches the mystæ the art of adultery; moreover, these latter offer to Venus a piece of money, even as lovers do to a courtesan.

“I shall speak then of the mysteries of Demeter or Deo, of the love embraces that joined Jupiter with Deo his mother, of her rage against, which shall I say? . . . her son or her spouse. I shall recall the fact that because of this rage she was named *Brimo*, nor forget Jupiter’s expiatory sacrifice, nor the drink whereby he calmed the fury of Deo, nor the heart torn (from Dionysus), nor any similar infamous deed. All these are found in the mysteries which the Phrygians celebrate in honour of Attis, of Cybele and of the Corybantes; for does not everyone know that Jupiter tore out the twin organs of a ram and cast them in Deo’s lap as the lying pretence of a self-inflicted punishment for the outrage he had committed on her, as though he had mutilated himself? In order to omit nothing, I add the sacramental words of this portion of the mystery, well knowing that they will make you smile, although the revelations I am -

¹ Clement of Alexandria (ob. circa 220) on the Mysteries of Eleusis (from the *Proreptikos*).

about to offer should not put you in any jesting humour: 'I have eaten from the drum; I have drunk from the cymbal; I have carried the *cernos*; I have glided into the nuptial chamber.' Are not these words absurd? What folly such mysteries!

"But my tale is not at an end. Deo becomes a mother, Koré comes to maturity, and thereupon Jupiter couples with Proserpine (Koré), his own daughter, after the relations he had had with Deo, her mother and his; yea, as though he had forgotten his first act of incest, Jupiter deflowers Koré after having begotten her; to accomplish which deed he changes himself into a serpent and enlaces his daughter in his coils, a serpent in very deed!¹ 'The God Who Passes Through the Body' (*ho dia kolpon theos*) is also the pass-word (*sumbolon*) used in the mysteries of Sabazius. So they style the serpent which glides through the folds of the initiates' garments as if to remind them of Jupiter's lewdness. However, Proserpine gives birth to a son shaped like a bull; to which birth an idolatrous poet alludes in the words: 'The bull is son of the dragon, the dragon is father of the bull, it is the mysterious goad wielded by the ox-herd that the Bacchantes brandish in their hands.' Meaning, I suppose, by the mysterious goad the *narthex*.

"If you like, I shall tell you how Proserpine was gathering flowers when Pluto carried her off, of how the earth opened and the swine of Eubuleus were swallowed up with the goddess, by reason of which in the Thesmophoria little holes are dug in the ground and little pigs thrown into them. It must be seen to be believed with what a variety of celebrations Thesmophoria, Scirophoria, Arrhophoria, the women march through the city in honour of this fable, and how many methods they find of bewailing the rape of Proserpine!

"Men are excluded from all these ceremonies; but the mysteries of Dionysus are foreign to human nature. While he was still a child the Curetes moved in a dance round his cradle, arms in hand, which did not prevent the Titans from getting access to him by a trick, when having attracted

¹ i.e. in the Christian sense, as symbol of Satan.

the young god by means of childish toys they tore him in pieces. . . . To show the trifling nature of this mystery it will be well to make known its emblems: knuckle-bones, ball, shoe, apple, top, mirror and woollen doll. However, Minerva carries off the heart of Dionysus (and because she carried this palpitating heart in her hands she is named *Pallas*) while the Titans are placing a caldron on the fire and throwing into it their victim's limbs. . . . Jupiter punishes the Titans by striking them with his thunderbolt, and gathering up the limbs of Dionysus he orders his son Apollo to bury them. The latter, obeying Jupiter, carries the objects wherewith he is entrusted to Parnassus and pays funeral honours to the mangled corpse of the young god.

“If you wish [to get at the origin of this fable], you must be present as an Epopt at the mysteries of the Corybantes. The Corybantes were three brothers; one of them was slain by the other two, who having wrapped up the dead man's head in a purple cloth carried it on a bronze buckler to the foot of Mount Olympus where, after having crowned it, they buried it. In a word, this is the whole mystery: an assassination and a burial! The priests of this cult and their followers wishing to heighten the miraculous part of this adventure, forbid the use of celery as a food, saying, this plant sprang from the blood of the slain Corybant. For a similar reason the women who take part in the Thesmophoria abstain from eating the seeds of the pomegranate; for they think that this fruit originated from the blood-drops of Dionysus scattered on the ground.

“Call the Corybantes Cabeiri, and you will have the Cabiric mystery. The Cabeiri also killed their brother; but in this case it is not the head but the phallus of Dionysus that they gather up in a basket; merchants in a new kind of wares, they carry this precious freight to Tyrrhenia, and there these runagates establish a truly respectable school of religion, teaching the Tyrrhenians to adore a phallus in a basket; so it is not without reason that some would like to give the name of Attis to Dionysus after his mutilation.

“And why should we be astonished that barbarians such as the Tyrrhenians should allow themselves to be taught.

such shameful legends in their initiation, when the Athenians and the rest of the Greeks, I am ashamed to say, have adopted myths so debased as that of Deo? Deo, wandering in search of her daughter Koré, arrives at Eleusis, a town in Attica, and to rest herself after her toils sits down on the margin of a well displaying all the signs of grief. To sit down, as the goddess did, in a similar place would be to imitate the mourning of Ceres (Deo), and that is why the initiated are advised to avoid doing such a thing.¹

“Eleusis had as inhabitants at this time the original natives, Baubo, Eumolpus the shepherd, Triptolemus the cowherd, and Eubuleus the swineherd . . . whence came the families from whom the Athenians chose their hierophants. However, not to interrupt my story, Baubo receives Deo into her house, and offers her the drink known as *cyceon*. But the goddess, overmastered by her grief, pushes away the cup, and refuses to drink; then Baubo, annoyed at this disdainful treatment, raises her garments and displays her complete nudity to Deo. The brow of the goddess grows unwrinkled at this sight, and having been moved to laughter she decides to accept the offered drink.

“That is what Athens hides in her mysteries (and do not seek to deny it) for I have on my side the description given by Orpheus. I shall quote you his verses, so as to produce as witness against such infamous proceedings the mystagogue in his own person:

“‘Saying these words, she raised her tunic, and showed in full view the lower part of her body which women conceal; beside her was Iacchus, the child, who, laughing, patted with his hand the part below Baubo’s bosom; at this sight Deo could not refrain from laughing, and she took the cup adorned with paintings wherein they had poured the *cyceon*.’

“[To this event refer] the sacramental words (*sunthema*) of the mysteries of Eleusis: ‘I have fasted; I have drunk the *cyceon*; I have taken in the basket, and after work I have placed in the calathos, then from the calathos in the basket.’

¹ Lenormant suggests that part of the initiation ceremonial copied this attitude of the goddess, whence the real reason for the prohibition.

“What an admirable spectacle, and how suitable for a goddess!

“Initiation worthy of the night (in which it is celebrated), worthy of the fire (kindled during it), worthy of the great heart or rather of the stupendous folly of the Erechthides, conjointly with the rest of the Greeks, who expect after death a lot very different from that which is awaiting them. Heraclitus of Ephesus predicted that the world would become the prey of flames, but to whom does this prophecy apply, if not to these night-birds, Bacchantes, magicians, mænads or initiates? The threat is meant for them, for nothing can be more impious than the mysteries they celebrate. It is a law without value, a vain opinion, and the mystery of the dragon is only a lie. The initiation attached to it is opposed to the true initiation, and is the work of men devoted to a false piety, and is without any real holiness. Nor have the mystic baskets more real worth than the rest. For I must unveil the sacred objects that they enclose and reveal the secret: cakes of sesame and wheaten flour, bannocks and biscuits with many protuberances on their surfaces, lumps of salt, and a serpent, that is the stock-in-trade of Dionysus Bassareus; add to these, pomegranates and amulets shaped like a heart, rods and wreaths of ivy; nor forget the cheese-cakes and quinces; is not that all? This list resembles that of the mysterious symbols of Themis (considered as presiding over the Thesmophoria), a sprig of marjoram, a lamp, a knife, and above all a comb, which is as much as to say, in euphemistic and mystical language, the sexual parts of a woman.

“Formerly modesty counselled men to spread the silent veil of night over their pleasures; in actual fact, incontinence is displayed to the initiates during the sacred night, and the flame carried by the torch-bearer reveals our weaknesses. Quench this fire, O Hierophant; O Torch-bearer, blush for thy torches; for by means of them Iacchus is put to shame; allow the night to conceal the mysteries from every eye; render to the orgiastic revels the homage of darkness, for fire should not play the part of revealing those deeds which it is destined to punish!”

Charles Lenormant, in discussing this passage from Clement,¹ has pointed out that it forms a complete unity in itself, is in a different style from his usual writing, and contains no quotations except from very old poems. He therefore concludes that Clement took this description from some pagan or philosophic source, and suggests for this a book known to have been written by Diagoras of Melos, a philosopher who spoke against the mysteries and thereby deterred many from seeking initiation, for which reason the Athenians would have brought him to trial. Diagoras saved himself by flight, and the Athenians set the price of a talent of gold upon his head. These events happened *circa* B.C. 429-23.

Whether Lenormant is right or wrong in attributing this fragment to Diagoras, there is little doubt that it does contain a great deal of esoteric matter from the mysteries. The rites seem to fall into three degrees or mystical dramas.

First: The fable of the institution of Agriculture, Demeter teaching men the cultivation of corn as a reward for their hospitality.

Secondly: The loves of Jupiter and Deo and Proserpine.

Thirdly: the mystic union of the Hierophant and Priestess with the intervention of Venus.

With these conclusions Monsieur G. Foucart (*Op. cit*) is more or less in agreement. He considers, however, that the allusions to the tympanum and cymbal refer to the mysteries of Cybele, whose worship was brought to Athens about B.C. 430; and he quotes Firmicus Maternus, who repeated the phrase in the text and completed it by the words: "I have become the *mysta* of Atis." Lenormant, on the other hand, found in the tympanum the symbol of Jupiter's incest with Deo; in the cymbal, his incest with Proserpine; and in the *cernos*,² the emblem of Dionysus being torn to pieces by the Titans.

There is another passage about which these two scholars

¹ *Mémoire sur les représentations qui avaient lieu dans les mystères d'Éleusis, Académie des Inscriptions XXIV* (1861).

² The *cernos* was usually an earthenware vase, but that of Eleusis was a sieve or winnowing-basket.

disagree. Foucart translates it: "I have fasted; I have drunk the cyceon¹; I have taken from the ciste² and *after having tasted* have put in the calathos;³ I have taken again from the calathos and put into the ciste." He finds here an allusion to a sacramental meal. Lenormant thinks it refers to a mystical cultivation of the Elysian Fields: "I have taken from the ciste the mystical seed, and after having laboured the earth have put the harvest in baskets, which I have again put into the ciste."

There is undoubtedly room for diversity of opinion.

There remains to be discussed the curious passage, "I have glided into the nuptial chamber." The best authorities refer this to a part of the ceremonies, probably at the very end, when Venus would make her appearance, to be followed by the symbolic coupling of the Hierophant with the Priestess in the *pastos*. The representation was merely emblematical, not actual; and to ensure the rites against any violation of purity (nominally an indispensable condition in every participator in the ceremonies), both Hierophant and Priestess are said to have previously rendered themselves incapable of coition by means of draughts of hemlock. Whatever precautions might be taken, however, to introduce such an incident into the drama of the ritual was to challenge attack from religious opponents, who would ascribe to it anything but an innocent purpose. This is how the Christians saw the matter⁴:

"Are not the mysteries of Eleusis the most important part of thy creed? Do not the Athenians and all Greece flock together to celebrate these vain ceremonies? Is it not in them that one finds the darkened haunt where that intercourse of such good repute takes place between Hierophant and Priestess, the twain being quite alone? Are not all the torches extinguished there, while an innumerable

¹ *cyceon*, a mixture of water, meal, honey, wine and cheese, flavoured with wild mint.

² *ciste*, a cylindrical wicker basket with a cover.

³ *calathos*, a wicker basket spreading out at the top. These baskets were used to contain cakes.

⁴ Asterius, quoted by Foucart, *Op. cit.* p. 477.

crowd (of the initiated) stands awaiting its salvation from what is being done in the darkness by these two persons?"

As for the *epoptai* who formed the aristocracy of the cult, Saint Hippolytus, writing in the third century, is the only person who has given us a description of any of the ceremonies attaching to the grade of epopt.

"The Athenians in the initiation of Eleusis display to the epopts the great, the admirable, the most perfect mystery of the supreme degree (*epoptikon*): an ear of corn reaped in silence."

The reference here to Demeter, who gave men the gift of corn, is unmistakable.

Some comment is now called for on the Arrhephoria, etc., mentioned by Clement in his attack. These were purely Athenian festivals, and his references to them were meant to cut Athenian superstition to the quick.

The Thesmophoria was the most important as well as the oldest and most wide-spread festival of Demeter, considered as the goddess of agriculture and civilization. It was by no means confined to Athens.

"Thesmophorus," law-bringer, is another title of the goddess, implying that laws are the natural outcome of society's transition from the nomadic to the agricultural stage. In Athens this festival lasted for three days. Only married women were admitted and initiated.

The first day commemorated the *kathodos*, the descent of Koré to the underworld, and was characterized by a procession through the city. On the second day the women taking part fasted, and sat around on the ground in attitudes of mourning, probably thus commemorating the absence of Koré in Hades. On the third day all the women resumed their cheerful demeanour, and spent the remainder of the festival in invoking the goddess to send them handsome children. At one point in the ritual the women gave themselves up to mutual revilings; and at another they cast into a deep pit in the temple various objects, all apparently made of pastry, pigs, the female pudenda, serpents and pine-branches, and all alike emblems of fecundity. The débris of these offerings was afterwards collected from the

pits and burnt on the altars, after which the ashes were removed to be mixed with seed-corn to ensure a good crop in the ensuing year.

An abstinence from sexual intercourse for a period of nine days was obligatory on those taking part in the festival. Many theories have been put forward to account for the exclusion of men from it, including the doubtful one of a matriarchal origin of the Greek polity, but the most plausible suggestion likens it to other early ceremonies performed by women because they were held to possess the stronger magic.

One more piece of ritual remains to be mentioned. At the conclusion of the Eleusinian mysteries the congregation was dismissed with the words *Kogx Om Pax*, which were long held to be inexplicable. It was finally pointed out¹ that they are really pure Sanskrit, and are used by the Brahmins to this day in the form Canscha, Om, Pacsha. The first signifies the object of our most ardent wishes; the second is used like amen; the third means change, course, duty, and is used in particular after pouring out water in honour of the gods.

On a muster of all the evidence the ritual of the Eleusinian mysteries may be stated to have consisted in the probable elements of a ceremonial meal, the representation of one or two mystery dramas, the exhibition of certain sacred objects, after which came the *logos* (word), an address by the Hierophant. Although there is little evidence about the contents of this last, it is probable that, while the custom of the time or place might decide its subject and make it either a mere recital of ritual requirements or an attempt at a wider moral teaching, in many cases, there may have been a standard ritual.

The moral influence of the mysteries has been a matter of great controversy, at least in as far as the Eleusinian mysteries are concerned, for though most of the philosophers and serious writers of Greece tend to regard the Dionysiac worship, with its magical practices and unrestrained orgies, as debasing, all alike are agreed that the Eleusinian are

¹By Captain Wilford in *Asiatic Researches*, 1798.

ennobling and purifying. On the other hand it seems doubtful whether any moral teaching were regularly or systematically given, though there may have been some in the preparation for initiation, and individual hierophants may have included moral precepts in their discourses, especially later in the history of the cult. The purity enjoined was probably, at least at first, ritual purity alone. There was little attempt to make a moral scrutiny of the candidates, though occasionally persons who were notoriously guilty of serious crimes were denied admission; and it seems fair to add here that in the Samothracian mysteries some form of confessional discipline seems to have been enforced. The Amphictyonic decree of the second century B.C. does, on the other hand, speak of the mysteries as enforcing the lesson that "the greatest of human blessings is fellowship and mutual trust," but it is possible that this refers more to the effect of the ceremonies than to any explicit teaching. The safest guide is probably Aristotle, who says that "the initiated do not so much learn anything as feel certain emotions, and are put into a certain frame of mind." If that frame of mind tended to make them better citizens, the rites were justified of their existence.

CHAPTER IV

THE ORPHIC AND OTHER MYSTERIES

°THE Orphic mysteries were those performed in honour of Dionysus or Bacchus, and there is little to say about them save that the mystic part of the ceremonies appear to have been both less elaborate and less exalted than the Eleusinian, and the public ceremonies often included orgies and periods of a wild licence.¹ Bacchus represented the new vernal life, vegetation, the new-born year, and especially the vine and grapes. The mythology is extremely complicated, and although it is of great interest to the anthropologist it is little to the purpose of a student of secret societies.

Bacchus appears under three forms in the myths. First: Zagreus, whom Jove in the form of a dragon begat on Proserpine. Secondly: the son of Zeus and Semele, entitled the Theban and the Conqueror. Thirdly: Iacchus, who appeared on the sixth day of the ceremonies at Eleusis, "who seems to have been imagined only that he might consecrate in some degree the alliance between the secret worship of Bacchus and that of Ceres."²

The following is a translation from a Greek papyrus preserved in the Berlin Museum, and dating from the time of Ptolemaios Philopator in the third century B.C., which was discovered by Professor Schubart and published by him in a Berlin newspaper in 1917. It shows that some sort of standard ritual existed for the mysteries of Dionysus, and what was true of one cult may have been true of all.

¹ "This opposition strikes us at once; and what conformity could in fact subsist between the savage licentiousness of the Bacchic worship and the severe character and the high destination of the worship of Ceres?" Ouaroff, *Op. cit.*, p. 86.

² Ouaroff, *Op. cit.* p. 92.

‘ “By Order of the King. All in this country who initiate into the rites of Dionysos are ordered to take ship down to Alexandria; those who live at Naukratis or nearer within ten days, those who live above Naukratis within twenty days of the publishing of this decree. They shall hand in a written declaration to Aristobulos in the Registrar’s office within three days of their arrival; moreover, they are at once to give information about those from whom they received the cult, for three generations, and shall hand in the sacred ritual (*lógos*) sealed, after having written each man his name upon it.”

In this connexion it seems worth remembering that Dionysus under his different names was connected with the festival of the Eleusinia. Iacchos, described by Strabo as “the daemon of Demeter, the founder of the mysteries,” is only known as a visitor at Eleusis, but he is purely Athenian, since he is not found in other mysteries borrowed from Eleusis. He is identified with Bacchus in Sophocles’s *Antigone*. There are other instances of connection between the Bacchic and Eleusinian cults, mostly of the fifth century and later, but the Orphic cult never captured Eleusis as it did other centres. There is, similarly, mention of the two goddesses in the Sabazian and other mysteries, and a tradition that Bacchus is the son of Persephone.

The mysteries of the Cabeiri seem to have been of an orgiastic nature similar to the Bacchic. Phallic worship was an integral part of the cult, as is shown by contemporary references. Herodotus (b. B.C. 385) says that the Athenians were the first of all the Greeks to adopt the custom of representing the god Hermes *arrecto pene*, and had this from the Pelasgians, not from the Egyptians. The Pelasgians, he adds, formerly dwelt in Samothrace, and from them the Samothracians had the mysteries of the Cabeiri, from which the above symbol was taken.

In another passage concerning Cambyses he relates that the king “went also into the temple of the Cabeiri, into which it is not lawful for anyone but the priest to enter, and these images he actually burned, after having scoffed at them exceedingly. These, too, are like the images

of Hephaestus, and men say that the Cabeiri are his sons."¹

Strabo (first century B.C.) tells us that the Curetes were by many held to be the same as the Corybantes, the Cabeiri, and other sects, whose mysteries are partly secret, partly not, and relate to the orgiastic worship of the Mother of the Gods in Phrygia. These sects, whatever minute differences distinguish them from one another, all are possessed by some divine and passionate frenzy, "inasmuch as in the conduct of their rites they terrify men by armed dances, accompanied with noisy shouting, ringing of bells, beating of drums, clash of arms, fluting and uproar, while they pose as servants of the gods; and they are supposed to share their ritual to a certain extent with the Samothracians, Lemnians, and many others, on account of the same people being called ministering priests."

The same author tells us elsewhere that the priests, leaders of the dances and ministers all have their appropriate names in the rites of the Cabeiri, which are similar to those of the Cottytian Rites prevailing in Thrace, whence sprang the Orphic mysteries.

The Cabeiri were demigods about whose ancestry varied tales were current in different places.

Pausanias, a Greek historian (second century A.D.), attributes the establishment of the worship of the Cabeiri among the Thebans to one Methapus, an Athenian. Later on he excuses himself from writing about the mysteries of the Cabeiri, saying it would not be lawful. It is not permissible to enter the groves sacred to them, and those who have profaned these sanctuaries have come to a horrible end, of which he offers divers examples.

CHAPTER V

MITHRA

THE worship of Mithra arose in the east at that remote period of time when the Persian and Hindu nations were still one people.

Of Zoroaster, the putative founder of this religion, almost nothing is known; and the extant Zend-Avesta, the sacred book that contains its tenets, dates only from the third century A.D.; of the original only trifling fragments remain. The philosophy of this book accounts for the presence of unhappiness in the world by presuming a constant struggle between the good and evil principles, named Ormuzd and Ahriman, who have chosen mankind as their battle-field.

Ormuzd is the omnipotent lord; luminous space, anterior to all things, and containing all; the sky is his garment brodered with stars, the sun his eye wherewith he oversees all things created; "in body he resembles the light, in soul the truth"; by his word he has created the earth, and this word in naming beings has inspired them with the breath of life.

Three separate classes of angelic or superhuman beings attend upon Ormuzd to do his bidding, and aid him in his struggle against Ahriman. First in rank come the Amshaspands, who seem to represent abstract qualities emanating from the soul of goodness; next come the Izeds, who are genii of the four elements, fire, water, earth, and air; last come the Ferouers or Fravashis, who are immortal types or ideas of things; their service consists in descending temporarily to earth and becoming incarnate, ascending again to heaven when their work is done.

Mithra was originally one of the Izeds, and thus belongs to the oldest Pagan mythology. In his earliest form he seems identical with the sun; then by process of evolution he became in turn the god of truth, the intercessor between men and Ahura (Ormuzd), the warrior god, the family god as friend and consoler; he became, too, the guide of men after death, and weighed them in the balance.

When the Persians conquered the Assyrians, the pure form of religion, as described above, received a strange medley of additions gathered up from the popular mythology of the Babylonian people; astrology, astronomy, magic and demons, monsters and chimeras were grafted on the original stem. The religion henceforth bore unmistakable traces of its passage through the land of the Chaldees.

Other changes crept in also that exalted Mithra at the expense of Ormuzd, and advanced him grade by grade, so that he first became co-adjutor of the god, and finally displaced him in the popular imagination and worship. In the end Mithra had in practice dethroned Ahura-Mazda (Ormuzd); yet the existence of the latter continued to be a matter of faith, and to him in the third century A.D. we find Mithra conducting the souls of the dead. It is, however, doubtful whether the former supreme god, the principle of good, received much notice or reverence from the common herd of worshippers.

From Assyria the worship of Mithra passed into Phrygia, where it borrowed the costume of Atys, in which Mithra is always represented henceforth.

From Phrygia the creed spread to Rome. In this last phase, the days of his greatness and decline under the Roman Empire, Mithra was still Persian in the trend of his morality and the character of his doctrines; Chaldean in the form of his dogmas and astronomical symbolism; Phrygian in his garb; Roman in the discipline whereby his devotees were bound together.

Mithra was an essentially Aryan deity. Both Hindu and Persian recognized him as the protector of truth and antagonist of error; but this view of the god as a guiding and morality-inspiring spirit was only attained after centuries

of religious evolution, and the legend with which his name was chiefly associated seems to go back to a very remote period when men clothed their divinities in a mortal shape wherein to fulfil works of love or enmity. The legend of the bull, which gave Mithra the name of Bull-slayer, ran as follows.

Mithra was born of the rock, a piece of symbolism perpetuated by his statues down to the latest age of the worship and probably embodying the idea of a physical phenomenon, the creation of fire from flint, light and heat being his special attributes. The first antagonist against whom he turned his arms was the sun, whom he conquered and made his ally. There is a certain amount of confusion in this myth, for during his later career Mithra was generally identified with the sun and regarded as its god; such contradictions and blendings of deities are not uncommon in the history of religions. The most serious of Mithra's struggles was one with a great bull created by Jupiter Orosmasdes, during which the hero laid hold of it by the horns, and was borne away on its back. At last it fell exhausted, whereupon the hero caught it up by the hind legs and carried it slung over his shoulders into a cave.

In the Mithraic monuments the god is very often portrayed in this attitude, carrying the bull; and this *transitus*, as it was called, became emblematical of the course of life; the esoteric teaching, one may surmise, would follow the line that all men have a burden to bear of passions, sorrows and duties, that none can escape it, and that courage is needed in order to overcome . . . a lesson not lacking in morality.

To resume the myth. The bull escaped from its prison in the cave while the hero was resting after his labours; but it did not evade the watchful eye of the Sun-god, who sent his special messenger, the crow, to wake Mithra with the command that when he had overtaken the fugitive it should be slain.

Mithra, much against his own will, for he loved mercy and hated bloodshed, obeyed the will of the Sun-god. Accompanied by his dog, the symbol of faithfulness and obedience, he pursued and overtook the bull, cast it to

the ground, and averting his head in horror at his own act, plunged his dagger into its heart. Thereupon from its flowing blood sprang all the plants and herbs useful to man. The spirit of evil, however, did not wish the sacrifice to be consummated, and sent his emissaries, the ant, the scorpion and the serpent to destroy the sources of life; but their attempts were unavailing. The seed of the bull was translated to the sphere of the moon, where it germinated, grew, and bore fruit. Thus by the immolation of the bull, committed against his will, Mithra became the regenerator of the earth and creator of a new life, richer and more fruitful than the former.

Such is the legend, details of which are carefully expressed in many of the Mithraic monuments that have been preserved; such is the legend that formed the basis of a cult which became immensely popular wherever the Roman eagles flew over Europe.

The first planting of Mithra-worship among the Romans probably dates from the military expeditions into Cilicia and Cappadocia about B.C. 102. While the religion seems never to have taken root in Greece, we find it firmly established in Rome at the end of the first century A.D. Here it had been preceded by various other Oriental cults, notably those of Cybele and Isis. Towards the decline of the republic the ground was prepared at Rome for a new faith. The old official religion was dying of formalism; paganism had proved itself impotent to form a popular morality; and the disastrous effects of state dry-nursing were reflected in the minds of men. Since the proletariat had come to be fed and entertained at the public expense, *panem et circenses*, the plebeian had no personal interest in politics, no anxiety about his daily bread, no popular religion to appeal to his heart and intellect; in fact, nothing in his environment tended to raise him above the level of the brutes or develop the higher side of his nature. Augustus attempted to supply this need by what may be termed an Apotheosis of Government, and declared the state to be the ruling deity of Rome; but the populace would have none of it; it wanted something more tangible,

a personal god, a ceremonious ritual. The cultured classes, of course, pursued the study and practice of philosophy, which formed many noble characters; but the worship of "self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control" was quite unsuited to the masses; they had other needs, and so devoted themselves to the grossest superstitions. Orgiastic rites and nature-worship did not suffice for all, and many sought light elsewhere; initiations into the mysteries became very common among the lower classes, indeed most of the recruits came from the men of the people, for a well-bred philosophic atheism contented the Patricians. The aim of all these mysteries was identical, expressed in many different ceremonies, to do away with the old man and cause him to be born anew to a fresh life.

Mithra-worship measured itself against other competing religions in Rome, and by the end of the first century A.D. was well ahead of all its Pagan rivals.

Judaism, which at one time bid fair to become the most popular of foreign creeds at Rome, ceased to be a vital force after the fall of Jerusalem; Cybelism was discredited and disgraced about the same time; there remained the religions of Isis, Mithra and Christ. The tender feminism of the first of this trilogy was unsuited to struggle against the third, the common enemy of all paganism; so Isis yielded place to Mithra, who by the end of the third century had gone a long way towards absorbing all pagan religions into his own. But it was a partial absorption only. This peculiar fact should be remembered: to follow Mithra it was not necessary to abandon every other creed, and his service was compatible with vows paid to different deities; in other words, a man might become a soldier of Mithra without renouncing the faith he previously held; so the worship of Mithra became a composite religion, receiving recruits from the most diverse sects and adapting itself to the most varied regions and spheres. So far as is known, neither language nor race nor belief in any exoteric divinity ever barred a candidate from participating in its mysteries.

The first followers of Mithra in Rome, like those of Christ,

came from the poor and lowly. A class of intelligentsia had arisen among the plebeians, consisting of skilled artificers and artists, to say nothing of the host of educated slaves maintained in patrician houses as secretaries, doctors, accountants, and so forth; these men had learnt discipline in the school of hard endeavour; they saw strength and beauty in the world, and wished to attain to its wisdom as well; a firm and unbending rule of morality had its attractions for such as these; and they accepted the doctrine of the immortality of the soul as an axiom. The religion of Mithra fulfilled all their requirements, and so his temples gradually increased in numbers.

His followers were not called upon to face persecution such as had attended other Oriental sects in Rome; partly, no doubt, because their creed was later in arriving there, but partly because its doctrines were less open to objection. The rites were free from that gross immorality which led to the suppression of Cybelism; it did not interfere with the everyday affairs of life; it permeated the army, so that no charge of bad citizenship could be brought against its devotees; and while it imposed a strict rule of life upon its followers, it sought no converts, nor gave rise to civil broils by attacking the practices and beliefs of other sects.

Soldiers were the first apostles of the new creed in Rome; and as time went on it grew increasingly popular in the army, indeed some of its degrees seem to have had an essentially military character. No wonder then that Mithra came to be regarded with great favour by the emperors; some of the best of them, and some of the worst also, took his vows.

Nero was initiated into the Mithraic mysteries; they flourished under Trajan's protection and favour; Hadrian forbade them, swayed by hearsay accounts of candidates subjected to cruel tests; with Commodus the emperor was again numbered among the initiated, and is reported to have soiled his hands by a murder during the ceremonies of his admission. In Aurelian's time the creed had reached the summit of its popularity, and was widely diffused over the Roman world. The pleasant valleys of the Rhine, the

plains of Belgium, the hills of Rumania, the garrison towns of Britain, all received its temples.

At this the time of his greatest glory Mithra became finally synonymous with the sun. He appeared as the *Deus Invictus*, the unconquered god, on the coinage of Constantine the Great, who is said to have composed a prayer that could be used by the followers of either Mithra or Christ and to have hesitated for a long time between the two guides before he finally inclined to the service of the latter.

Under the last pagan emperor the already discredited religion emerged in glory once more, when Julian chose Mithra to be the "Guardian of his soul." After his death Christianity would tolerate no other creed, and persecution ensued that would seem to have been entirely successful in extirpating the abhorred Mithraism. Its monuments were defaced, followers scattered, priests slain, and for greater shame buried in the profaned sanctuaries, so that these places might be for ever polluted by the presence of the dead. Finally, the *spelaea*, or underground temples, were filled in with earth. The creed was stamped out. So was all knowledge of its secret doctrines.

There are very few fragments in Greek and Latin writers referring to Mithra worship, for the Christians hated and feared this sect so much that they destroyed all evidences of their chief rival when possible; it is probable, too, that much of what they did write concerning the creed that supplanted theirs under Julian was either unjust or untrue. Owing to this lack of material knowledge, the creed of Mithra has sometimes been termed the "Freemasonry of Antiquity," and some ingenious writers, notably Lajard, have exercised their invention in reconstituting a complete system of rites and ceremonies for which there is hardly a tittle of evidence either written or graven.

This much is beyond doubt: the initiates were bound by an oath of secrecy; there were various degrees of initiation; the members were known to one another by certain signs; and membership was restricted to men. Because of the lack of written memorials, our chief source of information about the rites is the collection of monuments disinterred from the

spelaea; many of these which seem trivial or foolish to us may have been employed as allegories to teach some lesson neither ignoble nor unuseful in its purport.

Originally, in their purest form, the ceremonies of Mithra were celebrated on the tops of mountains, a suitable situation for sun-worship; then the place was changed to a natural cavern in the hill-side; finally, as in Europe generally, to an artificial cave underground, designed to look as if it had been formed by the operations of nature. The technical name for such temples was *spelaeum*, though *templum* was also in use. They have been discovered scattered over all the countries of Europe that knew the Roman occupation, and invariably conform to one ritual plan that does not change with the locality.

No rule about orientation was observed. All of them were supplied with a spring of water for lustral purposes; it will be remembered that a ceremonial washing is common to many religions. These *spelaea* were not large; the most capacious held only about forty worshippers, so that when a congregation grew too numerous the overflow members would acquire a *spelaeum* for themselves; this accounts for several being located in the same neighbourhood.

Entering by a portico the visitor found himself in a hall, known as the *Pronaos*, closed at the far end by a wall with a door that gave entrance to a smaller hall, the *Apparitorium*. This was the apartment where the candidates awaited their initiation. From this ante-room a flight of steps led downwards to the sanctuary, the *Crypta*. This subterranean room had a vaulted ceiling, and was built so as to resemble a cave. In some cases the roof was perforated to admit light and air.

Inside the entrance of the *crypta* a platform raised a few inches above the floor-level ran across the width of the room. The floor-space was divided longitudinally into three parts. Up the middle ran a passage about seven feet wide, known as the *cella* or choir, and flanking its sides two low walls of masonry, or *podia*, forming two benches about four feet wide, along which the initiates ranged themselves, resting one knee on the *podia*.

The central passage was reserved for the celebrants and ceremonial of initiation. In more than one instance a cemented receptacle has been found sunk into the floor of the *cella*, and was probably used to catch the blood of sacrificial animals. Chains, knives and other instruments for immolating the victims have also been discovered.

At the far end of the *crypta*, facing the entrance, the statue of Mithra slaying the bull was placed. This was concealed from the neophyte by either a veil or a wooden wainscoting, and the withdrawal of this screen was the culminating point of the initiatory ceremony. On each side of the main statue were two niches to contain the figures of the attendant torch-bearers, the *Dadophori*, known by the names of Cautes and Cautopates. Holy-water basins and lamps were placed around the walls.

The various articles found in the ruins of these temples afford a clue to the nature of the ceremonies; in addition to the knives and chains already mentioned are included vessels of different shapes and sizes for lustration and drinking purposes, lamps, bells, flutes, square urns, pedestals, keys, bones of mammalian quadrupeds and chickens.

Even human bones have been found, possibly those of some unfortunate priest of the cult murdered and interred in the sanctuary to render it a polluted spot. In this connexion, however, it must not be forgotten that one of the charges laid against the Mithraists by the Christians was that of ritual murder, so it will be as well to consider the possibility of such an explanation to account for the presence of these human bones. All contemporary records of the creed bear witness that it taught a noble morality to and demanded a high standard of conduct from its votaries; murder is incompatible with such things; and since dead bodies were buried in the *spelaea* by the Christians in token of desecration, this procedure indicates that the presence of a corpse in such a place was looked upon with horror by the initiated. This fact alone is a strong argument against the charge that ritual murder was ever committed there with their consent and approbation.

To complete the orthodox furniture of the *crypta* two altars

were placed in front of the statue of the Bull-slayer, one dedicated to the sun and the other to the moon. These altars and images were usually the gift of an initiate, and often bear inscriptions with the donor's name and the god's peculiar titles of honour.

Of the other statues found in these temples the commonest and most peculiar is that of the Mithraic Eon, or god of time. The form of this extraordinary deity shows that it had its origin in Assyria. It consists of a lion-headed man round whose body a serpent is coiled, while in many cases the signs of the zodiac appear within the folds of the reptile; the statue holds a key or keys in its hands. Various explanations of the symbolism of this figure have been suggested, the four elements, the course of the sun, etc.

Another sign found in the temples is the cross, referring to some star or planet; and no doubt its presence in the *crypta* helped to provoke the angry accusation of the Christians that the followers of Mithra perpetrated a parody of the rites and ceremonies of the only true religion, and that this had been delivered to them by the devil in person.

Images of the sun and moon were hardly ever lacking in the *crypta*. The moon usually appears as a female figure driving two horses yoked to a chariot; the sun as a youth driving four.

As for the statues of Mithra himself. He was always displayed wearing the *pileus*, the Phrygian bonnet, better known in the world now as the Cap of Liberty. Though the most general way of portraying him was as the bull-slayer, he also appeared at times as rising from the rock, as being borne away by the bull, and in various other phases of the legend.

The peculiar names whereby he was known to his followers were *Deus pileatus*, the god with the cap, *Deus invictus de petra natus*, the unconquered god born of the rock, and *Bouklopos*, the bull-stealer. But the term "unconquered" was applied to the planets as well as the sun, and is an obvious allusion to the triumph of these luminaries over death, typified by their diurnal setting.

Beyond doubt a deep symbolic meaning was attached to

all these statues and ritual paraphernalia. From Maternus comes the hint: "The Magians feign to adore a man killing a bull, but they explain this creed by stating it alludes to the power of light."

The best authorities agree that the rite consisted of seven degrees in an ascending scale. Lajard, whose statements must be accepted with caution, though he merits gratitude for having been the first to attempt a catalogue of extant Mithraic monuments, says there were twelve grades, but produces no evidence in support of this. As for the seven certain degrees, different savants arrange them in different orders; the one here given is that of Cumont who agrees with Goblet d'Alviella, two scholars whose diligence in collecting evidence is equalled by their critical faculty and love of truth. According to them the order of the grades was: (1) Crow (*Corax*); (2) Occult (*Cryptius*); (3) Soldier (*Miles*); (4) Lion (*Leo*); (5) Persian (*Perses*); (6) Courier of the Sun (*Heliodromus*); (7) Father (*Pater*). The *Pater Sacrorum* (Father of the sacrifices) was a superior class of the *Patres*; and the chief of the *Patres Sacrorum*, the supreme head of the order, was known as the *Pater Patrum* or *Pater Patratus*.

The first three grades probably did not confer full participation in the mysteries, only to be attained with that of Leo, when the initiate (*sacratu*s) advanced thus far.

The *sacрати* addressed one another as "brother," for they were instructed that co-initiates (*co-sacranei*) should cherish each other with a mutual affection, and that they were bound together more closely than by the ties of blood.

Admission (*acceptio*), into the lower grades could be obtained even by children; and this inferior initiation seems to have borne the name of *sacramentum* and entailed the usual obligation of secrecy. Perhaps Tertullian had this in his mind when complaining that the heathens had copied the Christian sacraments.¹

¹ The early Christian rites had probably borrowed from those of Mithra, not the other way about. Lustrations, ceremonial banquets, etc., appealed to the populace, whence the adoption of many pagan customs in the early Church, not all of which have survived. Some have held that Tertullian had himself been a soldier of Mithra; if so, his bitterness against his old associates has been often copied since then by other converts.

Julius Firmicus Maternus in *De erroribus profanarum religionum* asserts that the followers of Mithra had certain secret ways of recognizing each other. He says:

“I think I should not omit the signs and symbols which are current in these miserable sects in order to discern those who profess the like superstition. They have their pass-words and replies, which are taught them by the demon. There is a temple where those who seek to be admitted say: ‘I have eaten from off a drum; I have drunk from a cymbal; and I have learnt the secret of religion.’ . . .

• “There is another ceremony, when those of the Pagans who observe it recognize one another by pronouncing these words: ‘The God born of the rock’.”

The degree of Miles must have taught a very noble lesson of renunciation. The Soldier in this degree was offered a crown, which he was instructed to refuse with the reply, “Mithra is my crown!” Thenceforth he was not supposed to wear a crown of any kind at a banquet or other festivity, and if a military one should be offered, he must refuse it also, with the words, “It belongs to my god!”

Tertullian refers to this ceremony more than once, notably in a fine passage of *De Corona*, written about A.D. 201, where the unbending antagonist of paganism can scarcely forbear to express an admiration for his enemies. He is addressing his co-religionists.

“Blush ye, his fellow-soldiers, who shall now stand condemned, not by him, but even by any soldier of Mithra, who when he is enrolled in the cavern—the camp, in very truth, of darkness—when the crown is offered him (a sword being placed between him and it, as if in mimicry of martyrdom) and after placed upon his head, is then taught to put it aside with his hand, and remove it as low as his shoulder, saying, that Mithra is his crown. And thenceforth he never weareth a crown; and he hath this as a sign whereby he is approved, if at any time he is tried touching his oath as a soldier,¹ and he is forthwith believed to be a soldier of Mithra, if he throweth down his crown, and if he declareth that he hath it in his god. See we the

Or, perhaps better, “touching his religious ideas.”

wiles of the devil, who pretendeth to some of the ways of God, for this cause, that through the faithfulness of his own servants he may put us to shame and condemn us."

Another passage from Tertullian throws some light on the lustral and other ceremonies of the Mithraists. It is from his *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, of uncertain date, but prior to A.D. 220.

"He (the Devil) too baptizeth some, to wit, his own believing and faithful people; he promiseth a putting away of sin by washing; and if my memory serves me up to this time, Mithra there sealet his soldiers in their foreheads; he celebrateth also the oblation of bread, and introduceth a representation of the resurrection; and [the initiate] purchaseth a crown at the sword's point.¹ What shall we say also of his decreeing that the chief priest shall marry one only? He, too, hath his virgins; he, too, hath his self-restraining folk."

Tertullian here suggests that the followers of Mithra were sealed on the forehead with water; Cumont thinks that this ceremony was done with a hot iron. Honey was used instead of water as a lustration in the degrees of Leo and Perses. It is probable also, from the evidence of some disinterred bas-reliefs, that the Miles or lower grades were excluded from the ritual banquet, regarded by Tertullian as a parody of Christian rites.

The allusion to a "resurrection" in the passage quoted above must refer to the ceremony in one of the grades. It was a common feature in all the mysteries for the candidate to die symbolically and be born anew; but what form this simulacrum of death took in the mysteries of Mithra is not known, nor do we know in what grade it took place; possibly that of Leo was the summit to which the ordinary initiate could attain, certain it is that to become a Leo meant devoting oneself completely to the service of the god.

According to Goblet d'Alviella, the mysteries in their

¹ A corrupt passage: Mithra seems the subject of *et sub gladio redemit coronam*, which is nonsense.

later development taught that the human soul in order to gain the upper heaven where Ormuzd reigned had to traverse the seven spheres of the planets, using as passwords for each the secret formulas imparted in the mysteries.

The trials to which the neophyte was put during his initiation were celebrated for their severity, and rumours were current that several candidates had lost their lives during the ceremony. Hearsay and report in such cases are no sure guides.

The opinion that in its latest stages the worship of Mithra had become highly allegorical is borne out by a curious manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale, in Paris¹, supposed to contain a fragment of the liturgy used in one of the grades of Mithra. The Greek text written on papyrus is very mutilated, and interlarded with the hocus-pocus of a professional magician who had made use of it in his alchemistic rites. It consists largely of prayers to be repeated by the initiate at various stages of the ceremony, and what seem to be moral explanations of the objects shown to him. It seems to include the doctrine of transmigration of souls, and to impress on the neophyte that all ills attendant on humanity are negligible, because existence on earth is only given to prepare the soul for an ascent to heaven. Secrecy is enjoined more than once. Astronomical allusions are met with at every turn. The path of the neophyte seems to lead him to various obstacles which are passed by means of prayers and by the utterance of certain words. At the culminating point a god makes his appearance, "young, with fiery locks, in a white garment and scarlet mantle, with a circlet of fire." The fire-god is succeeded by the appearance of Mithra himself, exactly as we see him depicted on the monuments; and the ceremony seems to close with his accepting the neophyte as his follower in response to this prayer: "Hail, Lord, master of the water, hail, ruler of the earth, hail, prince of the spirit! Lord, born again I pass away being exalted; and being exalted I die; born by the birth that begetteth life I am released in death and pass on my way as thou

¹ Edited by Albrecht Dieterich, Leipzig, 1903.

hast ordained, as thou hast established the law and made the sacrament."

If this be indeed a veritable fragment of the liturgy used in the mysteries, while much remains inexplicable, enough is there to show that the religion which inspired it was not lacking in what has always appealed to the hearts and emotions of men.

Goblet d'Alviella has well summed up the demonstrable causes that led to the temporary success of Mithra worship. It satisfied the monotheistic tendencies of the day which saw in all the gods of mythology merely elements and personified forces. In Mithra an intercessor was provided between the supreme deity and man. The ascetic and militant morality of the religion withstood the licence of the times. Its eschatology promised a future life, an ardent desire for which is inherent in human nature. It did not interfere with the worship of other deities. The organization of its grades encouraged emulation in some, and perhaps flattered the vanity of others, while preserving a spirit of brotherhood throughout the order. Finally, by its symbolism it gave the neophyte hope of attaining by perseverance even more sublime truths, which should crown the mysterious secrets borrowed from the legendary wisdom of the east.

Why then did it fail in the struggle against Christianity?

The followers of the Galilean admitted women to a full participation in their rites, while the older religion excluded them; and women are speedily jealous of any secret they may not share. Their influence in matters religious would be hard to over-estimate, and that influence was cast against Mithra.

Christianity knew no toleration of other creeds, whereas Mithra-worship merely aimed at absorbing others within itself. The conviction that beliefs differing from one's own are wicked is very potent in begetting an earnestness that will carry one far on the road to temporal success; whereas a philosophic toleration, admirable in itself, is no such spur.

Imperial influence and court favour finally inclined towards Christianity; possibly because, owing to its militant

zeal for conversion, it was on the increase, while the nature of Mithra-worship, whose mysteries were secret, did not admit the use of recruiting-sergeants.

Finally, without entering into matters of the spirit, there can be no doubt that the victor was more suited to the heart of the masses. The fact that He had lived and died and suffered as man gave Him an appeal to humanity that made Him the real *Deus Invictus*.

A religion that jealously conceals its tenets, and seeks no converts, aims at embodying the chosen few of a nation alone; and while its influences may be great and noble in its own sphere, it will never appeal to the heart of the ordinary man, and its martyrs, seers, and prophets need expect no wider circle of recognition than is afforded by a very small state within a state; if the approbation of the chosen few is not without its value, let not those who seek it be unprepared to dispense with popular applause.

CHAPTER VI

THE Gnostics

THE sects of the Gnostics which flourished in the first three centuries of the Christian era have often been referred to as secret societies. This designation is hardly just. They all sprang originally from a branch of theology that aimed at discovering the true meaning of the written word in books accepted as sacred. They had their name from the Greek word *gnosis*, knowledge. In their development by a reformulation of Christianity in terms of the science and philosophy of their day they gained considerable influence in the early Church. Thus in Syria and the East generally they gave a Gnostic tinge to the Christian doctrine; while in the Greek and Roman worlds they formed esoteric schools which proved rival organizations to the Christian congregations. In the outcome they were forced to become sects apart from Christianity, a separation which destroyed their influence in the Church. This position had been reached by A.D. 310.

Thus they fall into the category of heresy rather than secret societies; but a few facts about their observances are worth noting, because these will explain the popular ideas concerning them.¹

All these Gnostic sects were dualistic, believing in a good and a bad principle balancing one another in the rule of the universe. The founder of all of them, according to the orthodox Christians, was Simon Magus.

"The fundamental doctrine held in common by all the chiefs of the Gnosis was that the visible creation was not the work of the Supreme Deity, but of the Demiurgus, a

¹ Vide F. C. Burkitt, D.D., *Church and Gnosis*, Cambridge, 1932, for the latest word on the Gnostics.

simple emanation, and several degrees removed from the Godhead."¹

In regard to the practices of religion, there was much diversity; some of the Gnostic sects inculcated an exaggerated asceticism, others permitted an unbridled licentiousness.

Various classifications have been attempted of their diversities, none of which concerns this study. As for their distribution: by the second century A.D. the Gnostics were very prominent in Syria, their most important branches being the followers of Saturninus of Antioch and the Ophites. The great Gnostic sects of the West were the Basilidians and Valentinians; Basilides, the founder of the former, flourished at Alexandria A.D. 105. He was by birth an Egyptian, and had embraced Christianity. The distinguishing tenet of his creed was that Christ did not die on the cross, but that His place was taken by Simon of Cyrene who suffered in His stead.

These Egyptian Gnostics were much addicted to the practice of magic, and among their amulets they had certain gems of a peculiar design called the Abraxas, a design so curious that it might well have belonged to a secret society practising the darkest of mysteries. The Abraxas gem represented the Supreme Being with five emanations. From the human body sprang two serpents, representing *nous* and *logos*, symbols of the inner senses and quickening understanding. The head was a cock's, symbol of *phronesis*, foresight and intelligence. The two arms held the symbols of *sophia* and *dynamis*, the shield of wisdom and the whip of power.

Abraxas was the name applied by the Gnostics to the Almighty, because "the letters forming Abraxas in Greek numeration would make up the number three hundred and sixty-five, that is the number of days in the revolution of the sun."

The inscriptions on these Abraxas gems frequently alluded to the Jewish or Christian religions in the words "Iao," "Sabaoth," "Adonai," etc. A serpent biting his own tail

¹ C. W. King, *The Gnostics and their Remains*, London, 1864.

to represent eternity was a favourite emblem for inscription on these talismans.¹

These names may refer to two curious Gnostic beliefs: that the soul after death had to pass, by means of watch-words, twelve crystal spheres that surrounded the earth; and that the "Dragon of Outer Darkness" lay in wait for unwary souls, but their escape was assured by knowledge of one of its twelve names. Such was the doctrine taught in the *Pistis Sophia*, the sacred book of the Gnostics.

The following passage from R. Payne Knight² indicates that some of the Gnostic sects had secret modes of recognition; but it must not be forgotten that this story is taken from one of the Fathers, and such a reporter is not likely to have enquired too closely into its truth since it was to the discredit of heretics:

"The Ophites and Gnostics employed secret signs of recognition. Epiphanius thus describes them: 'On the arrival of any stranger belonging to the same belief, they have a sign given by the man to the woman, and vice versa. In holding out the hand under pretence of saluting each other, they feel and tickle it in a peculiar manner underneath the palm, and so discover that the new-comer belongs to the same sect. Thereupon, however poor they may be, they serve up to him a sumptuous feast, with abundance of meats and wine. After they are well filled the entertainer rises and withdraws, leaving his wife behind with the command: 'Show thy charity to this our brother'."

This may have been true of such Gnostic sects as the Ophites, but cannot have been a doctrine common to all of them.

The Mandæans, a religious community found on the lower reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates, are the only surviving Gnostic sect. Their religion has some Christian elements "derived from Marcionite and Manichæan sources."³

¹ J. B. Deane, *The Worship of the Serpent*, London, 1833.

² *The Symbolic Language of Ancient Art and Mythology*, New York, 1876.

³ Burkitt, *Op. cit.*

CHAPTER VII

THE DRUIDS •

· IN discussing the Druids a careful distinction must be drawn between the evidence ancient writers furnish on the subject and the fantastical notions that have become popular about them within only the last couple of centuries. Judged by the reports of contemporaries the Druids seem to have possessed in their organization few if any of the characteristics of a secret society; but popular opinion has come to think of them with that connotation, and therefore some account of them is necessary in this book.

Almost all our knowledge of them is drawn from Gaul. They are seldom even mentioned by the ancient historians in connexion with Britain, two notable exceptions being Caesar's statement that their rule of life was evolved in Britain and transferred thence to Gaul, and Tacitus's account of the Druids at the battle in Anglesea. The account given of them, then, by Julius Caesar in *De Bello Gallico* must be referred to the continental variety that came under his own observation.

He tells us that in Gaul¹ two classes bore sway over the rest of the people, the Druids and the chiefs. The former were the priests who conducted divine worship, performed the sacrifices, public or private and determined all questions of ritual. They acted as teachers to the youth of the country, and as judges in civil and criminal matters. There was no appeal from their decrees. The chief authority amongst them was exercised by an arch-druid, who seems to have

¹ Those who wish to consult the original texts will find them collected in *The Druids* by T. D. Kendrick, London, 1927, a work of great scholarship whose guidance I here gratefully acknowledge.

borne office for life. His successor was elected by vote of the whole body of Druids, but sometimes by force of arms.

Once a year a general assembly of the Druids was held in the land of the Carnutes (near Chartres) in a consecrated place that was reckoned to be the centre of all Gaul, when judgment was given by them in lawsuits. The druidic system, Caesar adds, was believed to have arisen in Britain, and those who wished to study it accurately travelled into that island for the purpose.

Since the rank of a Druid exempted a man from war service or taxes, many young men sought to attain it by a training that lasted sometimes for as long a period as twenty years. Though they were acquainted with the art of writing, everything was taught orally, in verse, partly to train the memory, partly so that their wisdom might not become common property. Their chief doctrine was that of metempsychosis, a belief in which enhanced the valour of the nation. They also lectured their disciples on astronomy, geography and theology.

An important part of their religious duties consisted in offering sacrifices, human or otherwise. They burnt their human victims alive enclosed in a huge wicker-work frame representing a giant; while these were usually criminals, sometimes even innocent persons were immolated. Strabo, writing about sixty years later than Caesar, gives a different account of these human sacrifices in some details, and describes the Roman attitude towards them as antagonistic.

The foregoing account, the result of Caesar's nine years' acquaintance with the Gauls, may be accepted as tolerably accurate, even if the importance of the Druids was exaggerated in some respects by those from whom he obtained his information. It should not be forgotten that he was describing a religion that was confined to Gaul and the British Isles; for there were no Druids in Germany or Spain.

The testimony of other classic writers adds very little to Caesar's account. The earliest reference to the subject is a passage from a book by the Greek Sotion of Alexandria, written about 200 B.C. and now lost; according to this author, as quoted by Diogenes Laertius, the cardinal precepts

of the Druids were, to worship the gods, to do no evil, and to act as became a man.

The rank of Druid entailed no separation from the rest of the nation or desistance from civil or even warlike duties, if its holder did not wish to avail himself of legal exemption from the latter. This is illustrated by Cicero, who alludes to a Druid whom he knew, named Divitiacus, who was famous as a man of affairs in Gaul, and devoted much time to such secular duties. So even thus early in their history we may discard the idea of the Druids as practising an exclusive profession. Neither is there any reliable evidence that they were bound together by any strict discipline; because in the revolt of Vercingetorix in 52 B.C. the organization was not proof against inter-tribal jealousies, and became divided against itself, even as were those tribes; thus the order was tried, and failed as a spiritual means of binding a nation together. Strabo, writing about 8 B.C., speaks of the decline in the weight of their authority, and of the Romans as having suppressed the human sacrifices which had been an integral part of their rites. A complete suppression took place under the Emperor Claudius. Whether this aimed at an extinction of the Druids or not is hard to determine; if so, it failed. Pomponius Mela writing in the time of Claudius (A.D. 41-54) says that the Druids now refrain from the slaughter of victims, but still draw blood from those led to the altar; and he adds particulars about their other customs, which read as if copied from Caesar, and show the order in full existence, teaching its disciples the doctrine of the immortality of the soul in novitiates stretching through many years.

By the time of Pliny the Elder (A.D. 77) the Druids had been shorn of much of their importance in the nation as law-givers or teachers, but still carried on their priestly functions; and he describes their gathering of mistletoe and sacrificing of white oxen in the oak-groves. He also recounts charms and magic ceremonies that savour of shamanism, and accuses them of having practised cannibalism in the past. This mention of druidical ceremonies in a grove (to which Lucan also alludes in his *Pharsalia*) is worth noting,

because no suggestion is found that these rites were celebrated in any other place than a grove until the time of Aubrey at the close of the seventeenth century.

In Britain during the first century A.D. the profession of Druid would seem to have been negligible, if one may argue from the fact that Tacitus only mentions it once when describing the invasion of Anglesea by Suetonius Paulinus.

Later writers attributed the gift of divination to the Druids; but this testimony is not of much value. In one case, described by Vopiscus (*circa* 300), the Druidess who promised Diocletian the Imperial purple was keeper of a small inn, so there can have been little to choose between the profession of Druid then and that of a modern fortune-teller.

There was one country in which, by reason of its situation, Druidism might have been supposed to survive for a much longer period in its full prestige. But except for their teaching functions, which appear to have continued down to the time of the introduction of Christianity in the fifth century, the Druids of Ireland do not seem to have played any great part in the state. Most certainly they were not organized into one concrete order there. No such office as that of arch-druid is known to have existed in Ireland.

Some writers from a reading of the ancient texts have concluded that there were three classes of Druids: the bards, who practised the verse singing and composing with which their name is now connected; the vates who were concerned with divination, by many methods, including human sacrifices; the Druids proper, who were teachers, givers and administrators of the tribal laws. It will be enough to allude to this supposed division of the order without endeavouring to produce any concrete evidence of its accuracy.

This is all that we can learn about the Druids from those who were their contemporaries. As for the other traditions that have arisen from time to time concerning them, the curious inquirer can be safely commended to Mr. Kendrick's book alluded to earlier; but it is inadvisable to leave them without saying that nothing whatever is known

about their places of worship, save for the mention of groves by some early writers. Whether they made use of Stonehenge and other rude stone monuments is undetermined, though the probability is that they could hardly have failed to borrow the impressiveness of such edifices for their own purposes. Nothing, however, connects them with the origin of such erections as Stonehenge, and much seems to contradict the possibility. The traditions, local or otherwise, that ascribe all such monuments to the Druids seem to have no earlier origin than the eighteenth century, and to be based on the unfounded conjectures of antiquaries.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TEMPLARS

THE Templars were in no sense of the term a secret society, but so much literature has been composed about the alleged practices for which their order was ultimately dissolved that a short account of the facts of the case will not be out of place.

The Order of the Knights Templars was founded in the year 1117 with the object of guarding travellers on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. King Baldwin II gave them as quarters in Jerusalem part of a palace built on the site of the Temple of Solomon, hence they took the name of Templars, and the houses of their order in other cities became known as Temples. The rule of the order was drawn up by St. Bernard of Clairvaux. The life contemplated by the statutes was a very austere one, excluding all luxury and all worldly pleasure, and in addition the knights pledged themselves to chastity, poverty and obedience. The order consisted at first only of knights, but later serving-brethren (men-at-arms) and chaplains were also admitted. The headquarters were at Jerusalem; then in Acre, when the Christians were expelled from the former city in 1187; and their last home was in Cyprus, when driven from Palestine in 1291. The order became immensely popular, and in consequence immensely powerful and immensely rich. At its head stood the Grand Master, and under him various Masters or Preceptors managed the affairs of the different provinces.

With the accumulation of power, wealth and pride the Templars failed to retain their primitive strictness, and had become feared and envied and hated, while their great possessions were a challenge to the cupidity of all impetuous rulers. Philip the Fair, king of France, intending

to make their wealth his own, won over Pope Clement V to his purposes, and invited the Grand Master to visit him in Paris, bringing with him the accumulated money treasure of the Order.

The invitation having been accepted and the Grand Master, Jacques du Molay, having arrived bringing with him the war-funds of the Order, borne on three hundred sumpter mules, Philip proceeded to arrest him and the other French Templars in the year 1307. The ensuing trial of the Order was by Pope Clement's command extended in the year 1308 into all the countries of Christendom.

Proceedings were dragging out to an interminable length, so in 1312, before the trials were completed, the Pope exercised his spiritual authority and by Bull declared the Order dissolved. Such of its property as escaped royal or ecclesiastical cupidity was given to the Order of Knights Hospitallers.

In 1314 the last Grand Master and several more French Templars were burnt alive in Paris. In England and other countries where the Knights had been found guilty of charges of heresy, imprisonment was the worst penalty inflicted on the culprits; while in Spain no condemnation of an individual Templar, much less of the Order in general, was ever secured.

The charges brought against the Templars were sufficiently horrible, and the evidence obtained from witnesses under torture sufficiently confirmatory of those charges to blacken the character of the Order through many long centuries; but the consensus of modern opinion agrees in acquitting the Templars as a whole of having fallen into such a state of degeneracy as was alleged by their accusers, while in isolated cases judgment has to be reserved; for it is quite within the bounds of credibility that a local preceptor or Master may on occasions have become tainted with disgusting immorality or anti-Christian doctrines.

The following account of the charges laid against the Templars and the considerations that ought to weigh in forming our judgment are condensed from the learned analysis and summing up of a skilled lawyer who went

carefully through all the evidence of the trial of the Templars which is still preserved in Paris.¹

One circumstance laid the Order open to misrepresentation: the receptions of Templars were held in secret. No good reason why this should have been so was ever suggested at the trial—"their own unaccountable folly" was the best excuse that suggested itself to the champion of the Order in England. However, held in secret they were, usually before dawn, and guards were placed round the chapter-house to prevent the approach of unauthorised persons.

The ceremony itself was innocent enough. The candidate was warned beforehand of the life of hardship and self-denial that awaited him, and on signifying his willingness to proceed was admitted to the chapter-house. Here he had to reply to certain questions put to test his vocation; then he was sworn to poverty, chastity and obedience, and was invested with the mantle of a knight, after which he was kissed by the Receptor and the Chaplain. He had then to listen to a long homily, and to exchange his garments for the habit of the Order.

In the mouths of the accusers of the order this ceremony had degenerated into a denial of God, an insult offered to the Cross, an indecent kiss given to the Receptor, and the commission of a crime against nature.

In addition to these charges levelled by contemporaries a further count has since been preferred against the Templars of being Gnostics, but the first allusion to this is in a work by a learned German orientalist, Count von Hammer, written in 1818. The last charge need not detain us, for subsequent scholars have demonstrated that the Gnostic or Ophite heresy of which the Templars were accused had gone out of existence in Syria and the world eight hundred years before their Order was founded; while a glance at the doctrines of the Gnostics will be quite sufficient to show that their conception of the godhead was something quite opposed to the Unitarianism of the Saracens, who are supposed to have taught these pernicious doctrines to the Templars.

¹ E. J. Castle, K.C., *The Reception of a Templar*, 1902; *Enquiry into the charge of Gnosticism brought against the Freemasons and Templars*, 1906; *Proceedings against the Templars*, 1907. All printed in *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*.

The contemporary charges, however, cannot be dismissed so certainly. A great many witnesses swore to having personally denied God and to having been forced to spit upon the Cross during their ceremony of reception; that they swore what they did under torture and for the greater part retracted their evidence later must, however, be borne in mind. The prosecution contented itself in the main with securing a conviction on the charge of heresy, and did not press the counts dealing with depravity and idolatry; but on one point only does it seem to have proved its case, which was, that a custom had grown up in the Order for the Knights to confess their faults publicly in Chapter, whereupon the Master would declare them absolved, and this absolution was regarded by them as of equal virtue with that coming from a priest.

The secrecy with which the Templars had invested their proceedings bore its fruit at their trial, when a crowd of their enemies pressed forward to offer testimony based on gossip and hearsay. From such sources came assertions such as the story that Grand Master Bello-Joco being a prisoner of the Saracens obtained his liberty by promising that in all future receptions the Saviour should be denied; that the Templars had a brazen, double-faced head in their possession that replied to all questions; that they worshipped a cat which appeared at their meetings and addressed them, and so on and so forth. One of the mysterious heads mentioned at the trial was actually found and put in evidence, when it turned out to be the head of a beautiful woman in silver gilt, containing bones, in other words a reliquary, the relics being putatively those of one of the eleven thousand virgins of Cologne. This may perhaps be taken as an index to the reliability of the other gossip about the Templars' idolatry.

It only remains to emphasize that the Order of Knights Templars was thoroughly suppressed, and the stories which make them the progenitors of various societies, both respectable and the reverse, in existence to-day are comparatively recent inventions.

CHAPTER IX

THE ASSASSINS

THE Ismaeleeh or Ismaelis are a heretical sect of Moham-medans which arose about the year A.D. 863. Their prime heresy consisted in their belief that Ismael, the son of Djaafar, was the seventh Imam, an office which possessed the spiritual jurisdiction over Islam; but not only did their heresies increase in the course of the years, so did the additional heretical sects that sprang from them, such as the Karmathians in the ninth century, and at the close of the eleventh one much more famous. This was the sect known to Arab historians as the Eastern Ismaeleeh and to the Christian as the Assassins.

The founder of this movement was Hassan-ben-Sabah, a native of Khorassan, who was educated at a famous school of Nishapur with Omar Khayyám, the astronomer poet, and Nizam-ul-mulk, who subsequently became Grand Vizier. The story is well known to every reader of Edward FitzGerald's translation of the *Rubaiyat* how the three schoolfellows promised to help one another when any one of them should be in a position so to do. Nizam-ul-mulk faithfully fulfilled his promise, and obtained employment for Hassan under the Caliph Melekshah, but his conduct led to his disgrace and exile to Egypt. Here he became an Ismaeli, and was at first welcomed at the court in Cairo as a convert and because of his general ability, until this ability involved him in such a network of intrigue that he was obliged once more to become a fugitive.

Hassan then returned to Persia, and in the year 1090 gained possession by force and stratagem of the strong castle of Alamut, in the north of that country. By pretending to be the Huddjah, or incarnation of the Imam, he

collected followers from among the Ismaelis and other heretical sects. His power rapidly grew, and he seized castle after castle in Persia, choosing in preference those in hilly districts, whence his subsequent title of Old Man of the Mountain (*Sheikh al Jebal*). He never assumed the dignity of king or prince, nor did his successors. He also got a footing in Syria about the time that the Crusaders were appearing there; and at the end of the century held ten castles in the Ansariyeh Mountains north of the Lebanon range. Though he never left Alamut throughout his whole life, and but seldom appeared in public even there,¹ from Syria to Kuhistan his power was felt and feared.

His weapon was assassination. His instruments the devoted followers whom he bound to his purpose by fanaticism and by the hypnotic power of a drug, hashish (Indian hemp), whence the word assassin.

The founder of the sect of Assassins died in the year 1124 aged about ninety, and was succeeded in the chieftdom by his general, Kia Busurgomid, for Hassan had killed both his own sons. The succession of the children of Kia Busurgomid till the extinction of the sect "is one awful tale of suspicion and murder on the part of the father, or parricide on the part of the son. While they caused the blood of others to flow like water, they did not spare that of their nearest relations."² The Assassins of Persia were finally suppressed as an organized body in 1257, and their last Grand Master put to death. In Syria the Egyptian Sultan Beybars ultimately subdued them and took all their castles in 1272.

Their residence in Syria made the Assassins the near neighbours of the Knights Templars, who possessed many castles to the south of the Ansariyeh Mountains, and proved very troublesome neighbours. Thus when the Assassins in 1152 murdered Raymond I. Prince of Tripoli, in the church of the city of Tartus, the Templars invaded and ravaged their territory, until they were forced to agree to pay a yearly tribute of 2,000 pieces of gold. The Templars seem

¹ Silvestre de Sacy, *La dynastie des Assassins*, 1818.

² Samuel Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 1860.

to have kept the upper hand, for William of Tyre, the historian of the Crusades, tells of an embassy sent to the King of Jerusalem by the Assassins about 1173, promising to become Christians if the tribute annually paid to the Templars were abolished; and he goes on to say that the ambassador was slain on his journey home by a Templar, who was protected by the Grand Master and Order who had heard of the suggested treaty and wished to wreck it.

Other noteworthy contemporary references depict them as heretics from Islam, eaters of hashish (Edrisi, 1154); that their Sheikh lives in the city of Kadmoos, and exacts implicit obedience from them, "whether it be a matter of life or death" (Benjamin of Tudela, 1163); that they exceed 40,000 in number, and have "a certain hidden law, which it is not lawful for anyone to reveal, except to their children when they come to adult age," and that if any son were to reveal the law to his mother he would be killed without mercy (Jacob de Vitriaco, 1213); while the Spanish Arab Ibn-Djubair, writing in 1183, says, "in the mountains behind Lebanon are castles of the impious Ismaelech, a sect who have seceded from Islam, and claimed divinity for a certain man-devil, who has deceived them by vanities and false appearances, so that they have taken him as a god and worship him, and give their lives for him; and they have arrived at such a pitch of obedience as to throw themselves down from a precipice at his command."¹

This last report refers, of course, to the well-known story first told by Marco Polo, that Assassins were quite ready to commit suicide at the command of their Sheikh, thinking that they would thereby obtain paradise. Hassan, it is said, prepared a delightful valley near his fastness, to which neophytes would be conveyed while unconscious from the effects of bhang, and here they would spend several days in sensual delights, when having been drugged again and carried back to the Sheikh he would inform them that they had been granted a foretaste of the paradise that would be theirs after death. Hence his ascendancy over his followers. It seems hard to credit that such a device should

¹ These references quoted from Lyde, *Op. cit.*

have been employed for well nigh two centuries without becoming known to, at least, the seniors of the Order; so it may be presumed that the official assassinations, and they were many, had to be carried out by those poor dupes who had not risen very high in this hierarchy of crime.

Von Hammer has given an account of the grades of importance among the Assassins, amounting to seven in all: the Sheikh, the Grand Master; the Dai-il-Kebeer, the Grand Recruiters, his lieutenants in the three provinces Gebal, Syria, and Kuhistan; the Dais, religious nuncios and political emissaries; the Rafeek, Fellows of the Order; the Fedavee, guards, warriors and murderers; the Lasik, lay brethren; and lastly, the profane.

There was also, according to the same author, a seven-fold, gradation in the spiritual hierarchy, according to the doctrines of the Ismaelis, namely: (1) the divinely appointed Imam; (2) the Huddjah, the proof designated by him; (3) the Dthoo Massah, who received instructions from the Huddjah; (4) the Dais or missionaries; (5) the Madthomeem, who were admitted to the solemn promise of an oath; (6) the Umhellabeeh, who sought out subjects fit for conversion; (7) the Moomeneen, the believers. In this hierarchy the Sheikh represented the Huddjah, and so on in a descending scale.

For the Dais or missionaries a particular rule of conduct was imposed, consisting of seven points. By the first they were taught to gain a knowledge of mankind; by the second, to win over candidates by flattering their inclinations and passions; in the third, to involve them in a maze of scruples and uncertainty about the exact meaning of the Koran; in the fourth, to bind the acolyte by oath to inviolable silence and submission; in the fifth, to fire him by examples of great and powerful men who professed the tenets of the sect; in the sixth, to recapitulate all that had preceded in order to confirm and strengthen the learner's faith; and after all this came, in the seventh place, the allegorical interpretation as opposed to the literal sense, in consequence of which "articles of faith and duty became mere allegories, the external form merely contingent, the inner sense alone

essential; the observance or non-observance of religious ordinances and moral laws equally indifferent; consequently all was doubtful and nothing prohibited.”¹

It should be noted that the number seven which runs through all this code was sacred in the Ismaeli sect, and the matter will be referred to again when treating of the rise of that Islamic heresy.²

The modern descendants of the Assassins in Syria, the Ismaelis, have retained little or nothing of all this theological subtlety, if the accounts of modern travellers are to be credited, and have sunk very low in belief and in practice too. They are said to worship the *pudendum muliebre*, and to mix on certain days of the year in promiscuous debauchery. “They seem to use what they worship as a symbol of Mother Earth, and are reported to say, ‘From it we came, and to it we return.’”³ From which, if true, one might argue a survival of the Syrian nature worship of the Great Mother.

The tenets of the Assassins while in the noon of their power is a matter of some importance, because the theory is still widely held that they taught their doctrines to the Templars, and that the suppression of the latter was due to the corruption introduced into their ranks from this source. The question has been discussed in the chapter on the Templars, and it will be enough to point out here one noteworthy fact. While the Templars and Assassins were undoubtedly near neighbours, and may have been supposed to have learnt a good deal about one another’s ceremonies, there is nothing in the practices of the Assassins analogous to the general charges laid against the Templars at their prosecution. Whether or not the latter were guilty of the crimes laid to their charge, there is no scintilla of proof that such crimes were likely to be learnt from the followers of Hassan, from whom they took life or gold, as occasion served, but hardly a theological system, itself intrinsecated, but yet deeper enmeshed in the complexities of a strange and difficult language.

¹ Von Hammer, *History of the Assassins*, Wood’s translation.

² Vide p. 331.

³ Lyde, *Op. cit.*

CHAPTER X

THE VEHMGERICHT

THE Vehmgericht (the court of the *Veme*) is the name given to the tribunals that arose about the middle of the thirteenth century in Westphalia during the epoch of tumult and licence which followed the outlawry of Henry the Lion.¹ The Emperor lacked the ability to enforce his authority on the wide extent of territory lying between the Rhine and Weser, bounded on the north by Friesland and to the south by the mountains of Hesse, all of which was then known as Westphalia; as a consequence, malefactors of every description, from petty feudal barons to bands of roaming thieves, began to harry the peaceful inhabitants, and to curtail their activities the Vehm came into existence as a means of self-help and rough and ready justice devised by the law-abiding. Since it arose in this way by general consent of the governed, it enjoyed popular support in its early days; nor did some of its most ardent supporters hesitate to claim for it a greater antiquity than history would warrant by ascribing its original institution to the Emperor Charlemagne in the eighth century.

There is much uncertainty about the true meaning of the name. Leibnitz derived Fehm or Vehm from *fama*, as the law founded on common fame, common law as we have it in England. Fehm also meant something set apart. A modern scholar has defined Vehm as meaning fellowship or community.² Thus the real meaning remains as

¹ Duke of Saxony and Bavaria and head of the Guelphs. He was the most powerful noble in Germany. Placed under the ban of the empire by Frederick I in 1180, he remained so till 1192, when it was removed by Henry VI.

² Theodor Lindner, *Die Veme*, Munster, 1888. *Genossenschaft* and *Gemeinschaft* are the words he uses.

mysterious as ever were the proceedings of the tribunal itself.¹

These, however, were not nearly so mysterious or romantic as they have been described in Scott's *Anne of Geierstein*. The meetings of the Vehm usually took place in the open air, and at a well-known rendezvous. At Nordkirchen the court was held in a churchyard; at Dortmund in the market-place of the town. The usual time for its sittings was in the morning, not at night.

These courts were known by different names: Fehmding (Assembly of the Vehm), Freistuhl (Free Chair), Heimliches Gericht (Secret Court), Heimliches Acht (Secret Tribunal)², Heimliches Beschlossenes Acht (Secret Closed Tribunal), and Verbotene Acht (Forbidden Tribunal), all of which are undoubtedly awe-inspiring titles.

However, it had even better means of inspiring awe, chief of which was the number of persons in every rank of life who were bound by oath either to administer its code or to enforce its decrees. These oath-bound adherents were called Die Wissenden, the Knowing Ones, and are said to have numbered upwards of 100,000 persons. A form of oath preserved in writing at Dortmund is said to be that by which these supporters of the Vehm bound themselves to uphold it invoking dreadful penalties on themselves in case of failure.

It has been translated as follows :

“I swear by my sacred honour that I will hold and conceal the secrets of the Holy Vehm
 From sun and from moon,
 From man and from woman,
 From wife and from child,
 From village and from field,
 From grass and from beast,
 From great and from small,

¹ The word first occurs in connexion with a Vimenote at Münster in 1229. In 1251 a document dealing with the town Brilon mentions the “secret court vulgarly called Vehm or Freiding”—“illud occultum iudicium quod vulgariter Vehma seu vridinch appellari consuevit.” Reinhold Brode, *Freigrafenschaft und Vehm*, Hanover, 1886.

² The literal meaning of Acht in M.H.G. is outlawry.

Except from the man
 Who the Holy Vehm serve can,
 And that I'll leave nothing undone
 For love or for fear,
 For garment or gift,
 For silver or gold,
 Nor for any wife's scold."¹

Apparently anyone in any station of life could be sworn in as an upholder of the tribunal, provided he were a free man; but there were different ways in which he might be called upon to serve. Highest in rank were the Stuhlherren, who were the Judges; these were few in number. Then came the Freischöffen, the Deputy Judges. Lastly, the Frohnboten, the officers of the court who executed its decrees; so that the Freischöffen and Frohnboten may be said to have "combined the various functions of jurors, constables, inquisitors, detectives and executioners."²

On the evidence of some Vehmich writings that have been preserved at Herford, in Westphalia, those affiliated to the service of the Veme are said to have possessed a secret language; and the initial letters S S S G G occurring in these writings have been explained as Stock, Stein, Strick, Gras, Grein—Stick, Stone, Halter, Grass, Quarrel. While it would be unwise either to accept this as a true interpretation, or the letters themselves as a proof of the theory advanced, there would after all be nothing very surprising in finding that the adherents of the Veme had developed their own jargon to describe the everyday operations of their calling, much as the learned professions of to-day still continue to do.³

The tribunals possessed their written codes which were guarded from falling into the hands of unauthorized persons, who rendered themselves liable to punishment by any attempt to pry into the secrets. This can have held good only in the early days of the Veme, because in its later

¹ Pollard Urquhart, *The Vehmgericht*, 1868.

² Urquhart, *Op. cit.*

³ It is said that one of their signs of recognition was when sitting at table to turn the handles of their knives towards the dish and the points towards themselves.

stages the code was revised from time to time by the emperors, which would argue a general promulgation of its provisions; moreover, it would be hard to presume an obedience to laws and regulations knowledge of which was forbidden to the people called upon to observe them. No Vehmic manuscript of an earlier date than the fifteenth century has been preserved.

The courts were either open to the public, when they were known as *Offenbare Dinge*, or reserved only for those who were oath-bound to the *Veme*, when the gathering was known as a *Heimliche Acht*, Secret Tribunal. It is said that if an uninitiated intruder were discovered in such a court he was liable to be hanged on the spot.

According to Lindner,¹ the only penalty that the *Veme* was competent to inflict was death, and this in only one mode, by hanging on the nearest tree.² That was the usual medieval penalty for theft, and gives an index towards the particular class of crime the *Veme* in its original form had aimed at suppressing. As it is, conflicting statements have been made about the type of crimes of which the *Veme* took cognizance. One version runs that they concerned themselves with all offences against the Christian faith and the Ten Commandments³; but quite apart from the improbability of the clergy's allowing such offences to be dealt with outside of the ecclesiastical courts, the penalty of hanging would in many instances have been too draconian even for medieval ideas. Moreover, the same authority tells us that certain classes of persons were exempted from the jurisdiction of the *Veme*, such as children, women, Jews, heathens and the higher nobility. The two assertions seem mutually destructive, unless we assume, which is very probably the case, that the jurisdiction and powers of the *Veme* fluctuated from period to period, and what held good for one epoch had become a dead-letter in the next.

¹ *Op. cit.*

² According to Brode, the *Vehm* was the special court of Freemen in Westphalia long before it became the recognised criminal court, this is at variance with Lindner's statement about only one penalty.

³ C. W. Eckethorn, *Secret Societies*, London, 1897.

The criminal procedure began with an accusation laid by a Freischöffe in one of the courts, which thereupon issued a summons to the accused to appear before an open court if he were unconnected with the Veme, but before a secret court if bound to them by oath. It is easy to see the reason for this: a malefactor accused of infringing the code that he had sworn to uphold was also a traitor, and evidence of his delinquency in the latter capacity could be more freely given when only initiates were present.

Three separate summonses were sent to give the accused the opportunity of appearing. Six weeks and three days were allowed for answering each of them; and various methods of serving the notices had become prescribed by custom.

If the accused did not appear before the court in answer to any of these citations, he was condemned *in contumaciam*; but not before the accuser had produced seven witnesses to swear to his own good reputation as a truthful person. Then the Imperial Ban was pronounced against the absent malefactor.

“The sentence was one of outlawry, degradation and death—his neck was condemned to the halter, and his body to the birds and wild beasts; his goods and estates were declared forfeited, his wife a widow, and his children orphans.”¹

There is no doubt, however, that a person condemned *in contumaciam* became Fehmbar, that is as much as to say an outlaw for supporters of the Veme, and any three of them who could lay hands on him were at liberty to do justice by hanging him on the nearest tree. It is probable that in cases of notorious crimes a posse of special constables would be formed to hunt down the missing felon; but we must not exaggerate such procedure into a picture of every oath-bound supporter of the Veme abandoning all his private concerns in order to join in the hue and cry. The accuser

¹Heckethorn, *Op. cit.* This statement of the case must be accepted with caution. The only penalty inflicted by the Veme was hanging; and at its inception, at all events, it had no power to pronounce the Imperial Ban, nor would the latter have caused a Westphalian gangster a moment's uneasiness in a country where the Emperor's writ did not run.

was given a sealed document to be shown when claiming the assistance of fellow-members in executing the judgment of the court; but this must not be construed as a kind of medieval *Police News* circulated to warn all the initiated that they were to hang So-and-so, if they could lay hands on him. However, to give any such malefactor warning that danger was approaching him from the direction of the Veme was to render oneself liable to instant hanging on the nearest tree.

If the accused person decided to put in an appearance and stand his trial before the Vehmgericht, he had the right to produce thirty witnesses to prove his innocence; while the accuser might produce an equal number to prove the contrary. Both sides had the right to be represented by their lawyers. In case of conviction a right of appeal lay to the Secret Tribunal, which was usually held at Dortmund.

While the trial was proceeding a naked sword and a withy halter lay on the table before the judge, symbolizing perhaps his powers of administering justice and the penalty entailed by guilt. An analogous piece of symbolism was made use of in the case of an execution by order of the Veme, when a knife was stuck in the tree on which the criminal had been hanged, to show by whose authority his life had been taken.

When rough and ready justice was thus surrounded by the emblems of sudden death, it is little wonder that the Veme came to be more dreaded than the Emperor. It is on record that on one occasion it even dared to claim jurisdiction over the Emperor Frederick III himself, when in the year 1470 three of the Stuhlherren summoned him and his Chancellor to appear before them—of course, with as good a prospect of being obeyed as had Owen Glendower when he called spirits from the vasty deep. Still the incident shows that the right of citation had begun to be misused; the Veme had degenerated owing to this abuse, and also because of the improper character of some of its officials.

Reforms took place from time to time, the most notable being known as the Arensberg Reformation and the Osnaburg Regulations, which removed some of the abuses

and modified the power of the tribunals.¹ The civil institutions of the Emperors Maximilian and Charles V, however, finally rendered all further proceedings of the Veme quite unnecessary. It lingered on all the same. The last regular Veme court was held in Celle in 1568; but shadowy jurisdiction and authority continued to be exercised spasmodically, and it was not until legislation by the French invaders in 1811 abolished the last free court at Gemen in Münster that the curious institution can be said to have really passed out of existencce.

¹ In the year 1371 the Emperor Karl IV granted a code of laws to Westphalia, and by this code the Vehm courts were recognised, and the punishment of evil-doers handed over to them. According to Brode, *op. cit.*, this date can be taken as marking the establishment of the power of the Vehm in fixed channels, all its proceedings prior to this having been evolutionary.

CHAPTER XI

THE STEINMETZEN

THE Gild of the German stonemasons or Steinmetzen which became immensely powerful in the Middle Ages, while primarily a trade society possessed some features that seem to have made it definitely secret.

The exact significance of the German name Steinmetzen is doubtful; *stein* means stone, but for *metzen* derivations are offered connecting it with either *meitzel*, a chisel or *messen*, to measure. Stonemason or stonecutter is a close enough translation.

Various writers culminating with Fallou in Germany, and G. F. Fort in America, wove a legend round the Steinmetzen constituting them the ancestors of the Freemasons of England, but it will be enough to say here that this airy fabric was built of hypothesis and assertion on a base of fable, and was demolished once and for all by the criticisms of the English scholars Speth and Gould. The real facts about the Steinmetzen are, however, worth being recounted, for they form an interesting parallel to the customs of the French Compagnonnage.

The gild system arose in Germany in the eleventh century, and by the beginning of the thirteenth had become so strong that two successive Emperors decreed the total suppression of all such bodies. The gilds, however, did not dissolve themselves, and in the last quarter of the thirteenth century the Emperor Rudolf, acting on the principle that what cannot be cured must be endured, reinstated the gilds in all their former privileges.

In most medieval German cities existed what was known as the High or Patrician Gild, recruited from descendants

of the original freeholders, a very close corporation which ruled the city. As a rule such a gild refused to admit workmen; so the craft trades in self-defence had to form their own gilds to combat the Patricians. Probably in the twelfth century arose the Gild of the Steinmetzen. It is said to have originated among skilled masons who had been employed by the convents and found that these were no longer supplying them with sufficient work, and who therefore migrated to the great cities, joined forces with the resident masons there, and proceeded to evolve a code of government for the whole of their craft throughout Germany.

The earliest copy of their laws dates only from 1459, but had probably been developing through well-nigh two centuries. In this code the Lodge of Strassburg is named as the supreme court of appeal in any question about the laws, but no indication is given of why this privilege was granted.¹ The German Lodges paid a yearly tribute to this Head Lodge, and even after Strassburg became French territory in 1681 the tribute continued to be paid for some years; and as late as 1760 we find Strassburg claiming the customary contribution from the Rochlitz Lodge.

Later certain territory was put under subjection to the workmaster of St. Stephen in Vienna; other territory to the Lodge at Cologne; while the Lodge at Zurich had authority over Switzerland. All these districts were, however, merely convenient divisions of the one great fraternity.

From the original ordinances and a later version drawn up at Torgau, in Saxony, in 1462 many curious customs of the medieval workmen are discoverable.

If a Master had a complaint against another Master, a Fellow against a Fellow, etc., "whatever Master or Fellow is concerned therein" was to give notice to the Masters who held the book of the regulations, which it was forbidden to copy. "The Masters who are informed thereof shall hear both parties, and set a day when they will hear the cause. And meanwhile before the fixed or appointed day no Fellow shall avoid the Master, nor Master the Fellow,

¹ The meeting which revised the code of 1459 was held at Strassburg, so local Steinmetzen may have been in the majority.

but render services mutually until the hour when the matter is heard and settled."

The weekly subscription from each Fellow was about one penny. The subscriptions appear to have been collected by the Masters, who rendered an account of them yearly to the superior of a district. This money was to be employed for the relief of the poor and sick members.

When a member fell on evil days, he was enabled to borrow money from this benevolent fund; but on his recovery from illness or on his obtaining work, he was obliged to refund the sum borrowed.

The regulation regarding the appointment of a warden discloses a point of ritual observance.

"A Master shall appoint his Warden, Master and Warden being both present; and he shall appoint no Warden unless he be able thereto, *i.e. capable of acting in that office*, so that the craftsmen and he be supplied. He shall impress him with the Wardenship and receive his oath to the saints on square and gauge to prevent harm to the building or the Master."

The apprentice out of his indentures, and setting forth on his Wanderjahre as a journeyman was to be provided by the Master with a "Mark," apparently a particular symbol to be used by him henceforth in signing his work.

There was a fixed form of address to be used by a traveling Brother when entering a Lodge where he was not known¹

"God greet ye, God guide ye, God reward ye, ye honourable overmaster, warden, and trusty fellows!" and the Master or Warden shall thank him, that he may know who is the superior in the Lodge. Then shall the fellow address himself to him and say, 'The Master So-and-so bids me greet you worthily'; and he shall go to the fellows from one to the other and greet each in a friendly manner, even as he greeted the superior. And then shall they all, Master and Warden and Fellows, pledge him as is the custom . . . but not to him whom they hold to be no true man."

¹ F. J. Gould, *History of Freemasonry*, 1883.

The Stonemasons were divided, like all other guilds, into masters, fellows and apprentices, the last class being of the craft but not of the brotherhood. The usual term of indentures was five years. When he was out of his indentures the apprentice was received as a fellow in the assembled Lodge, where he took a solemn obligation "on his truth and honour in lieu of oath" under the penalty of being expelled the craft, that he would be a true, loyal and obedient mason, that he would not change his distinctive mark, that he would not disclose the Greeting or Grip (*Schenck*) to any non-mason, and that he would write nothing about the secrets of the fraternity. Thereupon the methods of recognition were made known to him.

These consisted in certain words, a form of greeting to be used, and the *Schenck* mentioned above. This might mean instead of grip a prescribed movement of hand and cup when drinking a health; but German tradition accords a grip to the Steinmetzen, and it may well have existed.

Several words might have to be remembered.

In many parts of Germany there was a distinction of Operative Masons into Wortmaurer and Schriftmaurer.¹ The Wortmaurer had no other proof to give of their having been regularly brought up to the trade of builders, but the word and signs; the Schriftmaurer had written indentures to show. Up to the end of the eighteenth century there were extant and in force borough laws enjoining the masters to give employment to journeymen who had the proper words and signs. It appears that some cities had more extensive privileges in this respect than others. The word given at Wetzlar, the seat of the great council of revision for the empire, entitled the possessor to work over the whole empire. We may infer, says one authority, that a master gave a word and token for each year's progress of his apprentice. He gave the word of the incorporated Imperial city or borough on which he depended, and also a word peculiar to himself, by which all his own pupils could recognise each other. This mode of recognition was probably the only means of

Literally, "word-masons" and "writing-masons."

proof in old times, while writing was confined to a very small part of the community.¹

The particular work over which the Steinmetzen claimed a monopoly was known in the old German as "Masswerke oder Auszuge aus dem Grund," and the phrase has often been misunderstood. The real meanings are "proportioned work of elevation from a given ground-plan." The Steinmetzen specialized in the elaborate carving of stone, and the preparation of designs for such work; thus they looked upon themselves, with justice, as being a cut above the ordinary stonemason who could prepare a rough or smooth ashlar.

As with most craft guilds the Steinmetzen could indulge in some rough horse-play on occasions. If a Fellow or Apprentice had in the course of his employment utterly spoilt a piece of stone, it was hoisted on a litter and carried in solemn procession to the refuse heap, known as the Beinhaus, charnel-house, and thrown among the rubbish. As chief mourner followed the unlucky wight who had botched his work, and behind him all his comrades. This ceremony over, the procession returned to the Lodge, and the delinquent was soundly flogged with the flat plumb rules. It was to put a stop to this bad old custom that the ordinances of 1563 enjoined: "And in future in no Lodge, no matter for what cause, shall anyone be beaten without the knowledge and consent of the workmaster."

The Steinmetzen fell from their high estate owing to the Reformation and Thirty Years' War, but still carried on into the eighteenth century. Though in 1731 an Imperial edict forbade all brotherhoods of journeymen and all oaths of secrecy, yet these usages continued in practice for more than another century. They may even have lingered on in isolated German masons' guilds down to our own times.

It should be noted in conclusion that the Steinmetzen were far from being the only German guild to have a general bond of union, but their system of centralization has drawn more attention than has been bestowed on the other fraternities. Their objects were much the same as those of any

¹ John Robison, *Proofs of a Conspiracy*, etc., 1798.

other gild; to provide work, relief, and help for their members, and to secure a monopoly of their particular trade for them. Finally, though there were many outward resemblances between the customs of the German Steinmetzen and the English Freemasons, when English Speculative Freemasonry was brought into Germany early in the eighteenth century it was not then recognised by anyone as having any connection with the indigenous rites of the Steinmetzen. Had there been any correspondence between the esoteric workings of the two systems, some contemporary would most assuredly have drawn attention to the fact.

CHAPTER XII

THE FRENCH COMPAGNONNAGE

CRAFT guilds existed in France from a very early period and may in some cases have derived from their Roman predecessors.¹ In details they developed along different lines from similar English institutions, though they possessed alike the three grades of Apprentice, Fellow or Compagnon, and Master. Under the French system the Master might take as many servants or employees as he liked, provided he did not instruct them in the mystery; the consequence was that the journeyman or Compagnon grew to be a class apart, with no hope of ever rising to become a Master, which was reserved for the privileged classes of Apprentices and Masters' kinsfolk; and this state of affairs lasted till after the Revolution. As was only to be expected in the circumstances, the Compagnons instituted at a very early date an association for self-help. The four crafts of stone-cutter, locksmith, joiner, and carpenter formed the Compagnonnage, and developed in detail the system known as the Tour de France. Other trades joined the society later, and it ultimately included nearly all of them. It was an association of journeymen only; "and the criterion of membership was their right to make the Tour de France, a circuit comprising most of the important towns south of Paris, and Paris was also included in it. Only the workmen of trades recognised as belonging to the association were permitted to make this circuit, and any attempt on

¹ *Vide* the admirable article by Lionel Vibert on *The Compagnonnage*, in A.Q.C., xxxiii, p. 191, *et seq.* It contains a complete summary of the facts about this society. The reader in search of more details may be confidently and gratefully referred to it.

the part of unauthorized trades, or of unauthorized individuals, to associate themselves with it was liable to be resisted with actual violence." There was no system of apprenticeship; but a lad might join one of the trades as a novice, and even make the tour¹ in that capacity, and when he had acquired sufficient skill in his craft might claim to be admitted a Compagnon on paying the prescribed fees and going through the prescribed rites.

For the Compagnonnage had early developed a ritual containing a legend and imparting secret modes of recognition.

This was inevitable, for great advantages attached to membership. In every town there existed a local centre where the travelling Compagnon could apply for work, relief, and brotherly assistance, but the applicant had first of all to prove his *bona fides*. The local officers of the society were known as the Premier-en-ville, the Second-en-ville, and the Rouleur, or agent, whose business was to find employment for applicants and act as secretary. The landlady at whose house the Compagnon stayed was known as his Mère, and the local society was careful to see that he had discharged his debt to this mother before he was allowed to leave the town on further travels.

In spite of many laws passed to suppress such associations, the society continued to exist throughout the Middle Ages down to our own times.

These Tours were enlivened by constant quarrels and pitched battles between the three great divisions of the regular Compagnonnage as well as with other associations of journeymen which the former regarded upon as surreptitious and irregular and discountenanced in every possible way. The legendary date of the origin of these discords in the society is 1401, but no direct evidence of them is available prior to 1655, when an ecclesiastical censure on

¹ The scope of the Tour probably varied from time to time. Vibert, *Op. cit.*, has pointed out that before 1453 Gascony and Guienne cannot have been included, since they were English provinces. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the circuit was about 1,500 miles, which had to be made on foot; but the Compagnon might take his own time about it; sometimes over four years were spent in this way.

the society was published by the Sorbonne, whereupon the cordwainers retired from it in a body, and did not return to it till two centuries later.

The Compagnonnage recognizes three original founders, King Solomon, Maître Jacques, and Maître or Père Soubise, all of whom met at the building of the Temple. The recognition of one of these founders in particular formed the three Devoirs¹, or divisions to which all the original trades in the Compagnonnage were affiliated.

“The Compagnonnage recognizes three principal founders; it forms many Devoirs and is divided into many Societies. The masons, named the Compagnons Étrangers, otherwise called Loups, the joiners and locksmiths of the Devoir de Liberté, called Gavots, recognize Solomon; and they say that this king to reward them for their labours gave them a Devoir. . . .

“The masons named Compagnons Passants and also Loups-garous with the joiners and locksmiths of the Devoir called Devorants or Devoirants, also pretend that they issued from the Temple, and that Maître Jacques, famous conductor of the works in that edifice, founded them.

“The carpenters, Compagnons Passants or Bons Drilles, claim the same origin as the last group; they also issued from the Temple, and Père Soubise, renowned in carpentry, was their founder.”²

¹ Scholars cannot agree about the exact meaning to be given to this word as used by the Compagnonnage. Its ordinary meanings are duty, behaviour, task, exercise, debt; but on occasions it also seems to mean the secrets of the order, or even the written ritual. If it be permissible to take the word in a symbolic sense, it might be defined as the chain of obligation by which the Compagnons were bound to one another.

² Agricol Perdiguier, *Livre du Compagnonnage*, quoted by W. H. Rylands, *Legends of the Compagnonnage*, A.Q.C., i.

Vibert, *Op. cit.*, puts the divisions in a convenient tabular form: The stone-masons were known as (i) Sons of Jacques; Compagnons Passants; Loups-garous (werewolves); Bons Enfants; and their novices as Aspirants: (ii) Sons of Solomon; Compagnons Étrangers (foreign journeymen); Loups (wolves); and their novices as Jeunes Hommes (young men).

Joiners and Locksmiths were known as (i) Sons of Jacques; Devoirants; Chiens (dogs); and their novices as Aspirants; (ii) Sons of Solomon; Gavots; and their novices were known as Affiliés (affiliated). The Carpenters were known as Sons of Soubise; Compagnons Passants; Drilles or Bons Drilles (good fellows); Devoirants; and their novices as Renards (foxes). It should be noted that the stone-masons, locksmiths and joiners were all divided into two camps according as they favoured Solomon or Maître Jacques.

There were three degrees in the primitive society. The young workman in his novitiate, protected, looked after, but excluded from any mysteries, was known as the *Attendant* (aspirant). The *Compagnon reçu* (received) was better known, and had received part of the secrets, but was not competent to hold office in the society. As soon as he had been entrusted with all the secrets he was termed *Compagnon Fini* or *Achevé* (finished) and could become a ruler. On the top of these original degrees was introduced in the year 1803 "a new and aristocratic order", which was the occasion of a great deal of jealousy and schism. This will be referred to later on.

It is obvious from what has gone before that the Compagnonnage, even in its earliest days, must have been a federation of different trade societies and not one sole body. This becomes even more apparent when we begin to examine the different legends that were in vogue among its constituent parts.

The most important of these centre round the three mythical founders, Solomon, Jacques and Soubise. No trace has yet been discovered of that connected with the wise king, which may or may not have been the most primitive of all; but the French historian of the Compagnonnage, himself a Son of Solomon, has preserved for us the Compagnonnage legend of Maître Jacques and Maître Soubise.¹

"Maître Jacques is a person little known; each society has made about him a story more or less improbable; there is one, however, which enjoys a large enough authority with many Compagnons du Devoir. It is from this that I extract without changing a word the details which follow.

"Maître Jacques, one of the head masters of Solomon and colleague of Hiram, was born in a small town in Gaul, named Carte, now Saint-Romili, situated in the south. He was the son of Jacquin, celebrated architect. He devoted himself to cutting stone; at the age of fifteen years he left his family; he travelled in Greece, then the centre of the

¹ W. H. Rylands's translation from Agricol Perdiguier, *Le livre du Compagnonnage*, in A.Q.C., i. p. 122.

fine arts, where he associated himself intimately with the philosopher . . .¹ of distinguished genius, who taught him sculpture and architecture; he soon became famous in these two arts. Having heard that Solomon had made an appeal to all the celebrated men, he passed into Egypt, and from thence to Jerusalem; he was not at first distinguished among the workmen; but having received from the head master the order to make two columns, he carved them with so much art and taste that he was received master. . . . Maître Jacques arrived at Jerusalem at the age of twenty-six years; he lived there a very short time after the construction of the temple; many masters wishing to return to their native countries quitted Solomon loaded with favours.

“Maître Jacques and Maître Soubise returned to Gaul; they had sworn never to separate; but soon Maître Soubise, whose character was violent, became jealous of the influence which Maître Jacques had acquired over their disciples and of the love which they bore him, separated himself from him and chose other disciples. Maître Jacques landed at Marseilles and Maître Soubise at Bordeaux.² Before commencing his travels, Maître Jacques chose thirteen Compagnons and forty disciples; one of them quitted him; he chose another; he journeyed during three years, leaving everywhere the remembrance of his talents and his virtues.

“One day, being far from his disciples, he was assailed by ten disciples of Maître Soubise, who sought to assassinate him, and wishing to save himself he fell into a marsh, in which the reeds having supported him protected him from their blows; while these cowards sought the means to get at him, his disciples arrived and freed him.

“He retired to Sainte-Beaume.³ One of his disciples, named by some Jéron, by others Jamais, betrayed him and delivered him to the disciples of Maître Soubise. One morning before sunrise Maître Jacques was alone at prayer in an accustomed place; the traitor came there with his butchers, gave him, as was customary, the kiss of peace, which was the signal of death; then five ruffians fell upon him and assassinated him with five dagger-strokes. His

¹ Left blank in original.

² Perdiguer notes the obvious anachronism. Neither city was in existence in the tenth century B.C.

³ Between Marseilles and Toulon; a celebrated place of pilgrimage in honour of St. Mary Magdalene.

disciples arrived too late, but soon enough to receive his last adieux.

“I die,” said he, “God has willed it so; I pardon my assassins, I forbid you to pursue them; they are sufficiently miserable; one day they will repent of it. I give my soul to God my creator, and you, my friends, receive the kiss of peace. When I shall have joined the Supreme Being, I will watch still over you; I wish that the last kiss which I give you, you will always give to the Compagnons whom you make, as coming from their father; they will transmit it in like manner to those whom they make; I shall watch over them as over you; say to them that I shall follow them everywhere as long as they are faithful to God and their Devoir, and that they must never forget. . . .”

“He pronounced some more words which could not be understood, and crossing his hands on his breast he expired in his forty-seventh year, four years and nine days after having gone out of Jerusalem, 989 years before Jesus Christ.

“The Compagnons having taken off his robe found on him a little reed (*jonc*) which he carried in memory of those which had saved him when he fell into the marsh.¹ Since then the Compagnons have adopted the cane (*jonc*). No one knows if Maître Soubise was the author of his death; the tears which he shed upon his tomb and the pursuit which he made for his assassins removed a portion of the suspicions which lay heavy upon him. As for the traitor, he was not long in repenting of his crime, and in the despair which his remorse occasioned him he cast himself into a well, which the Compagnons filled with stones.”

The legend goes on to relate, that the Compagnons took up the body of Maître Jacques on a litter and carried it into a grotto, where it was embalmed by “eight seniors,” dressed in fresh garments, and exposed for two days to view. After this it was placed in a coffin of cedar-wood, and taken to be buried in the evening.

“Four Compagnons in blue scarves carried the coffin, and four in the same costume followed after to replace them.

¹ *Jonc* means cane as well as reed; and this portion of the legend purports to account for the custom of carrying tall staves.

Four others carried the pall, upon which were all the mysterious ornaments of the Compagnonnage. Another carried the *acte de foi* pronounced by Maître Jacques at his reception at Jerusalem. All the Compagnons in the procession had a lighted torch. Ten others armed with cudgels and iron levers marched a hundred paces in front to avoid any one coming to trouble them in this lugubrious ceremony."¹

The Compagnons bore the body through a wood named Vorem, and stopped at various places. At midnight in the wood "a terrible wind blew; the torches went out, and the cortège remained in the greatest darkness; the thunder made itself heard with crashes, the rain fell in torrents. The Compagnons approached the body, and continued their prayer for the remainder of the night. In the morning, the storm being over, they recommenced the march at the first light of day. . . ." They finally reached the place where Maître Jacques had been assassinated and "where he had wished to be buried." Before lowering the body into the tomb each gave it the kiss of peace. "The first descended near to him, the Compagnons covered it with the pall; after that, having made the *guilbrette*,² he had given to him bread, wine and flesh, deposited them in the tomb, and went out. The Compagnons covered the tomb with large stones and fastened them down with strong bars of iron; then, having made a large fire, they cast into it their torches and everything which had been used for the funeral ceremonies of their Master. The clothes were put into a chest. At the destruction of the temples the children of Maître Jacques being about to separate, they divided his garments, and they were thus given: his hat to the hat-makers; his tunic to the cutters of stone; his sandals to the locksmiths; his cloak to the joiners; his girdle to the carpenters; his pilgrim's staff to the wheelwrights."

The *acte de foi*, act of faith, alluded to above, is given in

¹ The details of this and other portions of the legend may be an index towards the ceremonies used in the Compagnonnage initiations.

² The sign of recognition. See p. 89.

Perdiguier, and consists of a long prayer, followed by an oath tendered by Maître Jacques to King Solomon.

“O thou great king, to whom the all-powerful God has accorded the gift of wisdom, deign to receive my oath. I swear to thee never to adore another God than that one whom thou hast caused me to know, never to receive any Compagnon without having searched to the bottom of his heart and made him pass by the most severe trials. I now offer up the prayer that thou mayest live in peace a long life and that thou mayest see thy posterity equal the stars of the firmament.”

To the Masters Maître Jacques tendered another oath, of which the most important passages ran:

“I swear always to follow the divine laws which you have made known to me, to share your troubles and your labours, to cherish you, to love you as my brothers. True elect (*élus*) of the true God, true elect disciples of the wisest of the kings of the earth, receive the oath which I make you to-day. I thank you for the favour you have done me by receiving me among you.

“May my blood stop in my veins, may the chill of death freeze my senses, may my sight be extinguished, may my body be paralysed, may my soul quit the dwelling which God has given to it, and may I become the food of wild beasts, if I become perjured to the oath which I have pronounced.”¹

The *acte de foie* goes on to request the sacrificial priest to accept the offering of a white heifer; after which comes the oath of an aspirant on being received.

“I swear by the God whom I adore, by the soul which gives me life, by the blood which flows in my veins, by this heart which beats within me, to guard with constancy, perseverance, firmness, the secret which has been confided to me, to love my neighbour as myself, to punish the traitor,

¹ It would be fairly safe to assume that the foregoing oaths were in use in the different ceremonies of the Compagnonnage at the time when Maître Jacques's *acte de foi* was put on record by Perdiguier.

and to uphold the Devoir even to the last drop of my blood.”

The names Jacques and Soubise occur in another and later legend of the Compagnonnage referring to the great split that took place in the order at Orleans. Perdiguier obtained this legend in the archives of the Compagnons Dyers, and what follows is a synopsis of it.¹

The towers of the cathedral at Orleans were begun in 1401, and the works were confided to Jacques Moler of Orleans,² Jeune Homme du Devoir, and to Soubise of Nogent-sous-Paris, Compagnon and Ménatzchim of the children of Solomon. These two Compagnons directed all the works.

“A great number of workmen were employed there. But a general discontent grew among them” . . . they organized resistance, and struck work.

“Jacques Moler and Soubise vexed at this mode of action, unknown to the Franks³, demanded from the Court of Aids what they should do under such circumstances. Parliament gave as judgment in consequence, the banishment of all those organized bodies (*corps d'état*). The carpenters, dyers, stone-cutters, as well as a portion of the joiners and locksmiths, submitted to Moler and Soubise, for fear of suffering the same penalty. They adopted for their father Jacques Moler of Orleans. He allowed the hatters to adopt Soubise of Nogent, which was done on the spot. But one part of the joiners and locksmiths formed a league and swore always to be faithful to Solomon; they took flight, and embarked on barges (*gavotages*), hence the name of Gavot with which they invested themselves. One part of the stone-cutters also took flight. Finally their ancient records were burnt, and Moler and Soubise became the Masters in name, and Christ the spiritual Master.

“Nothing was spared to bring the rebel Compagnons

¹ Perdiguier, *Question Vitale*, 1863. The translation is W. H. Rylands's in A. Q. C., ii., p. 56.

² Some writers on the Compagnonnage have confused this Jacques Moler of Orleans with Jacques du Molay, the last Grand Master of the Templars. There is, of course, no connexion between them in the legend.

³ This reference to the strike as a weapon in trade disputes in France is noteworthy, and might be a key to the date of the compilation of the legend.

under subjection; the sword, gibbet, prison, all were used. Some *corps d'état* presented themselves, and were received in their old sheds, and bore the name of *compagnons passants*. These were the rope-makers, basket-makers, hatters, etc. To them was given the rule of the Devoir to follow, and they were received by the trials of the Passion, and the entries into the chamber were symbolized by bread, wine, and cheese, and all in allegories." Sainte-Beaume was appointed a place of pilgrimage. Coloured ribbons were ordered to be worn by the Compagnons instead of sashes.

"The carpenters, joiners, locksmiths, dyers and tanners, Children of Solomon, seeing that strength was on the side of Moler and Soubise, asked to be Compagnons du Devoir, which was allowed them. The carpenters entered under Soubise, and the others under Moler. There only remained a portion of the stone-cutters, the joiners and locksmiths, who took the name of Gavots and Compagnons du Devoir de Liberté; as for the stone-cutters, they took the name of Compagnons du Devoir Étranger; all three of them Children of Solomon, and faithful to their first Master."

Moler and Soubise decided that the Jeunes Hommes who had stood by them should wear certain ribbon decorations and be known as Compagnons Passants. "The Compagnons faithful to Solomon lamented and always protested against all these admittances," Moler and Soubise called an assembly of their proselytes and ordained rules to be followed.

"The accolade or guilbrette was given to the numerous initiated stone-cutters, and entry to the chamber was allowed them. The chamber was provided for examinations on morality and about the work which the newly initiated were made to undergo. A Master Compagnon was constantly placed there to direct the symbolic works, and to enter the names of the Compagnons who had been received, and to give the pass-words, sacred words, and general means of recognition of each corporation.¹ Lastly, Jacques and Soubise made their Compagnons swear this solemn oath: 'I swear by the God whom I worship, by the soul which animates me, by the blood which flows in my

¹ "Paroles, mots sacrés, et la reconnaissance générale de chaque corporation."

veins, by the heart which beats unceasingly within me, to guard inviolate with constancy, perseverance and firmness the secrets which have been confided to me by my worthy brothers and brothers Jacques and Soubise; I swear by my sacred Devoir to love my neighbour as myself, to succour him everywhere, to punish the traitor, and to uphold the holy Devoir to the last drop of my blood.' . . . At this assembly it was decided that no non-Catholic should be received Compagnon; and, at their request, the Compagnons joiners and locksmiths should have no longer the surname of Compagnons, and this was so, to distinguish them from the Gavots; they pleaded also that, having been once baptised, they had no need to be so a second time, following the maxims of the true Master, Jesus Christ."¹

Another legend, probably introduced at a comparatively late date, had to do with Hiram, the architect of King Solomon's temple.

According to Perdiguier², there is among the stone-cutters, Compagnons Étrangers, called les Loups, an old fable "in which it is a question of Hiram, according to some, Adonhiram according to others; there are in it crimes and punishments; but I leave this fable for what it is worth." He goes on to say, that the stone-cutters are named Étrangers, because almost all the stone-cutters employed at the temple were not of Judea but of Tyre and the neighbouring countries, and that the society consisted of them alone in ancient times. Hiram, it would appear, was murdered in the Compagnonnage legend, for the joiners du Devoir, Children of Maître Jacques, wear white gloves, because, as they say, they did not steep their hands in the blood of Hiram; moreover, the Compagnons du Devoir are called Chiens (dogs), because it was a dog which discovered the place where the body of Hiram lay under the rubbish, and that after that all the Compagnons "who separated themselves from those who had slain Hiram

¹ One of the charges brought against the Compagnonnage by the Sorbonne (*vide* p. 87) was that mock baptism was administered in the ceremony of initiation. The above legend may incorporate a change made by a certain section to avoid this reproach for the future; if so, the legend is later than 1655.

² Rylands, A.Q.C. i., p. 119.

were called by this name." It would appear from this as if the blame for the murder of Hiram rested in this legend on the followers of Solomon, "and was supposed to have been the work of the particular division who were strangers, having come from the country from whence Solomon obtained Hiram the builder. This is important, as it gives the legend to the most ancient division of the Order, the stone-cutters, Compagnons Étrangers, called Loups." Perdiguiet, however, considered that this fable was quite a recent introduction into the Compagnonnage by "those men initiated into the two secret societies"—Freemasonry being the other.

This seems to have happened in or about the year 1803, when a third order or degree superior to that of Compagnonnage was invented at a convention of the Compagnonnage, attended by some twenty delegates, but approved of by only two-thirds of this gathering. However, the new dignity was spread rapidly by its missionaries, who had invented a mysterious ritual, high-sounding titles, etc. This gave rise to much dissension, for the holders of the new degree claimed supremacy over the Order. Finally, in 1843, at a general assembly of the Order, the new grade, the *Initié* (Initiated) was suppressed. Perdiguiet, who had himself been admitted to this degree, describes it as "*Imitation franc-maçonnique . . . imitation grossière des hauts grades.*"

One can perhaps venture to ascribe the origin of the legend given above to the period when this "reform" took place in the society.

It will be more profitable to consider some older ceremonies of these federated societies. When the system of initiation began in trade societies is unknown, but it certainly had been established before the middle of the fifteenth century in France.¹ In 1655 the doctors of the Sorbonne published a condemnation of the rites of the Compagnonnage, which may have been partly just, though, as has been pointed out by Vibert, the fact that the Sons of Solomon had taken to admitting Huguenots into their

¹ *Vide* Marcelots, p. 196

mysteries may have weighed in the scales against the Compagnonnage, which had already been attacked in 1639 for its alleged impiety. Anyway the Sorbonne disclosures of 1655 gave the following account of the "impious, sacrilegious and superstitious practices which take place among the Compagnons."¹

"The Devoir of a Compagnon is alleged to consist of three precepts: to honour God, to protect the master's interests, and to support the Compagnons. But in fact the Compagnons do just the reverse; they greatly dishonour God by profaning all the mysteries of our religion; they ruin their masters by emptying their workrooms of labour whenever one of their faction complains of having been insulted; and they ruin themselves by the fines which they levy on one another for breaches of the Devoir, to be spent on drink. Besides which the Compagnonnage does not in any way help towards attaining the mastership. They have a system of government of their own, and elect officers, a president, a deputy, a secretary, and a bailiff,² and the various towns have a organized system by which they keep in touch. They have a pass-word by which they recognize one another, and which they keep secret. They form everywhere an offensive league against the apprentices of their trade who are not of their party, beating them and ill-treating them and soliciting them to join the society. The impieties and sacrileges which they commit when admitting them as members vary according to the different trades. They have nevertheless much in common; in the first place, they make those whom they admit swear on the Gospels not to reveal to father or mother, wife or child or confessor, what they are now to do or see done. For these ceremonies they meet at their tavern, which they call 'The Mother,' because it is there that they usually assemble as if at a common mother's, in which they choose two rooms conveniently placed for going from one to the other, one serving for their abominations, and the other for the feast. They close carefully the doors and windows to avoid all

¹ Vibert, *Op. cit.*

² These are the Premier-en-ville, Second-en-ville, and Roulcur.

chance of being seen or surprised. Secondly, they elect sponsors for the candidate, give him a new name, such as may be decided on, go through a mock baptism, and perform the rest of the accursed ceremonies of admission according to the particular usages of each craft, and their hellish traditions."

It is hardly necessary to point out that while the similarity of the legend of Maître Jacques to the story of the Passion may well have seemed impious in the seventeenth century, the medieval minds that probably conceived it would not have deemed it irreverent; and other items will suggest themselves as similarly objectionable to a generation that had developed a mentality incapable of comprehending the naïve faith of more primitive times.

Indeed the exposures of their ceremonies made voluntarily by some of the trades from 1651 on in response to clerical denunciations can only be described as shocking parodies of the Christian sacraments. The Saddlers' initiation rite was a travesty of the Mass and Baptism. The Shoemakers made the candidate take an oath on bread, wine, salt, and water, "by his faith, his hope of paradise, his God, his chrism, and his baptism"; he was then instructed to choose a new name, and one of the Compagnons poured a glass of water over his head with the words: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The Cutlers, after having sworn the neophyte, made him eat bread mixed with salt and drink three glasses of wine. "Some time after they take him quietly to the country, and show him the rights of a passed Compagnon, make him take off one shoe, and all take several turns on a cloak which they have spread in circular form on the earth, in such manner that the shoeless foot remains on the cloak and the other on the earth." Various objects were then shown him all having a religious signification. The Hatters' initiation was a representation of the Crucifixion, with the candidate playing the part of our Lord, and culminated like many others with a mock baptism. The ceremony was full of allusions to the

Passion and other incidents in the life of the Saviour.¹ Little wonder that the Doctors of the Sorbonne were horrified.

Thus we learn from these revelations that the ceremonies of initiation differed according to trades. The novice was admitted with or without oath on promising to conform to the regulations of the particular Devoir he wished to join, but to become a Compagnon required a much more elaborate ceremony.²

The room was arranged to represent the Temple. The candidate was introduced blindfolded and divested of all metals, and was led round the room, now stooping, now stepping high. Different tests were put to try his moral character. Having declared that he still wished to join the society, the bandage was removed from his eyes, and he took an oath to guard the secrets of the society. After he had repeated, "I swear, I swear, I swear," a Compagnon said: "And you, brethren, if the *Pays*,³ becomes a perjurer, say what he will deserve;" and all present replied: "Death!" Then he was made to drink a mixture of salt and wine, to choose three Compagnons as godfather, godmother and priest, and to select his future nickname, with which he was then baptized. He was then adorned with his ribbons, and the ceremony might conclude with the delivery of a moral lecture.

The *Conduite* (conducting) was a method in which the Compagnons took leave on the outskirts of a town from one of their brethren who was going away. The *Entrée de Chambre* (entrance of the Chamber) was the mode of receiving a Compagnon newly come to a town. He had to present his credentials and give the pass-words in an assembly of the Compagnons, after which he advanced three paces, and bowing to the Premier-en-ville said:

¹ The rites of the Italian Carbonari, which were in my opinion undoubtedly derived from France, also contained a representation of the Crucifixion. The parallel is worth noting. *Vide* p. 132.

² In describing this and the other peculiar customs of the Compagnonnage, I follow Vibert, *Op. cit.*

³ The title used by the Compagnons in addressing one another ceremoniously. In colloquial French it means compatriot, one from the same district or locality.

“Glory to God, honour to Maître Jacques, and respect to all worthy companions.” The *topage* was a dialogue between two Compagnons who met on the road and wished to discover the particular Devoir to which each belonged, and in case of a feud’s existing between these Devoirs often ended in a fight with their heavy canes. The most curious custom of all was the *Guilbrette*, a word whose meaning has perplexed the scholars. Another name for the ceremony was the *Accolade*, embrace. It was used at funerals, the *Entrée de Chambre*, and when two travelling Compagnons met one another. The canes were laid crosswise on the ground, and each Compagnon placed a foot in one of the four quadrants; they then turned inwards, placing their right feet in the opposite quadrants, grasped each other’s right hands, and kissed, after which the pass-words were whispered. The posture seems to have varied for different occasions.

The Compagnons’ regalia consisted of bunches and strings of coloured ribbons and a heavy cane about five feet long. The ribbons were attached to the cane and to the hat and clothes, and the exact position in which they might be worn was rigorously prescribed for each trade, the seniors wearing them highest. A constant cause of feuds was the attempt of some junior and more recently admitted trade to wear its ribbons in the manner assumed as the privilege of a more senior body. The practice led to a fight on sight in which the canes were used as weapons.

The Compagnonnage finally came to an end in the nineteenth century, partly owing to the railways, partly to internal weaknesses. During the centuries it lasted it had tremendous influence on the social life of the class of workman to whom it ministered; and perhaps it may even be said to have influenced the life of the nation in general by accustoming the French to the presence of secret societies in their midst, and preparing the ground for the introduction of those later secret societies that trafficked in matters political. In any case the Compagnonnage is noteworthy as a medieval survival, and the ideas it disseminated were in all probability responsible for the

birth of such bodies as the Charbonniers, and consequently we must regard it as the ancestor in the second or third remove of revolutionary societies that remodelled the political orientation of Europe; all of which raises its importance far above the level of that of the ordinary **benefit society**.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FENDEURS OR CHARBONNIERS

THE society of Les Fendeurs, or Hewers, deserves a special mention, not for any outstanding influence exercised by it, nor for anything particularly striking in its ceremonies, but because of its connexion with two more important bodies, the Charbonniers of France and the Carbonari of Italy. Les Fendeurs appear to have been a revised edition of the secret ceremonies of the society of Charbonniers, and was established at Paris as an organized body in the year 1747 by the Chevalier Beauchaine, who was a prominent Freemason and Master of one of the Parisian Lodges. The Chevalier asserted that the society "was born in the forests of Bourbonnais by the woodcutters of the country. . . . The common obligation of all the members was to help and protect one another. It is certain that these forest *Good Cousins*, whose forms and symbols were adopted from the actual occupations of the Hewers, admitted into their fraternity persons of all classes, nobles, priests and burghers. The *Fenderie* of the Chevalier de Beauchaine enjoyed a great vogue in Paris . . . and it also spread over the whole country, especially in Artois. . . . Their form of reception differed little from that of the Charcoal-burners, save that with it were mingled 'some droll tests and some practices borrowed from Freemasonry'." ¹

The ceremonies of the Fendeurs of which some account will be given later were certainly designed for celebration in the open air, and it may well be that in them were preserved some of the primitive rites of the Charbonniers.

¹ Article on *Les Fendeurs*, by F. J. W. Crowe in A.Q.C., xxiii. The above extract is taken from Clavel's *History of Freemasonry*.

They present little apparent resemblance, however, to the ceremonies of the Italian Carbonari, who also claimed descent, probably justly, from the Charbonniers. Yet the Fendeurs, or one of their spokesmen, so late as the year 1823, which was shortly before the society dissolved itself, imagined that the two bodies were on all fours in practices. Clavel¹ gives the following account of a debate that took place in the French Parliament in 1823, when the Procureur-Général had been making a violent attack on French *Carbonarisme* because of the recent *cause célèbre* of the four sergeants of La Rochelle.²

“A *Fendeur*, M. Cauchard d’Hermilly, confounding the new secret society with that to which he belonged, undertook to prove that it was not guilty of the misdeeds attributed to it, and that it was quite unknown to politics and only set up to pass the time joyously. To this end he recounted his reception amidst the *Fendeurs*, charcoal-burners of Artois, who had admitted him in 1813 in their open-air meeting, the which took place every year in the midst of the woods, and where each member, clothed in the blouse and emblems of the Hewer, had no other care but to laugh, sing, eat and drink. . . . M. d’Hermilly brought, above all, to notice, that no secret society was less dangerous than that of the Hewers, which united in its fraternal assemblies all the province possessed of people of intellect and good fellows, including gentlemen, who when it is a question of amusing themselves are not always enemies of a momentary equality. In spite of this witty and piquant defence he could not destroy the reality of the facts revealed by the debates on the affair of La Rochelle. All he was permitted to conclude was that two societies existed, derived from a common source, employing the same symbols, one of which, however, proposed the overthrow of the established order of things, and the other had in view only an agreeable pastime. The Hewers were not therein concerned; nevertheless they felt the counter-blow of the attack dealt at the political *Charbonnerie*. Either from prudence or fear or indifference, they have since then ceased to meet; and the *Fenderie* is to-day completely extinct.”

¹ *Op. cit.*

² *Vide. p. 172.*

Apparently it was never revived after the eighteen-forties when Clavel was describing it as above.

There seems little doubt that in its original state, whether known as La Charbonnerie or by some other name, the society of the Hewers was just a friendly and benevolent body existing among the woodcutters and charcoal-burners of the Bourbonnais and Jura regions; and it would be futile to speculate how long it had been in existence in those parts or the cause of its establishment. Various traditions, valueless in themselves, carry it back to the civil wars of Charles VI and VII, or even to the time of Alexander the Great, while the Italian version of origin was modestly content with the patronage of Francis I. The strong probability is that it was originally just a medieval trade society, and that its ritual grew more elaborate as time went on. It would appear to have been affiliated to the Compagnonnage at one time, for its title in Ragon's ritual ¹ is Fendeurs du Devoir.

Ragon states that Forest Masonry consisted of five degrees: (1) Fendeur or Charbonnier; (2) The Prodigal Converted; (3) Not so Black as it's Painted (*Moins diable que noir*); (4) Scieur, sawyer; (5) Charpentier, carpenter. He gives an account of the first two, but says that the other three have been extinct for so long that their ritual is not worth reproducing.

The Charbonniers had three grades, apprentice, master, and hewer. The Fendeurs were originally part of this third grade, but split off to become a separate society, and termed themselves Cousins and Good Companions as a distinction from the Charbonniers, who were content to be known as Good Cousins. The latter claimed Francis I as having joined their Order, and that their title dated from the time of this monarch who was the first to address high dignitaries by the term Cousin.

It is obvious that in Ragon's time the Fendeurs were the same as the Charbonniers; but he may be right in stating that the former society was originally the third grade in the

¹ J. M. Ragon, *Rituel de la Maçonnerie Forestière*, Paris, n.d. For the meaning of Devoir *vide* p. 76.

primitive Charbonnier system. Other authorities say that the Fendeurs comprised the first and earlier grade of the "Society which afterwards with the second or higher grade of the *Carbonari* or charcoal-burners became known as the *Carboneria*"; this may be so, but the ceremonies as they have come down to us present few points of resemblance to those of the Italian Carbonari.

A ritual printed at Paris in 1788 is dedicated to "the Good Cousins, Hewers of the forest of the King," and from it the following account is taken of the ritual¹, while Ragon's account has been utilized for a description of the *Chantier*, etc.

The meeting-place of the Fendeurs was in the open air, if possible, and was known as a *Chantier* (wood-yard). In the east was placed a large block of oak as a seat for the presiding officer who was known as the *Père Maître*, and in front of him was a log of oak with an axe and two wedges, one iron, one wooden. Two similar blocks of oak were placed at the west; and other blocks, with bundles of faggots and woodcutter's tools, were arranged round about. Towards the east four huts were erected, in each of which the candidate² had to undergo a different kind of horseplay during the ceremony of his initiation, all of which would seem to argue considerable antiquity for the ceremonies.

The first hut was presided over by the *Cousin Hermit*, who seems to be the prototype of the Saint Theobald of the *Carbonari*. He was dressed as a monk, and from the roof-pole of his hut was suspended a vessel filled with water. "Below the water was a cushion for the candidate to hear on his knees the exhortation of the hermit. To make proof of his charity he was told to put the 5 *sous* that had been given him into the money-box, and holding the cord of the water the hermit said: 'Be washed and purged from all the filth that accompanies the *Briquet*, and may the protecting virtue of the Fendeurs be your guide and safeguard', and at the same time upset the water over him."

¹ The translation of Crowe, *ut sup.*, is used.

² The candidate was known as the *Briquet*, the tinder-box.

The second hut was that of the Cousin Winedresser. At the top projected a stick crowned with a cabbage; inside was a barrel of wine for the refreshment of the Cousins. The candidate probably had his with a stick in it.

The third hut was that of Mère Cateau, sutler and seamstress. It contained a washing-tub full of soapy water, which managed to find its way over the Candidate.

The fourth hut was known as that of the Bear, whose rôle was to indulge in a rough-and-tumble clawing and hugging match with the candidate, and to end by embracing him amicably.

This is the explanation of the statement made by M. d'Hermilly in defending the Order, that "Neophytes were delivered into the claws of a bear, to all appearance thirsty for human blood; but that this bear of a most benevolent nature was not long in becoming their best friend."

Such horseplay was no doubt common to many of the *devoirs* in the Compagnonnage. With the bear of the Fendeurs might be compared the Devil of *Les Maîtres Sonneurs*, described by Georges Sand in the novel of that name.

The Fendeurs admitted both men and women to full membership.

The presiding officer was styled Père Maître, Father Master, and the officers took the names of trees, Cousin Oak, Cousin Elm, etc.

When a candidate was being initiated, Cousin Elm announced that he had come from the Royal Forest, the *Vente d'Honneur*, which curious expression seems another link with the Italian Carbonari, who entitled their place of meeting Vendita. *Vente* may mean either a sale or a quantity of felled timber, but what its exact significance may have been to the Fendeurs cannot now be demonstrated.¹ Similar uncertainty exists about other expressions used in the ritual, so without entering into details of language it will be

¹ Commenting on Crowe's essay on *Les Fendeurs*, W. J. Songhurst suggested on the analogy of *vendita* and *vente*, used by the Carbonari and the Fendeurs respectively, that *Vente d'Honneur* might conceivably have had the meaning of Grand Lodge; and that in the *Chantier* a degree was conferred superior to that of Charbonnier.

enough to say that when the candidate had been conducted round the *chantier* several times, and had visited the four huts, he took the following oath:

“I promise and swear on my word of honour, on the bread and wine of hospitality, and in the presence of the Father Master and the worthy Cousins of this *chantier*, never to betray in any inn the secrets of the worthy Cousins, Comrades Hewers. I promise never to try to oust any cousin, also never to change the felling of the woods arranged by the worthy Cousins. I swear never to have carnal intercourse with the wife of a cousin, unless she asks me three times. I swear to defend him; to help him; to aid him in his need; to put him back in his way if he has strayed; and to lodge him in my hut; or if I fail in my oath, I consent to have my head severed from my body by all the axes of the *chantier*, and to be exposed in the depths of the forest to be there devoured by wild beasts.”

Some of the operative allusions in the foregoing would go to argue considerable antiquity for the form of oath. The form taken by a woman candidate differed considerably.

“I promise and swear on my word of honour, on the symbol of cleanliness, in the presence of the Father Master and the worthy Cousins of this *chantier*, never to betray the secrets of the worthy Cousins, worthy Companions Hewers, and if I fail in my promise, I consent to be soaked, beaten, and twisted like a bundle of dirty linen. Then to be cast to the bottom of the vat of the worthy and benevolent Cousin Cateau, then to be exposed for forty days in the deepest Forest to live on acorns only like a sow, and to be devoured by wild beasts.”

There were certain modes of recognition by signs, tokens and words; and there was also a lengthy catechism as another means of testing an initiate. In this catechism of the order there is a certain amount of shrewd epigrammatic wisdom and also a sprinkling of ribaldry, and both of these ingredients, even as do the horseplay in the ceremonies and the operative clauses in the oath, argue considerable antiquity for the ritual as it existed in 1788. To instance some examples of these qualities:

"How old art thou? As old as pleasure.

"Why? Because pleasure is of every age.

"Cousin Oak, what is the best wine one can drink? That you drink in your neighbours' houses, for as a rule it costs nothing.

"What is the boldest thing in the world? It is the wind.

"Why? Because it blows down our huts, and often thrusts itself under our women's garments."

This will be enough to demonstrate that the original framers of the catechism did not fear to spoil its dignity by inserting a jest suited to bucolic ears.

Barruel, the famous writer on Jacobinism and other societies of his day, is a witness that the Fendeurs did not confine their membership to actual woodcutters. He says: "The Fendeurs form a real fraternity among themselves. They have their signs, their pass-word, their secrets and their festivals. They call themselves the Order of the Fendeurs; they receive into their order common persons and gentlemen, who, with the secrets of the order, attend their meetings and their festivals just as those of the Freemasons. I have known some adepts at the same time Freemasons and Fendeurs who, by their birth and position, were anything but made to pass their days in woodcutting."¹

Enough has now been said to show that the Fendeurs and Carbonari were two branches that developed in very different ways, though sprung from the same trunk. Speculation about why such a thing should happen is usually futile and often misleading; one is almost tempted, however, to re-examine the claim advanced for the nebulous society of the Philadelphes,¹ and to wonder if there may not be some grain of truth in the story that Colonel Oudet grafted his political plots on societies already existent, including the Charbonnerie of the Jura district. All one can conclude is that there must be some fire behind the smoke, though the latter is so dense as to obscure almost all the traces; but if it were not Colonel Oudet, then

¹ *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Jacobinisme.*

² See p. 123 et sqq.

some other revolutionary conspirator was responsible for changing what was in its beginnings no more than a harmless piece of benevolent tomfoolery into an instrument to overturn thrones and to strike down the sceptre of the divine right of kings in order to raise on high the fasces of the divine right of the people.

CHAPTER XIV

THE ROSICRUCIANS

ONE famous secret association, if it ever had a real existence, must be regarded as forming the connecting link between the esoteric bodies of the Middle Ages and those of our own times.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century an anonymous manuscript began to be passed from hand to hand among scholars in Austria and south-east Germany. It told the story of a certain Christian Rosenkreuz, how he had founded a hidden brotherhood which possessed mysterious secrets and occult powers; it went on to dwell upon the benefits that would accrue to Germany if all the learned could be induced to lay aside their mutual jealousies and combine in such a fraternal union; and it ended by inviting all men of good will to join the brotherhood established by Rosenkreuz.

Various men who had read this manuscript published pamphlets in reply, some of them even asking publicly to be received into the fraternity, as did one Haselmeyer in 1612 two years after the manuscript had fallen into his hands in the Tyrol; but it was not till the year 1614 that the manuscript itself was printed. In that year, not later than August, was published at Cassel in Hesse a book entitled: *Universal and General Reformation of the Whole Wide World; together with the Fama Fraternitatis of the Laudable Order of the Rosy Cross, written to all the Learned and Rulers of Europe*, etc.¹ It told the following story.

Christian Rosenkreuz, born of a noble German family in the year 1378, was at the age of five placed in a cloister,

¹ Vide introduction by F. N. Pryce to the reprint of the *Fama* issued by the *Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia*, 1923, for complete information about the early editions of the book and the more important pamphlets evoked by it.

where he acquired some knowledge of the Greek and Latin tongues. A brother of this cloister intending a pilgrimage to the Holy Land took the boy with him as companion; but this brother died in Cyprus, and Christian was thrown on his own resources. Having received a good report of the wise men of Damascus, the young pilgrim, then aged sixteen, abandoned his journey to Jerusalem and travelled to Damascus instead, where he was welcomed by the sages, who had foreseen his arrival. He remained in that city for the next three years, studying medicine, mathematics and Arabic. From Syria he proceeded to Egypt, where he made no long stay, but went farther west to Fez to study magic and the Cabala. After a stay of two years in Fez he journeyed to Spain, where he was unable to obtain a patient hearing for the new learning that he had brought with him. After that, having visited many countries and been coldly received in all, he at last returned to his native Germany, where, probably in some place in the Austrian Tyrol, he drew up an account of his travels, and reduced his system of philosophy into writing. Five years were spent in these labours. Then Christian Rosenkreuz decided that he would need help in his proposed reformation of the world, and claimed it from three brethren chosen from his old cloister; to these first disciples four others were subsequently added, all of whom he bound to be "faithful, diligent and secret." They were to pursue as their chief ends the healing of the sick and the commitment to writing of "all that which men can desire, wish or hope for"—in short, the grand total of human wisdom was to be collected as a free gift for all humanity. "In all they were eight in number, all bachelors and of vowed virginity."

After having lived together for some years, five of the brethren departed into foreign countries, to spread the wisdom they had already acquired and to gather more. They all entered into an agreement, the most important clauses of which were: that none of them should profess any power or mission but to cure the sick, and give his services gratis; that they should all meet together in the House of the Founder once a year; that each one should

choose "a worthy person who after his decease might succeed him"; and that the Fraternity should remain secret for one hundred years. In due course the founder and his original disciples died, Christian Rosenkreuz in 1484 at the age of 106. They were followed by the consecutive Fratres of the "second row and succession." A centenarian Frater of this "succession" became the chief instructor of the "third succession," among whom the compilers of the *Fama* are to be reckoned. At this point the story becomes contradictory. Silence concerning the Fraternity had been enjoined for one hundred years, but apparently this silence was broken not because the period had expired, but because of the accidental discovery of the tomb of the Founder while the House of the Fraternity was undergoing some renovations. This tomb lay in a secret vault together with certain other deposits, and the Fratres accepted the discovery as a sign that the hour had come when the boundaries of the Fraternity should be enlarged and its existence avowed to the world. So after a brief and none too lucid statement about the tenets of the Fraternity the book concludes with what is practically an invitation to all men of learning and philanthropy to seek admission to the Order of the Rosy Cross.

The appearance of the *Fama* occasioned great excitement in Germany, which was increased by the publication in Cassel, probably in January, 1615, of another Rosicrucian document written in Latin, entitled *Confessio C.R. ad Eruditos Europae*, now usually known as the Confession. This book added little or nothing to men's knowledge about the mysterious society, and its greatest interest lies in the fact that scholars have discovered in it a post-Reformation tendency as opposed to a pre-Reformation spirit in the *Fama*; but the whole of Europe was already so curious about the Rosicrucians that the new book found an avid public awaiting it, as did any printed matter on that theme. Letters were published by individuals who wished to become Fratres, by others who denied the existence of the society, and by yet others who asserted their personal acquaintance with the Fraternity. Holland was already

discussing the secret in 1615. A year later the Fraternity found an English defender in Robert Fludd. Edition after edition of the *Fama* and *Confessio* came from the Press. The last of these appeared at Frankfurt-am-Main in 1617, and had attached what purported to be a manifesto of the Fraternity declaiming against those who had sought admission for unworthy motives. "But men have either scorned our writings, or else have supposed we are going to teach them to make gold by alchemical art, or to bestow upon them riches to satisfy their pomp and ambition, their wars and greed, their gluttony and drunkenness and lust."¹

This was the last putative manifesto of the Fraternity, which, so far as printed evidence goes, renounced henceforth the idea of making public appeals for support, and resumed its secret method of recruiting; that is, if it had ever had any actual existence or any more substantial form than the noble dream of a high-thinking philosopher.

The question whether the Fraternity had or had not an actual existence at that date has been matter of controversy for over three hundred years; and the present writer is not called on to add to it. There is no doubt, however, that from time to time throughout these centuries individuals and groups of individuals have claimed to be members of the Fraternity.

Of the various writers, beginning with Martin Luther, to whom the authorship of the *Fama* and *Confessio* has been attributed, only one need be mentioned here, Johann Valentin Andreae (1586-1654), a theologian of Würtemberg, who has been the popular favourite. It is unnecessary to enter into a discussion of the evidence for or against his authorship, because if the Fraternity really did exist, or if the *Fama* and *Confessio* imply a wish to establish such a society, Andreae's authorship is impossible²; while if the society was merely an erewhonian dream, the question of who started the myth does not affect the present inquiry.

¹ F. N. Pryce, *Op. cit.*

² The opinion of Dr. Begemann, the chief German adherent of the theory of Andreae's authorship. Quoted by F. N. Pryce, *Op. cit.*

As has been said above, from the year 1614 the world has been full of *soi-disant* Rosicrucians, as the new sect came soon to be called; and while none has clearly demonstrated descent from the original Fraternity, many have claimed it.

The name has been a cloak for many charlatans. During the course of the seventeenth century the term Rosicrucian came to connote a magician or alchemist knowing mysterious secrets and possessed of occult powers, and so the title was readily assumed by impostors who knew that dupes would accept them at their own valuation.

The quest of the Philosophers' Stone was the usual object that brought the swindlers and swindled together; and that such things should happen in the name of Rosicrucianism is a paradox in human mentality, because the *Fama* disclaimed any such hidden knowledge in the Fraternity. This ungodly and accursed gold-making, said that book, is so popular nowadays that not only all the world's worst scoundrels but even many men of discretion look upon it as the goal of all wisdom; but we, the brethren of Christian Rosenkreuz, do publicly testify that such a view is false, and the true philosophers are they for whom gold-making is but a trifle and a *parergon*. But it was in vain that the true Frater¹ might enter the protest: "He doth not rejoice that he can make gold, and that . . . the devils are obedient to him"; the words might never have been printed, for all the heed paid by the vulgarly covetous; the Rosicrucians were popularly supposed to possess great skill in the arts of magic and alchemy, and therefore any dabbler in the occult might be given or might assume the name of Rosicrucian, as the badge of his tribe.

On the other hand, there has been no lack of men of scholarship and upright life who also have assumed the badge of the Rosicrucian in widely different places since the year 1614, but their succession from the putative original society has never been proved, and in some cases has never even been claimed. It will readily be understood that during the first half of the seventeenth century when the Thirty Years' War (1618-48) was raging, no secret society would have

¹The Rosicrucian style of entitling initiates.

been tolerated in any part of Germany, so that reports of regular assemblies of Rosicrucians in such places as Hamburg, Nürnberg, Danzig and Erfurt must be accepted with caution. We know, however, that such a gathering was forbidden at Amsterdam in 1619.

Isolated scholars, such as Michael Maier in Germany, or Thomas Vaughan in England, believed in the existence of the Fraternity, and defended the principles for which it stood, though confessing that they had never been received into it as members.

Robert Fludd (1574-1637) is the first celebrity to have his name connected by common report with the Fraternity in England,¹ though Francis Bacon has also been claimed as a Frater without much confirmatory evidence. Fludd, however, studied medicine on the continent and defended the Rosicrucians in print, facts more than enough to acquire him the reputation of having belonged to the society. Similar claims have been made on behalf of other Englishmen; but, apart from all this, no organized body calling itself Rosicrucian is known to have existed in England until the nineteenth century. From 1830 till 1850 a society was in existence claiming such a title, but had died out by the later year.

In 1866 the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia was founded by Robert Wentworth Little on the basis of a Rosicrucian system or rite which had been communicated in Germany to Kenneth R. H. Mackenzie, who became a prominent member of the English society. Authority to practise this rite in England was obtained from Austria where it had been in vogue for many years. The first English College of Rosicrucians then founded has since grown into a flourishing order with colleges scattered through the provinces. It also introduced the Society to Scotland and America, both of which countries now possess independent jurisdictions. The Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia demands a Masonic qualification in its candidates, and thus excludes women.

¹ But merely by tradition, in defiance of documents and dates. *Vide* A. E. Waite, *The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross*, London, 1924. p. 271, *et seq.* for a very emphatic mustering of the evidence against Fludd's connexion with the Society of the Rose and Cross.

Its object is to promote study among the members, not of occult matters solely, but of ancient wisdom, art, and literature generally, for which purpose a library is maintained for the use of the Fratres. It works an esoteric rite of nine grades. The head of the Order is known as the Supreme Magus, who is assisted by a Senior and Junior Substitute Magus.

As for continental societies claiming to be Rosicrucian, they are legion. In 1710 one Sigmund Richter, writing under the name of Sincerus Renatus, published a pamphlet at Breslau wherein he purported to give the laws of the society as then existing in a reformed model; and after him came many others.¹

In France in 1754 a new Masonic degree suddenly cropped up, and attained great popularity, instanced by its having continued as an integral part of the Antient and Accepted Rite down to this day. It was known as the Rose Croix degree, and was only the first of many quasi-Masonic degrees that claimed to be Rosicrucian, but has, in the opinion of some scholars, a better claim on the title than most of the others.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century some of these quasi-Masonic Rosicrucian degrees had developed into a rite of nine grades, which was practised in various parts of Germany. These Rosicrucians had the reputation of being a reactionary secret society in contradistinction to many brands of Freemasonry as then practised on the continent.

From Germany Rosicrucianism passed into Russia, and flourished, in name at least, for a time. It would be impossible as well as unprofitable to discuss which of its many manifestations there as well as elsewhere had inherited any traditions of the original Fratres of the Rosy Cross, whom we have seen darkly in the *Fama* of 1614, hardly more than shadows, but wielding power over men's imaginations and aspirations for generations to come.

¹ For full details about Renatus and other eighteenth-century manifestations of Rosicrucianism consult Waite, *Op. cit.*

CHAPTER XV

THE ILLUMINATI

IN the year 1776 the Chair of Canon Law at the Bavarian University of Ingolstadt was filled by a young man of twenty-eight named Adam Weishaupt. He had been educated by the Society of Jesus, but had so far fallen away from the doctrines taught him in youth as to have become a most advanced thinker in all matters where religion and politics were concerned, and was, moreover, an avowed and bitter enemy of his own early instructors. Contemporary accounts show him to have been a man of great intellectual powers, a brilliant lecturer, and exercising much influence over the young men with whom he came in contact at the University. This predominance in a small circle was, however, far from contenting him, and his ambition was to become the directing genius of a vast social movement that should alter the whole condition of the world.

His projects were, broadly speaking, to sweep away all existing monarchies and creeds, establishing in their stead republics where the desire to do good to one's fellow-man should take the place of all natural or revealed religions and subordinations of rank. Bavaria and all Germany were well prepared to listen to the preaching of such doctrines in an attractive and forcible form, for his theories were no fresh meat, but merely a skilful rechauffé of what eleutheromaniac pamphleteers had been vending for years in catchpenny attacks upon the petty courts of Germany and the sloth and corruption of the clergy. Weishaupt was therefore certain of finding a sympathetic audience, but he wished to make those who listened to his message subservient as well, and hence for the purpose of publishing

it to the world he established a secret society of which he intended to remain the chief, if not the sole director.

The association was launched at Ingolstadt on the 1st May, 1776, and was at first given the name of The Order of Perfectibilists, but this title was, no doubt wisely, soon changed to one that was to become world-famous, the Illuminati.

The purpose of the society, as expounded by the founder, was to create a luminous centre for the promotion of national and religious enlightenment, a purpose that would become increasingly effective as the society grew in members whose opinions had been moulded in advance to suit the ends it contemplated. To ensure that none should deviate from the strict standard of perfectibility devised by Weishaupt, the society was so designed as to secure from every admitted member the rejection of all religious dogmas, a pledge in favour of republican doctrines, and the habit of implicit obedience to whatever commands might be issued by the Areopagus or Supreme Council.

In order to find suitable material out of which to fashion the body of the Illuminati it was necessary to gain an influence over groups of the young and enthusiastic, and Weishaupt decided that his best recruiting-ground would lie in the Masonic Lodges. With this object in view he sought and obtained initiation as a Freemason in the Lodge Theodore of Good Counsel (*Theodor zum guten Rat*) in Munich some little time after he had established the society of Illuminati.

Freemasonry since its introduction to Germany from England had fallen far away from its original simplicity and become the victim of a host of impostors and quacks, so that half a dozen different systems held the field in that country in the seventeen-seventies, each declaring itself to be the only true Church and all others heterodox. In France the three Craft degrees of the primitive English rite had almost from their first appearance there been looked upon as far too simple and low-class to deserve the serious attention of a people with a passion for military rank, titles and decorations; so these three steps had been dubbed

symbolical, as merely a preparation for something better—this something being evolved in due course as endless ladders of chivalric degrees with high-sounding titles, attended by picturesque rituals and glittering decorations. From France all these Masonic adjuncts had been imported into Germany and added in one rite or another to the body of Freemasonry; but the German Masons had also evolved a new idea of their own about the society, which was that somewhere aloof, unknown, perhaps on the Mountain of Harodin, wherever that might be, perhaps in the hardly less mythical caves of Old Aberdeen, undisclosed superiors were watching the progress of the Lodges all over the world, and would from time to time manifest themselves to such junior Brethren as had merited their favour and seemed worthy of advancement in Masonry. What particular knowledge or advantage was to be gained by the happy recipient of such notice from the unseen superiors no one had the least idea; but many Freemasons believed in the existence of such unknown and unnamed hierarchs, and it was on this belief that Weishaupt reckoned when he set himself to ransack the Masonic Lodges for revolution-fodder.

He also reckoned on another factor. Most of the continental Lodges had completely broken away from the English rule prohibiting any discussion on religion or politics at the meetings; so much so indeed, that in many German Lodges it was in those days the custom for the Brother Orator to hold forth at length on debatable questions of theology and statecraft; and what might be euphemistically termed “advanced opinions” were those received with most applause in the Bavarian Lodges at this time.¹

Yet an additional reason for invading the Masonic Lodges was that the searcher would find there many young men of wealth, leisure and position, the classes most to be desired as instruments by a dictator who aimed at ruling a nation. Nor, as events proved, had Weishaupt miscalculated when he chose as baits such prospects as the hope of learning a secret shared by few, the opportunity of redressing anomalies

¹ John Robison, *Proofs of a Conspiracy*, etc., 1798. Robison had belonged to and visited many continental Lodges, and is an excellent authority for facts, though inclined to exaggerate the influence in world-affairs of the Illuminati.

and injustices, the obligation to use one's wealth and rank in the service of the commonwealth and in doing good to one's fellow-man—the young, the generous-hearted, are easy game when hunted down behind such stalking-horses.

Before proceeding with Weishaupt's Masonic adventures, however, some account must first be given of the Illuminati system itself, so far as can be gathered from the confessions of its author or the revelations of its opponents.

The grades of the Order were theoretically arranged in this scale:

1. Preparation.
2. Novice.
3. Minerval.
4. Illuminatus Minor.

This series was known as the Nursery, after which came the second group known as Masonry.

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|----------|---|---|
| Symbolic | { | 1. Apprentice. |
| | | 2. Fellow-craft. |
| | | 3. Master |
| Scotch | { | 4. Illuminatus Major or Scotch Novice. |
| | | 5. Illuminatus Dirigens or Scotch Knight. |

There is evidently some conflict between this ideal arrangement and the actual organization, for most, if not all, the members of the Illuminati had passed through the symbolic Craft degrees before ever becoming acquainted with Weishaupt's society. The scheme formulated above, therefore, must merely represent the model intended to be established when the Illuminati should have captured the control of all Masonic Lodges, which was one of Weishaupt's main objectives.

The third group comprised what was known as The Mysteries, divided into Lesser and Greater.

- | | | |
|-------------|---|-------------------------|
| The Lesser | { | 1. Presbyter or Priest. |
| | | 2. Prince or Regent. |
| The Greater | { | 3. Magus. |
| | | 4. Rex. |

The method of obtaining membership involved, in theory at all events, much difficulty and delay. In the Masonic Lodges Minervals were to be met who hinted at their immense superior knowledge that raised them above the common herd. When a likely candidate approached such a Minerval and expressed the wish to share the secret, the latter reported the matter to his Superior, who passed it on to the Council. After a time the candidate was invited to a conference with a person unknown to him who administered the following oath:

“ I, A.B., hereby bind myself by my honour and good name, forswearing all mental reservations, never to reveal by hint, word, writing, or in any manner whatever, even to my most trusted friend, anything that shall now be said or done to me respecting my wished-for reception, and this whether my reception shall follow or not, I being previously assured that it shall contain nothing contrary to religion, the state, or good manners. I promise that I shall make no intelligible extract from any papers which shall be shown me now or during my novitiate. All this I swear as I am, and as I hope to continue, a man of honour.”

The taking of this oath constituted him a Minerval.

The candidate was then introduced to an Illuminatus Dirigen as his future instructor, who, in theory, led him through a course of study lasting many weeks; but there is little doubt that this novitiate was greatly curtailed in the case of any very eligible recruit. The neophyte was impressed with the importance of the Order and told it existed for the purpose of doing good to others; and he was counselled to abandon all his prejudices. If after three years the Minerval had received no further advancement it was because he was considered unfit. He had then to be content to remain a Freemason of the highest class. This was known as a *Sta Bene*. Should he, however, have found favour, he was advanced to be an Illuminatus Minor. He was told in this grade that he must now look upon himself as an instrument to be used by his Superiors for the noblest purposes. In taking the oath he swore that he would “oppose

the enemies of the human race and of society," and that he would observe unshaken loyalty and submission to the Order "in the person of my Superiors," and make a complete surrender of his private judgment . . . and so on at considerable length.

A drawn sword was then pointed at his breast, and he was threatened with vengeance should he ever betray the Order. Four questions were then put to him to discover: What aim he wished the Order to have? What means he would adopt to gain that end? Whom he wished debarred from the Order? What subjects he wished discussed in it? All this was followed by an elaborate ritual ceremony of admission.

The Illuminatus Minor as such now learnt a little about the real doctrines of the Order, but these were communicated with great caution. He was told that their chief end was to unite all mankind into one great society ruled over by his Superiors, whose authority must be considered greater than that of any king or prince or existing system of government.

All this time the Illuminatus Minor had met only a few of his own rank, and throughout it was impressed on him that all mention of the society must be carefully avoided, "for the Order wishes to be secret, and to work in silence; for thus it is better secured from the oppression of the ruling powers, and because this secrecy gives a greater zest to the whole."

On attaining the rank of Illuminatus Dirigens, the aspirant was instructed to be all things to all men; to endeavour to acquire as much property as possible; and to plot to get a commanding position in his Masonic Lodges, by obtaining control of their funds, and by endeavouring to have the degree of Scotch Knight introduced into their ceremonies.

In his oath the Illuminatus Dirigens promised never to flatter the great nor to be the servant of princes, but to strive for "virtue, wisdom, and liberty"; to "oppose superstition, slander, and despotism"; and to "follow up the traces of the pure and true religion pointed out to me in my

instructions, and in the doctrines of Masonry; and I will faithfully report to my Superiors the progress I make therein."

The Love Feast that attended this degree was a parody of the Eucharist, and in it "J. of N." was referred to as the Grand Master of the Order and as having instituted this Agape the night before His Passion.

The Priest's degree was remarkable for a long harangue delivered to the candidate, and in it some of the doctrines of the Order were displayed much more openly than hitherto. It suggested that the best way of getting rid of irksome rulers was by means of a secret society that should aim at capturing all the power in the State. Princes and priests were to be exterminated. Patriotism must yield place for ever to cosmopolitanism or, as we should term it nowadays, Internationalism. "Whoever spreads general Illuminism augments mutual security; Illumination and security make princes unnecessary"—such was the clinching syllogism.

The subsequent ceremonies of the degree disclosed that the objects of the Order included the design of securing the control of education, of the Church, of the Universities and of the Press, particularly of reviewers.

Two versions of this degree are said to have been current; in the bowdlerized one the more offensive attacks on Church and State were omitted. No doubt the Superiors knew beforehand which version would best suit the quality of the candidate.

The degree of Regent was supposed to be reserved for men who were dissatisfied with existing governments, and wished to see a change. The candidate was introduced to the meeting dressed as a slave, and on being questioned what had brought him into such a miserable condition was instructed to reply: "Society—the State—Submissiveness—False Religion." In what followed after the new Regent was given some very enlightening instructions about behaviour, the main points of which can be condensed as follows:

To let the underlings imagine that the Order controlled all Masonic Lodges, and were the secret advisers of the greatest kings. That he should study to make himself

agreeable to women, because they are the best means of influencing men; therefore, let women be his principal study—flatter them, and they will eat out of your hand, says Weishaupt, though in more pompous language. Then the “common people” must be won by schools, condescension, and a pandering to their prejudices. Writers hostile to the principles of the Order must be bribed into becoming its supporters, or, if incorruptible, decried as scribblers. Veneration for kings must be killed by ridicule and the circulation of scandalous stories about their vices and follies. Since the great strength of the Order lies in its concealment, let it always be covered by another name—Freemasonry is a useful cloak to borrow. Then as grand climax:

“The power of the Order must surely be turned to the advantage of its members. All must be assisted. They must be preferred to all persons otherwise of equal merit. Money, services, honour, goods, and blood must be expended for the fully proved Brethren, and the unfortunate must be relieved by the funds of the society.”

In the degree of Magus or Philosophus a form of materialism or pantheism was openly preached. “God and the world are the same thing, and all religions whatever are without foundation, and merely the contrivances of ambitious men.”

In the Rex or supreme degree the teaching was that the meanest citizen is himself a sovereign “as in the Patriarchal state, and that nations must be brought back to that state, by whatever means are conducive—peaceably if it can be done; but if not, then by force—for all subordination must vanish from the face of the earth.”

It was the custom of the Illuminati to adopt the names of ancient celebrities: thus Weishaupt was known as Spartacus, the slave who headed an insurrection in the days of Pompey the Great; Baron von Knigge, of whom more later, was Philo; Judge Zwackh, Cato, etc., etc. Some celebrities, such as Mirabeau, are said to have become members, but their assumed names have not been discovered; while the originals

of some of the assumed names of active propagandists such as Euclides, Mahomet, and Socrates have yet to be disclosed. These assumed names were of course used in all correspondence about the concerns of the Order. Similarly the names of ancient places were given to modern German ones; thus Munich became Athens, and Bavaria, Grecia.

Weishaupt, as has been said, established his Order in 1776, and within two years it had increased considerably in numbers; therefore the lengthy period of novitiate must have been waived to begin with, but perhaps it was never strictly enforced. In 1778 Zwackh, alias Cato, a Criminal Court judge, a member high in the Order, suggested "to suit the taste of many of our truest members" the institution of an allied Sisterhood, to consist of two classes, "the virtuous, and the freer-hearted, i.e., those who fly out of the common track of prudish manners"; but apparently the adoption of this proposal was not deemed advisable—or perhaps necessary.

To the question of the morals of the Illuminati we shall return later.

It would appear that the system as a whole was evolved gradually, and did not spring, Athena-like, all at once out of the head of Weishaupt. Thus to Baron von Knigge, who did not join the Order till 1782, was entrusted the compilation of the ritual for the degree of Priest; and in Spartacus's opinion he spoilt it by introducing too much religion. Whatever ceremonies were in vogue, however, the Order spread rapidly from the start. At its apogee in 1783 the Grand Lodge of Illuminati was situated at Munich, and there were six other Circles functioning in Bavaria, which alone contained 600 Illuminati. Other Circles were said to be scattered all over Europe; the Order was supposed to have reached even America; while England was credited with eight Circles and Scotland with two. The Duke of Orleans, later Philippe Égalité, Grand Master of the Grand Orient of France, was claimed as a member, and so was Mirabeau, and though doubt exists about these names, it is certain that the Order had won the approval

if not the participation of such eminent literary men as Goethe and Herder, and of sovereigns such as Ernest II of Gotha and Karl August of Weimar. Its membership throughout Germany ran into thousands.

The progress of the Order was undoubtedly greatly forwarded by the acquisition as a member in 1782 of Baron von Knigge, a Masonic enthusiast who spent his life in acquiring new degrees and searching into the hidden meanings of the ceremonies. In pursuance of his usual occupation he had attended the Congress held at Wilhelmsbad in 1782, to which all the different Masonic systems of the continent sent delegates to decide by wrangling what was pure and genuine in Freemasonry, and who possessed the best rite. From such futile discussions Knigge was diverted by his conversion to Illuminism through the good offices of the Marquis Constanza, whose name in the Order was Diomedes.

Knigge was rapidly advanced to a post of trust and authority in the Order, and by his Masonic connexions and infectious enthusiasm gained it many supporters. He became head of the Circle that comprised Westphalia.

Philo, as Knigge was named in the Order, was not, however, disposed to accept Spartacus as a supreme dictator; and the latter termed him "fanatical and prudish," because he introduced too much religion into a ritual which, as we have seen, he was given to draft; but Philo had an excuse ready, which ran: "It is all one whether it be true or false, we must have it, so that we may tickle those that have a hankering for religion"—all of which savours of the rankest hypocrisy rather than of high purpose. Undoubtedly, however, Philo was of a gentler disposition than the bulk of his associates, and had more respect for the prejudices of others.

His connexion with the Order did not last very long, for in less than two years Philo got disgusted with Spartacus, and withdrew from the Illuminati with this parting valediction addressed to Cato Zwackh: "I abhor treachery and profligacy, and leave him [Spartacus] to blow himself and his Order into the air."

Warned by this defection, Spartacus at once made an addition to the ritual, and demanded a pledge from the neophyte that he would engage himself for ever to the Order, and bind himself by oath never to draw back.

But the mischief had already been done. Knigge's defection took place in 1784, but the society had previously become the subject of inquiries undertaken by command of the Elector of Bavaria, who had got an inkling that somewhere or other in his dominions a new movement was afoot directed against the established order of things.

Whatever had happened about the other maxims taught in their ceremonies, the Illuminati had failed hopelessly over the one that inculcated discretion and concealment of their designs. Several offensive pamphlets had been traced to members of Lodge Theodor zum guten Rath, and the Elector directed that an inquiry should be held about its proceedings. The result of this was to disclose that Lodge Theodor and other Masonic bodies had become breeding-grounds for a novel kind of Freemason, who called himself an Illuminatus, and whose express aim was to abolish Christianity and overthrow all civil government. No highly placed Illuminati were run to earth at first, but one or two Minervals were discovered who, when questioned, sang the Order's praises and refused to disclose what they had been taught concerning it. A decree followed ordering the closing of all Masonic Lodges. Lodge Theodor showed itself truculent, and continued to hold its regular meetings.

It was at this juncture, in July, 1784, that Knigge abandoned the Illuminati, and the thunder of his disapproval which rumbled through the ranks as he banged the door behind him terrified a junior member of the Order who was a professor at Marienburg. He communicated his doubts to three other professors who were also members, and in the upshot the four volunteered to disclose to the Elector all that they knew about Illuminism. Two of them were only Minervals, and the others had not advanced much farther; their revelations, however, were sufficiently damaging to the Illuminati. The Order was declared by these recanting Brethren to abjure Christianity and refuse advancement

to anyone who professed belief in this creed; epicurean pleasures were condoned; suicide justified; patriotism and loyalty deprecated as narrow-minded prejudices; the holding of private property declared a crime; to do evil that good might come of it was enjoined as a duty; and the advantage of the Order was held superior to every other consideration.

Weishaupt and his supporters hastened into print anonymously to deny these assertions, and a pamphlet-war began, only to be cut short in 1785 by an edict which abolished the Order of Illuminati.

Weishaupt was discovered to be the head of the offending body, and he was deprived of his chair and banished from Bavaria with a pension of some £40, which he refused to accept. He went first of all to Regensburg, where he published a defence of the Order, and thence to the court of Saxe-Gotha. Still later he became a professor at Göttingen, where he died in 1830. Cato Zwackh and a couple of noblemen who had been connected with the Order were also banished.

What were the real aims of the Order of Illuminati? The account given of its rituals is perhaps sufficient indication, but this and other evidence cannot be considered of equal weight with Weishaupt's own apology; so some excerpts from this defence of his will be pertinent.

"I have contrived," he writes, "an explanation [of Freemasonry] which has every advantage, is inviting to Christians of every communion, gradually frees them from all religious prejudices, cultivates the social virtues, and animates them by a great, a feasible, and a *speedy* prospect of universal happiness, in a state of liberty and moral equality, freed from the obstacles which subordination, rank, and riches continually throw in our way. My explanation is accurate and complete; my means are effectual and irresistible. Our secret association works in a way that nothing can withstand, and *man shall soon be free and happy*. . . .

"To fit man by Illumination for active virtue, to engage him to it by the strongest motives, to render the attainment of it easy and certain. . . . this indeed will be an employ-

ment suited to noble natures, grand in its views, and delightful in its exercise. . . .

“And what is the general object? *The happiness of the human race.* . . . When we see the wicked so powerful and the good so weak, and that it is in vain to strive singly and alone against the general current of vice and oppression, the wish naturally arises in the mind that it were possible to form a durable combination of the most worthy persons, who should work together in removing the obstacles to human happiness. . . and by fettering lessen vice; means which at the same time should promote virtue, by rendering the inclination to rectitude, hitherto so feeble, more powerful and engaging. Would not such an association be a blessing to the world?”

Truly, here be noble sentiments, even if expressed with a longwindedness of which the German language is peculiarly capable; they are a trifle too idealistic perhaps for a workaday world, but who will deny that such sublime altruism when embodied in the lives of the founder and his disciples would have formed a golden example to the great advantage of humanity?

The abolition of all rank and subordination, the confiscation of private property, and the proscription of religious beliefs in a state have become common enough during the past few years to have lost most of their power to shock or surprise; so some of us might almost be inclined to forgive the Illuminati their iconoclastic doctrines about property and statecraft for the sake of the civic virtues they professed. For if there was one thing the Brotherhood preached, it was virtue, moral and social; and how well they practised their own lessons will now be shown from intimate correspondence that passed between the leaders.

Spartacus Weishaupt writing to Cato Zwackh in August 1783 complains that his associates are so engrossed in their private concerns that “I am deprived of all help. Socrates, who would insist on having a position of responsibility amongst us, and who really is a man of talent, *of the right way of thinking*, is eternally drunk. Augustus’s reputation could not be worse. Alcibiades does nothing but sit all day

long with the vintner's pretty wife and spends his whole time in sighing and pining with love. Then a few days ago at Corinth Tiberius attempted to ravish the wife of Democides, and her husband took them in the act." Spartacus goes on to say that he is expecting a very highly placed personage to arrive in Munich, and that this bigwig will probably fight shy of entering an association of "dissolute, immoral wretches, whoremasters, liars, bankrupts, braggarts, and vain fools . . . when the chiefs raise the highest expectations, and then exhibit such wretched examples. . . ."

No wonder that a distressed Spartacus calls upon his Cato to deplore with him the presence of such members in the Order. In another letter, however, Cato's own toga is found to have become much too soiled for washing in public. We have already heard of his projected Sisterhood "to consist of two classes," and now the gossip of his fellow-Illuminati exhibits him as having received a bribe of 250 florins when acting as judge in the criminal court.

In another letter Spartacus tells Marius, a clergyman Canon Hertel, that a "worthy Brother of the highest rank in the Order" had stolen some jewellery from Brutus (Count Savioli), so would Marius please endeavour to recover the lost property before the theft was discovered, because the culprit was a most excellent man and of vast use to the Order.

Such were the disappointments of the idealist who had formed an Order to give *employment suited to noble natures*. How grieved too must Canon Marius Hertel have been at receiving so many deplorable confidences. Did he ascribe these lapses from rectitude to the inadequacy of the existing moral and social laws? Did he look forward to an amelioration, when everything under the sun should be directed by the Illuminati? We are not in a position to answer these questions nor yet to describe what his feelings were when, in September, 1783, he received one more and culminating illustration of the founder's determination to *fit man by Illumination for active virtue*. Spartacus then wrote to him in the agony of personal despair: "I am in danger

of losing at once my honour and reputation by which I have long had such influence," and disclosed the cause, that he had got his sister-in-law with child. "We have tried every method in our power to destroy the child," he complained, "but it looks as if marriage will be the only means of hushing up the business. . . . I cannot conceive what devil has made me go astray—*me who have always been so careful on such occasions.*"

The prophecy "Man shall soon be free and happy" was not to be realized yet awhile for Spartacus, for attempts to procure abortion having failed, and the expectant mother having refused to commit suicide, an act that seemed an easy way out of the difficulty to her paramour, he was ultimately obliged to obtain a dispensation and marry his sister-in-law, though this event was delayed till some little time after the arrival in the world of Spartacus Junior.

This story of his betrayal of the woman who loved him, and his futile attempt to evade responsibility by criminal means is no pleasant reading, but yet hardly so nauseous as the defence of his own conduct published years later by Weishaupt. The incident of endeavouring to destroy the unborn child was, he declared, far from proving any depravity of heart; and speaking of himself in the third person he continues his defence: "In his condition, his honour at stake, what else was left him to do? . . . He had become a public teacher, and was greatly followed; this example might have ruined many young men. The eyes of the Order also were fixed on him . . . had he fallen, *he could no longer have been in a condition to treat the matters of virtue so as to make a lasting impression.* It was chiefly his anxiety to support the credit of the Order which determined him to take this step."

The reader has now been put in the position to answer for himself the rhetorical question of the Founder of Illuminism: "Would not such an Association be a blessing to the world?" He can also decide for himself the still hotly debated problem whether the Illuminati were as dangerous to the State and to morals as they seem in the face of the evidence, or whether the buckets of whitewash that have

been poured over them during the course of the last century and a half have really been effective either as a decoration or as a deodorizer; but another question still remains to be considered: did the Illuminati continue to exist as an organized body after the dissolution in 1785?

The "German Union," a kind of reading-club, membership of which was obtainable only through reading-societies and on taking an oath of secrecy, is still held by many to be merely a continuation of the Illuminati under a new form; but it is improbable that this society which arose shortly before the fateful year 1789, had anything in common with Illuminism but its advanced doctrines, and these were, after all, the fashionable cant of the years preceding the French Revolution. Other writers have traced a continuity of Illuminism in every revolutionary event that has happened in Europe from 1789 to the present day; but in so far as this theory connotes any unbroken "laying on of hands" from Weishaupt to Lenin, it would seem to be far-fetched, and unproven by any evidence hitherto produced.

But is not the converse position equally untenable? That Weishaupt and his associates had no influence on the course of the world beyond their own day, and but little in that? Let us hearken to a reluctant parable from Heine, the poet of revolt, who dreamt that he was being followed about everywhere by the shadowy form of an executioner carrying an axe, and that when he challenged the spectre to say what it was and why it dogged his footsteps, the answer came: "I am the deed that follows on your thoughts!"

Thoughts, even as flames spreading through a city, can leap over barren spaces to material ripe for the burning, and during the last four hundred years have become more indestructible than ever in the written word; nor is there anything impossible or too fantastic in the suggestion that the bold speculations of the Illuminati may from time to time have caught the attention of those spiritual brethren of theirs who have in various epochs and divers countries been seeking to change the moral and civic bases of society, and caught it, moreover, without the intervention of any

secret association to preach the lesson, a printed page being quite potent enough for the purpose.

We who are to-day spectators of what is perhaps the most daring social experiment in the history of the world would need to shut our eyes to the picture of modern Russia before declaring that the Illuminism of Adam Weishaupt had faded out into dull lifeless ashes as assuredly as did his own fiery soul in the dust and cobwebs of a Göttingen class-room.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PHILADELPHES OR OLYMPIENS

THIS secret society is said to have come into being with the object of undermining the Napoleonic régime; but, while it probably had an actual existence, as is proved by the appearance of Lodges of Filadelfi in Italy, we have to rely for information about its formation and early activities on evidence that is not above suspicion.

In 1815 there was published anonymously in Paris a book, said to be from the pen of Charles Nodier, entitled: *Histoire des Sociétés Secrètes de l'Armée et des Conspirations Militaires qui ont eu pour objet la Destruction du Gouvernement de Bonaparte*. This book is written in the first person, and purports to be the revelations of an ex-Philadelphe. His story is as follows:

At the time when Napoleon became First Consul there existed in Besançon a purely social club composed of young men, known as Les Philadelphes.

General Claude François de Malet (1754–1812), a veteran of the Revolution, who was opposed to Napoleon, determined to turn this club into a secret society, with the object of restoring the Bourbons. To do so he made use of his friend Colonel Jacques Joseph Oudet (1775–1809), also a veteran of the Revolution, who had been initiated into nearly every European secret society in search of information, and who was therefore well qualified to form a new one.

Oudet, whose name in the society became Philopoemen, called it *L'Échelle Philadelphique*, the Philadelphian Ladder. It was surrounded by mystery and ceremonial; the ostensible objects aimed at were moral perfection in the individual and an ideal reorganization of society. Members took an oath of secrecy, and were divided into three grades, each

having fixed duties. Each grade knew nothing of the functions of the one superior to it. Supreme power was vested in the successive leaders, the first of these being Oudet. To attain this rank, one had to pass through the three grades, the second of which was intended to test the aspirant's firmness of mind, and many never surmounted it. The institution was despotic, and resembled nothing so much as the power wielded aforesaid by the Old Man of the Mountains. Oudet had modelled the society on what he imagined Freemasonry must have been in the times of its primitive purity.

Those who reached the third grade were given a new name, a custom such as had been established in the society of the Illuminati.

Having completed his work of forming the society in Besançon (which to the members was henceforth known as Philadelphia), Oudet set himself to introduce the society into the army, and was successful; three complete regiments became initiated and affiliated to the Mother Society by the name of the Frères Bleus. Delegates were sent to the west and south-east of France, and transplanted the Philadelphie system into the affiliated societies of the Miquelets in the Pyrenean departments, the Barbets in the Alps, Bandoliers in Switzerland, Jura, and the Savoy. For propagating his system Oudet made use of societies already in existence, among others the Charbonniers of Jura, who are stated to have been the progenitors of the Italian Carbonari, and this is undoubtedly true to a certain extent.¹

Were all these statements susceptible of proof, we should have to attach a great historic importance to Les Philadelphes; but proof will have to be found elsewhere than in an anonymous book.

To continue the tale. The highest office in the society, the dictator, was known as the Censeur, and Oudet, as has been said, filled it first of all. Having incurred suspicion of treasonable plotting against Napoleon he was retired from the army and banished to the Jura district, whereupon

¹ See Les Fendeurs, p. 91. See also p. 148 for De Witt's statements about the Masonic origin of *Les Philadelphes* and the coming of the Order to Italy.

he chose as Censeur to succeed him no less a person than General Moreau, the victor of Hohenlinden, who was appointed to this office immediately after having been elected a Philadelphie. He took the name of Fabius.

Moreau having to go into exile after Pichegru's plot, Oudet was either re-elected Censeur or else reassumed that office. He had been restored to active service in the army in 1805. About this time, Fouché, Napoleon's Minister of Police, got wind of the plot, and to avoid discovery the name of the society was changed to that of Les Olympiens.

Vidocq, in his *Memoirs*, a book on which it would be unwise to rely implicitly, states that a society called Les Olympiens was formed in the army at Boulogne with the object of overthrowing Napoleon, and that its founder was a young man named Crombet, who ran a Masonic Lodge with his associates. They were denounced in 1806.

Later on Oudet again retired, and Malet became Censeur. But the society was moribund, and the death of Oudet in the battle of Wagram, 1809, ended its political activities. The society had no devotion to Malet, and took no part in his conspiracy in 1812 to overthrow Napoleon which came within measurable distance of succeeding.

A translation of a passage from the book so much quoted already may serve to complete this account of the society.

“There are societies of Philadelphes at Boston and Philadelphia. They are almost entirely composed of Frenchmen, and only concern themselves with the fundamental ideas of the original institution, philanthropy and friendship. Moreau is said to have formed the one in the city last mentioned. Officers, prisoners of war, have formed other branches of the society in England and Russia.

“There are three Italian societies which openly bear the name of Filadelfi; one of them, situated in Parma, long ago returned to its Masonic allegiance.

“In certain towns the Philadelphes have never concealed their proceedings, but this open portion of the institution never followed the movement.”

CHAPTER XVII

THE CARBONARI

THE society of the Carbonari first began to attract attention in the kingdom of Naples towards the close of Murat's reign, but the date of its actual inception in Italy cannot be determined. According to one story it was established in Genoa in 1809. Its introduction to the south has been ascribed to different persons, including Queen Caroline of Naples, an unidentified French officer in garrison at Capua, an unnamed Italian officer who had served in Spain and acquired a knowledge of the society in that country; while yet another theory favours the gradual evolution of the Carbonari system from a knot of persons interested in progressive politics. There is no doubt whatever that its conception was in the first place French, for it has a strong family resemblance to *Les Fendeurs*, which existed in eighteenth-century France as a friendly and benevolent secret society; and a similar society known as the *Charbonniers* or *Bucherons*, and referred to as *Le bon Cousinage*, was said to have been existent in the Jura districts long prior to the first appearance of the Carbonari.¹ Thus the exact date at which it first appeared in Naples in its Italian dress is as undeterminable as unimportant.

The society first came into prominence as a political force in 1814, and this was due to Maghella, the Minister of Police. This man, a Genoese by birth, had been known and trusted by Murat during the French campaign in Piedmont, and when the latter succeeded Joseph Bonaparte on the throne of Naples he summoned his former acquaintance, employed him in affairs of State, and ultimately made him Minister of Police. Maghella was a man of patriotic and liberal

¹ Anon., *Memoirs of the Secret Societies of the South of Italy, particularly the Carbonari*, translated from the Italian. London, 1821.

views; his ideals were an independent Italy with a constitutional Government, in pursuit of which he tried to detach Murat from Napoleon. He advised his master to take no part in the Russian campaign of 1812, and on its failure further pressed him to break with France, proclaim an independent Italy, and put himself at the head of the movement. The idea was not unfavourably received at the Congress of Prague, for the Allies would have welcomed any anti-Napoleonic movement; but Murat could not make up his mind to such a bold step, and Napoleon, on getting wind of what was afoot, demanded that Maghella be sent to Paris as a State prisoner, an order which was duly carried out. However, towards the end of 1813 Maghella made his escape, returned to Naples, and took a prominent part in persuading Murat to throw in his lot with the Allies. Later, in 1815, when Murat occupied the Papal States and hoped to retain them as his own, he entrusted Maghella with their secular organization; but with the failure of this scheme and the deposition of Murat, Maghella's political career came to an end, and he again became the State prisoner of an absolutist Government. This, however, is anticipating events.

It was in 1814 after his return to Naples that he set about consolidating the Carbonari as a political power. He was working for his old ideas, as was shown by an address published in March, 1815, asking Murat for a constitution in which the power of the crown should be subject to certain limitations; this, if granted, would have been an inducement to the other Italian States to link up their fortunes with that of Naples. Maghella's demand was supported by the nobility, army and upper classes; but the middle and lower classes were indifferent to a constitution, and some of the provinces of the kingdom of Naples, notably the Abruzzi and Calabria, held back, for in those districts an attachment to King Ferdinand, the deposed Bourbon, and a dislike of innovations persisted. Moreover, Murat had no intention of granting constitutional government unless his hand were forced. So to overcome all these hindrances Maghella chose the Carbonari society as a lever.

“Both the character and the position of Murat precluded reliance upon him, and the Carbonari organization was an instrument which could be used to mould to the purposes of its directors, or to overturn, either a Bonaparte or a Bourbon.”¹

The instrument itself must now be described.

Contemporaries, both friends and foes, traced the origins of the Carbonari to Freemasonry. It is said that any Freemason who wished to join a Carbonaro Lodge in Naples was admitted simply on ballot, without having to go through the usual initiatory ceremonies. This, if true, must refer only to certain brands of quasi-Freemasonry as practised on the Continent; for the society of Carbonari was, above all, political in its objects.

What follows is the earliest account available of the legend on which the society was based.²

During the troubles in Scotland in Queen Isabella's time, many people took refuge in the woods from tyranny. They employed themselves in cutting wood and making charcoal. Under pretence of carrying charcoal for sale they introduced themselves into the villages, met their partizans, and communicated their plans. They recognized each other by signs, tokens, and words. They lived in oblong huts in the forest, and established there a Government and laws. This Government consisted of three persons; their office was triennial, and they presided over three *vendite*³ or Lodges; one legislative, another administrative, and the third judicial. This last was called the *Alta Vendita*.

These *vendite* were divided into a number of *baracche*, each erected by a Good Cousin of some distinction among his companions who communicated with the *Alta Vendita*, and was styled the Grand Master.

There was a hermit in the forest named Theobald, who joined the Carbonari, and was proclaimed their protector.

Francis I, king of France, hunting on the frontiers of his

¹ Thomas Frost, *Secret Societies of the European Revolution*, 1876.

² *Memoirs of the Secret Societies of the South of Italy*, 1821.

³ *Vendita* is, literally, a place of sale; *baracca*, a hut or tent.

kingdom nearest to Scotland, got lost in the forest. He stumbled upon one of the baracche and asked for shelter, which was granted. Francis admired the happiness and mystic discipline of the Carbonari, discovered himself to them as the king of France, and requested to be made acquainted with their secrets. They initiated him, and he promised to become their protector. On his return to France he scrupulously fulfilled his oath, declared himself the protector of the Carbonari, and increased their number. The society afterwards spread itself over Germany and England.

The absurdities of this legend would hardly call for any comment, but for certain deductions that may be drawn from it. It seems to be of French invention from the mention of King Francis; to have been composed, moreover, in a part of France where the people were unaware of the real frontier, the sea, between that country and Scotland; while the fact that Scotland was mentioned at all would seem to point to that period in French Freemasonry when the word *Écossais* was applied to any recently invented degree as a forged hall-mark of respectability. If these deductions be right, we shall perhaps not be far wrong in seeking for the true original of the Carbonari society in some obscure French secret society of the second half of the eighteenth century.

The general doctrines of the Order were ten in number.

I. Good Cousinship is mainly founded on religion and virtue.

II. The place of meeting is called the Baracca; the place surrounding it the Forest; the interior of the Lodge the Vendita.

III. The members are called Good Cousins, and are divided into Apprentices and Masters.

IV. Tried virtue and purity of morals are qualifications for membership.

V. Six months must pass before an Apprentice can become a Master.

VI. It is forbidden to argue directly or indirectly against religion.

VII. All conversation on religion in general and against good morals is prohibited.¹

VIII. Secrecy to be preserved about the mysteries of the Order.

IX. What takes place in the Vendita is not to be communicated to members of another Vendita, much less to the uninitiated.

X. The greatest reserve is recommended towards all persons with whom members are not well acquainted, but more especially in the bosoms of their own families.

The Alta Vendita, or principal Lodge, was composed of honorary members and of deputies from each particular Vendita. It was an administrative and legislative body, a court of council and appeal, and was therefore divided into different sections.

This Grand Lodge was held at Naples, and consisted of the most distinguished members of the Order and delegates from provincial lodges. It granted patents; made laws and regulations; acted as court of appeal; and for a time formed the centre from which all the revolutionary movements in Italy radiated.

Two registers were kept: the Golden Book and the Black Book. In the former the laws and records were entered; in the latter, the names of rejected candidates, also the names and particulars of expelled members.

The strength of the society grew with extraordinary rapidity. In some towns of Calabria and the Abruzzi the whole of the male population had been initiated as Carbonari.

The anonymous Italian author who gave an account of the society in 1821 when it was in the height of its power has recorded one strange instance of the anomalies inherent in such a widespread and all-comprehending political society.

“Excepting in the case of the absolute power of the Vendite, the Secret Societies flatter the taste of the age for equality. The rich and the poor, the noble and the artizan

¹ Presumably in the Vendita.

are here confounded. . . . So far is this system carried, that an assassin condemned to the chain is permitted to take his place in the *Vendita* of the Castle of St. Elmo, where he is confined with other galley-slaves, and the commander of the fort, himself a Carbonaro, has not dared to exclude him but is obliged to sit by his side."

The penal statutes of the Order suspended all members who kept notoriously bad company, or appeared drunk in public, or abandoned their families, or played at games of chance. Severer penalties were attached to any offence against the chastity of a Good Cousin's wife or female relative or mistress.

These and other graver crimes were tried by a court of Carbonari. The accused had the right to be represented by counsel, and the verdict was returned by a jury. No appeal to the ordinary law of the land was allowed until the Carbonari court had given such permission to appeal.

Thus the Carbonari formed a State within the State.

The Order also aimed at drilling and arming its members.

Many of the lower clergy became its ardent supporters, notwithstanding the severest prohibitions of the Holy See.

According to the ritual of the Order a Carbonaro Lodge or *Vendita* should be held in a room wainscoted with wood and paved with brick. At one end was situated a rough block of wood behind which the Master sat, and on it were placed certain objects—a linen cloth, water, salt, a cross, leaves of trees, sticks, fire, earth, a crown of white thorns, a ladder, a ball of thread, with three ribbons, one blue, one red, and one black, to complete the emblems. On the wall behind the Master was an irradiated triangle with the initials of the pass-word of the Master's degree. On the left a triangle painted with the arms of the *vendita*. On the right, three triangles with the initials of the sacred words of the Apprentice.

At each side of the Master's block were placed similar blocks for the Secretary and Orator, while two others at the far end of the room were for the Master's First and Second Assistants.

Backless benches ran down each side of the room. To the right of the Master sat the Apprentices barcheaded; to his left, the Masters wearing their hats.

The meaning of all the symbols exposed to view formed the matter for a discourse addressed to the candidate which varied according to the period and place where it was delivered; in some venditas a political signification was attached to the emblems; in others, apparently not.

In the degree of Apprentice the candidate was blindfolded, and swore upon the axe to keep the secrets of the society, and to help his Good Cousins in time of need.

In the degree of Master the presiding officer was addressed as Pilate, while his assistants took the names of Caiaphas and Herod. The candidate was again blindfolded, and in the subsequent ceremony represented Jesus Christ.

The anonymous reporter of 1821 mentions yet a third grade, in which the resistance of a certain Theban named Philomel to Philip of Macedon was commemorated, the legend being obviously given a political bearing; but if this grade did actually exist, it was no part of the regular Carbonaro system, which recognized only the two grades of Master and Apprentice.

Heckethorn¹ describes two additional degrees practised by the Carbonari. In the first of these the candidate was attached to a cross, and the ceremony consisted in a mock raid by supposed Austrian soldiers. The second was named the *Principi Summo Patriarcho*, and the authority for its existence is a certain De Witt of whom some account will be given later.

Let it be said at once, that in the period 1816-21 so many secret societies with revolutionary aims came into existence in Italy, all postulating the desire to work hand in hand, that even contemporaries may have found it impossible to distinguish carefully between them; at any rate, the general term Carbonari was loosely used for them all; so that body undoubtedly got some undeserved discredit from the teaching and methods of other societies over which it had no real control. Thus the extra degrees mentioned

¹ C. W. Heckethorn, *Secret Societies*, London, 1897.

above most likely came from another source than the Good Cousins.

Such was the organization of the society which Maghella in 1814 enlisted in the struggle for an independent Italy under a constitutional government. He aimed to influence by it the middle and lower classes, who had a Gallio-like indifference for the word "constitution," but were attracted by the promise that an independent Italy would mean lower taxation. To give prestige to the movement there was circulated a forged document, purporting to be a Bull of Pope Pius VII in favour of the Carbonari.

The order began to flourish exceedingly; and early realizing its strength, when it found that Murat hesitated to grant constitutional government, it sent ambassadors to King Ferdinand at Palermo, and found him ready to promise anything to get back his kingdom. A revolt in favour of "Ferdinand the Constitutional King" was accordingly set on foot, but easily suppressed.

Then came the Hundred Days of 1815, when Murat declared for Napoleon, marched on Rome, seized the Papal States, attacked the Austrians, and advanced to the Po. He was faced then by disaffection in his own troops and obliged to retreat. A tardy grant of the long-promised constitution on the 13th May came too late to save his kingdom. Ferdinand on the 1st May had already issued a similar manifesto from Palermo. By the end of the month the Austrian troops had marched into Naples, and the Bourbon king was restored to his throne.

A secret article in the treaty between the Emperor of Austria and Ferdinand stipulated that the latter should not introduce into his government any principles irreconcilable with those adopted by the former in the government of his Italian provinces, which were Venice and Lombardy, with the overlordship of Parma and Modena. Ferdinand therefore was sworn to rule as an absolute monarch. This suited his inclinations. A reign of terror followed his return to Naples. Maghella having been carried off to an Austrian prison was succeeded as Minister of Police by the Prince of Canosa, who, finding himself faced with the opposition of

the very powerful Carbonaro society, determined to oppose it by the establishment of a counter-society, which he named the Calderari del Contrapeso, Braziers of the Counter-weight. It came into being about January, 1816, and contradictory tales are told about the ways in which it was recruited. According to the Carbonari version, the new society was composed of those who had been expelled from the Vendite for misbehaviour. Another version given by the contemporary *Minerva Napolitana* asserts that the Calderari were an old reactionary society, known as the Sanfedists, revived under a new name by Cardinal Ruffo, archbishop of Naples. . . . "On being reinstated in his episcopal see, he assembled a number of persons of the lower and middle classes, and gave them the name of Calderari or Braziers, in order to resist the Carbonari, as kettles resist coals, which are exhausted by burning under them."

An anonymous statement published in 1820, and supposed to emanate from Canosa himself, denied the facts laid to his charge. According to this document the Calderari were not expelled Carbonari, but originated at Palermo out of the trade guilds. Their original name was the Trinitarii; and they were under oath to defend legitimate monarchy. Since the Carbonari were sworn to destroy the latter, says the pamphlet, Canosa was quite justified in playing off one faction against the other during his term of office. The oath of the Calderari was couched in the following terms:¹

"I, N. N., promise and swear upon the Trinity, as supreme director of the universe, upon this cross, and upon this steel, the avenging instrument of the perjured, to live and die in the Roman Catholic and Apostolic faith, and to defend with my blood this religion, and the society of True Friendship, the Calderari, to which I am about to belong. I swear never to offend in honour, life or property, the children of True Friendship; I promise and swear to all the Knights True Friends all possible succour that shall depend on me.

"I swear to initiate no person into the Society before I arrive at the 4th rank.

¹ Count Orloff, *Memoirs of the Kingdom of Naples*.

“I swear eternal hatred to all Masonry, and to its atrocious protectors; as well as to all Jansenists, Materialists, Economists and Illuminati. I swear as I value my life never to admit any of them into the Society of Friendship.

“Lastly I swear that if, through wickedness or levity, I suffer myself to be perjured, I submit to the loss of life as the punishment of my error, and then to be burnt: and may my ashes, scattered to the wind, serve as an example to the Children of Friendship throughout the whole world. And so help me God, for the happiness of my soul, and the repose of my conscience.”

Whether this society owed any recruits to that of Della Santa Fe or not is really immaterial; the fact is certainly indisputable that it contained many bad characters. Canosa provided it with arms, and incessant tumults between it and the Carbonari resulted. In the upshot, the Calderari committed so many excesses that Canosa was obliged to resign his post and leave Naples in 1816. Three months later the Calderari were suppressed by royal decree.

The Carbonari, however, were not to be suppressed. General Nunziante, the military commander in Calabria, reported that the forces at his disposal were quite inadequate for any such purpose. He estimated the numbers of Carbonari in that province as approaching sixty thousand. Moreover, in Calabria and the Abruzzi in 1817 several new societies appeared as offshoots of the Carbonari: the three most important were the Filadelfi, the Reformed European Patriots, and the Decisi. The first two were military in organization, and were divided into camps and squadrons respectively. Their meetings were at first held at night in lonely deserted buildings, where they drilled and trained; but later they became bolder, and appeared in public during the daytime. The seal of both these societies was a figure of Liberty displaying the Phrygian cap and Roman fasces. The Reformed European Patriots also possessed a second seal, a sun enclosed within two triangles.

The society of the Decisi, it is said, was originally formed^d in 1807 to further a conspiracy against the French in Naples, but in this their later manifestation their purpose was

plunder and blackmail, and they consisted mainly of Carbonari who had been expelled for their crimes.

The Decisi seems to have been a particularly horrible society. One of the officers of each *Decisione*¹ was known as the Registrar of the Dead, and his duty was to keep a record of the victims they immolated. There was also a Director of Funeral Ceremonies, who presided over the rites of assassination. The Grand Master of each *Decisione* had the power of decreeing Death, and added four points after his signature to imply this terrible distinction.

“When the Decisi wrote to anyone to extort contributions, or to command him to do anything—if they added these four points it was known that the person they addressed was condemned to death in case of disobedience. If the points were omitted, he was threatened with a milder punishment, such as laying waste his fields or burning his house.”

The symbols of the Decisi were the thunderbolt darting from a cloud and striking the Crown and the Tiara; the Fasces and the Cap of Liberty planted upon a death's head between two axes; the skull and cross-bones with the words, “Tristezza, Morte, Terrore, Luto”—sadness, death, terror and mourning. Their colours were yellow, red, and blue.

Undoubtedly their activities vastly increased the volume of crime that has been committed in the name of Liberty.

By the beginning of 1818 bands drawn from these three societies were ravaging all Calabria. The Government of Ferdinand was impotent against them, and at last engaged an English General, Church, to raise a foreign legion to hunt them down. At this time they numbered about 20,000. Church finally overthrew the bands early in 1818, and executed prisoners wholesale, including a priest, Ciro Annichiarico, one of the most celebrated leaders.

Besides the societies already mentioned others with a political basis sprang up in different parts of Italy between 1816 and 1820. To understand the existence of such societies the political condition of Italy at that time must be borne in mind; there was the independent kingdom taking its

¹ The Lodges of the Decisi were termed *Decisioni*, Decisions.

name from the island of Sardinia and embracing Piedmont and Savoy; the States of Lombardy and Venetia which were Austrian provinces; the Duchies of Parma and Modena ruled by members of the Hapsburg family; the Papal States; and the kingdom of the Two Sicilies; all of these entities were independent of one another, in all of them there was an absolute ruler, and in all of them there was a desire for change, whether to a constitutional monarchy or to a republic. The ideal of a united independent Italy was held of less importance than the desire to expel the Austrians in the north or to establish a more tolerable form of local government in the south.

About the year 1816 a revolutionary society named the Guelphs arose in the Papal states. It had its central council at Bologna, and provincial councils at Fermo, Macerata, and Ancona. The Carbonari were already established in the Papal States, probably the results of Maghella's administration there in 1815, but were, naturally, quite independent of the Grand Vendita in Naples, and had their own Grand Lodge at Ancona. Correspondence probably passed between these two bodies, but no real connexion of effort or plan can be traced between them. It is even doubtful if they were alike in ritual. The seal of the Ancona Alta Vendita was a hand grasping a dagger; and it used daggers instead of axes in its initiations. With this Grand Lodge the Central Council of the Guelphs had a conference in the autumn of 1816, at which a union of all the secret societies in the Papal States was arranged. These were divided into three districts, Bologna, Forli, and Ancona, each with its own subdivisions. Each of the societies was to preserve its own constitution and organization; but every Lodge was required to send a monthly statement of its membership to the Central Council at Bologna. The Carbonari were to be admitted without initiation into the Guelph Lodges. The conference also devised a system of cipher for use in correspondence.

The new arrangement worked well, and by 1817 the Carbonari or Guelphs, or both, had extended their operations into Lombardy.

In the spring of 1817 the Pope was rumoured to be lying on his death-bed, and the secret societies prepared for a rising to coincide with his decease. He recovered unexpectedly, and the revolt was postponed until June, when the attempt was made at Macerata, and proved a complete failure. The leaders were arrested, tried, found guilty, and ultimately sentenced to death or imprisonment, all of the sentences being promptly mitigated by the Pope, who on this occasion set an example of mercy that was not followed by the other absolute rulers of Italy.

At the trial of the conspirators which did not take place till 1818 the prosecution alleged that the Carbonari were accustomed to resort to poison as well as the dagger to punish disobedience, and accused them of incendiarism and treason. It would perhaps be unfair to assume that all the charges levelled against this group of unsuccessful plotters were strictly proven; still the official report of the trial is interesting as showing the opinion held in conservative circles about the Carbonari and their federated allies. For one thing, they were all supposed to be branches of Freemasonry.

“We had become fully acquainted,” says the report, “with the Masonic sect during past calamities, which owe their origin to it. That of the Carbonari was called forth just as those calamities were about to cease, as if to increase and perpetuate them. It had its origin and principal seat at Naples, whence it spread into some provinces of the Papal States; and its inauspicious influence had been particularly felt in the Marches. While, in the midst of general peace, this Society was making progress in several cities of Dalmatia, other secret associations, no less audacious, established themselves. The Guelphs extended themselves into Lombardy from the northern provinces of the States of the Church; the Republican Brother Protectors, of French and Lombard origin, insinuated themselves into some parts of the Marches; the Adelphi lurked in great secrecy throughout Piedmont; and lastly, the Society of the Black Pin attempted to introduce itself into Italy from France. These different denominations, which succeeded each other, were artfully continued, not only for the purpose of deepening their

secrecy, but to enable their chiefs, whenever it suited their purpose, to get rid of such members as change of times or circumstances had rendered obnoxious to suspicion. They also served to inform all the initiated at once of whatever was going on in the way of innovation or reform, and to keep them in constant activity, in order that they might be ready and ardent to support, on the first opportunity, a political change agreeable to their wishes. In fact, the adherence of any individual to one of the secret societies suffices to ensure his reception, with a corresponding rank, into all those that may be formed afterwards, so that one sect is always merging in another while procuring new proselytes. That they are all, however, no other than so many ramifications of Masonry, some of the best informed sectaries themselves allow; and none of them differ essentially as to the object which they have in view—namely, independence and constitutional government.”¹

The same year that saw the unsuccessful attempt at revolt in Macerata had been spent by the Neapolitan Carbonari in plots for a rising; but they had discovered that the populace was not ripe for it. They had alarmed the Government by distributing a printed manifesto which demanded a constitution and advised the people to pay no taxes till it was granted. Consequently stern repressive measures were adopted, and unlimited judicial powers (in some cases the death sentence itself without any preliminary trial) conferred upon an officer appointed for that purpose. Tactful management, however, kept the public peace from being broken.

The next two years saw a great extension of the Carbonari and the federated societies in Piedmont and Lombardy as well as the Papal States and Naples. In the last-named State in the year 1820 the numbers of the Carbonari amounted to upwards of a million of men, owing to an extensive recruiting campaign that had been conducted on the principles of a special exhortation issued by the leaders.

“Let us augment our strength; let us be cautious how we exclude; let us again examine those who have been re-

¹ Quoted by Frost, *Secret Societies of the European Revolution*, Vol. I, 237.

jected in more suspicious times; let us exercise less rigour in admitting members. Let us refuse such only as are really unworthy and irreclaimable. . . . Let us overlook corrigible faults; they will be corrected in our baracche."

This policy of accepting any recruit, good, bad or indifferent cannot have benefited the society in anything but numbers, and was in reality sowing the seed of future weakness rather than strength, as was proved when the society was actually called upon to take part in governing the State in the year 1820.

In that year Spain gave a lead to the other European states, and forced King Ferdinand VII to concede a constitution. The Neapolitan Carbonari determined to follow this example. During March and April, 1820, conferences were held in Naples at which it was decided to concentrate troops on the capital and to hold Ferdinand and the royal family as hostages until a constitution was granted. The conspirators counted on the support of the army, which contained 3,000 Carbonari.

The 29th May was fixed for a rising in Salerno under Gagliardi, Grand Master of the Vendita in that city; but the plot was betrayed, and Gagliardi fled to Nocera where, ably seconded by a priest named Menechini, he continued his conspiracy. The great difficulty of securing an able military leader caused some delay, but at last on the 1st July the standard of revolt was raised and the march on Naples began. The Government soon discovered that it could not rely on the troops at its disposal; and when this was patent, General Pepe, a Carbonaro, who had only been awaiting the assured success of the revolt, put himself at the head of the army and marched out to join the insurgents at Avellino, where he was proclaimed generalissimo of the Carbonari forces. On the 6th July Ferdinand executed a secret convention with Pepe, and handed over the functions of sovereignty to his son the Duke of Calabria as Vicar-General of the kingdom. The Duke immediately issued a proclamation granting a constitution. Three days later Pepe led the army into Naples, when the king in public took a solemn oath to maintain the new order of

things. *Ipsa facto*, all authority passed into the hands of the Carbonari. A new Liberal ministry came into being. A Carbonari guard was formed, and proceeded to keep good order; the society itself emerged from its shroud of mystery, published its constitutions and statutes; while the rank and file ceased to conceal their warrants and cards of membership. Were they not the conquerors; and should not the whole world know it in as open a manner as possible?

It seems to be a fundamental law of secret societies that they can maintain internal cohesion only when combatting strong external opposition. After the revolution in Naples it soon became apparent that two parties existed among the triumphant Carbonari; one, the larger, was content with the constitutional monarchy; the other desired a republic. The leaders of the minority tried to raise a revolt in September, 1820, failed and were arrested and brought to trial, only to be acquitted for lack of evidence. Another schism took place when the Carbonari of Salerno broke away from the *Alta Vendita* at Naples and formed a Grand Lodge of their own.

During the whole of that autumn robberies with violence became disgracefully frequent in Naples, and were ascribed, according to the politics of the reporter, either to the Carbonari or to the enemies of the constitution. In such times of public unrest and insecurity the blame always attaches to the party in power, and the popularity of the Carbonari began to wane. The anonymous reporter of 1821 is worth quoting in this connexion.

"It is a Jacobin or Radical Party," he wrote, "such as is to be found elsewhere far beyond the limits of the Two Sicilies. The curiosity of its members is no longer irritated by an unknown object. Their zeal is no longer kept alive by mystery. The ceremonies and emblems have lost their power as symbolical of great events and a happy futurity; for habit has rendered them familiar and uninteresting. The abuse of them has often made them ridiculous, and the lower order of candidates have learnt to speculate more on the alms which they expect to receive from the society in case of need than on the marvellous secrets to be revealed

to them. The old members have begun to look down with contempt on the new, although they are themselves disappointed and disgusted with a reality by no means corresponding with the expectations they had formed. Freemasonry now appears to be destined as a retreat for such Carbonari as begin to despise their old associates, and who are glad of a pretext for joining a more respectable order. The Lodges of Freemasons are daily increasing in number at Naples. . . . It is not uncommon to hear the expression: 'Such a one is more than a Carbonaro, he is a Freemason'."

Meanwhile, the Carbonari had been banned in every district of Italy where the old order of things continued; Austrian troops were being massed on the frontiers of the Two Sicilies; and the partizans of absolutism were busily preparing a counter-revolution. Religion, as is usual, was invoked in the dispute, and the Bull of August, 1814, against secret societies was quoted to discredit the Carbonari and all their works. The *Alta Vendita* in Naples published a lengthy remonstrance addressed to the Pope, the kernel of which was the assertion: "The ceremonies of the Society of the Carbonari are in no wise opposed to the Catholic and Apostolic religion, which its members jealously maintain." This remonstrance, however, as might have been expected, did not materially alter the situation; nor was much more achieved by the action of the Neapolitan Minister of Worship, who issued a circular to the higher clergy stating that the Carbonari were no longer a secret society, and therefore the Bull did not apply to them. The Emperor of Austria, for one, was far from sharing such an opinion, and in August, 1820, promulgated a decree condemning Carbonarism as a conspiracy subversive of all government and menacing its adherents with the penalties of high treason.

This decree was followed in the autumn by a meeting at Troppau of the Emperors of Austria and Russia with the King of Prussia, when the monarchs pledged themselves to support one another in any emergency brought about by their secret enemies; and further pledged themselves to

enforce the secret compact between the Emperor of Austria and King Ferdinand by virtue of which the latter had been restored to his throne.

The Emperor of Austria had good cause to be alarmed at the activities of the secret societies in the north of Italy. The Carbonari Lodges had been spreading rapidly throughout Lombardy from the spring of 1820, and had attracted the most intelligent classes in the country. At this period, too, the new society of the Federati was formed which, in common with that of the Adelphi, was bound to the Carbonari by a tie of mutual recognition; just as the Guelphs were bound to the Carbonari in the Papal States. In the autumn of 1820 these societies were jointly concerned in formulating a concerted plan of action throughout northern and central Italy. The plan was to achieve a union of Piedmont, Lombardy and Venice and bind them to the Central States by a federation, once the revolution had been accomplished and Austria expelled from Italy.

Meanwhile in Naples a constitution on the Spanish model was submitted to parliament and passed; but, because the clergy objected to certain clauses in it, the royal veto was pronounced. Riots followed, when each side accused the other of responsibility for the disturbances. In January, 1821, the parliamentary hall of assembly was actually invaded by a mob clamouring for the arrest of unpopular reactionaries.

The Carbonari attempted to cope with the elements of unrest by first of all putting their own house in order. They remodelled the society, and expelled many ultrarepublicans, who thereupon formed themselves into a new and short-lived body known as the Pythagoreans.

Leaving things at home in this state of turmoil, King Ferdinand set off to the Congress of Laybach, nominally in order to obtain the consent of the allied sovereigns to the new Neapolitan constitution, in reality, to implore them to suppress it. They were, of course, quite ready to grant his request. An Austrian army set out for Naples, and on the 7th February, 1821, defeated General Pepe, whose forces were outnumbered by six to one. The old régime

triumphed. The Neapolitan Carbonari were suppressed by the usual methods—the scaffold and the dungeon.

In the north, too, their cause was destined to failure. In Piedmont in 1820 the Prince of Carignano, heir to the throne, had put himself at the head of the Carbonari movement, which by the end of the year embraced most of the intellect and nobility of the country. Carignano, however, betrayed the patriotic aims of the society to the Russian ambassador, by whom the Austrian Government was informed of the conspiracy, and as a counterpoise began to mass troops on the frontier of Piedmont. In March, 1821, a rising took place in that country; the army declared for a constitution; King Victor Emmanuel abdicated; and Carignano, who had continued as leader of the Carbonari in order to betray them, was declared regent. He used his power and authority in this position to invite the Austrian armies to enter Piedmont, and their bayonets re-established absolutism in the person of Charles Felix, brother of Victor Emmanuel.

Lombardy had determined to rise against the Austrians the moment that Piedmontese troops entered Lombard territory, but this programme of course became impossible once the movement was betrayed in Piedmont.

CHAPTER XVIII

OTHER ITALIAN SOCIETIES

It is hardly necessary to say that the Carbonari in the Papal States, Lombardy, and Piedmont, had not copied the example of their associates in Naples, but still maintained secrecy as part of the system. This was partly because the different countries had different methods of recognition, partly because of the understanding with the new societies, Federati, Adelphi, etc., similar, though not the same, and all having a common object; but mainly, of course, because it was dangerous to avow oneself a Carbonaro in any territory ruled by an absolute monarchy.

It became more dangerous than ever after the failure of the Piedmontese revolution; and the leaders of these federated societies were so uncertain how far their secrets were known to the authorities that they resolved to dissolve all the associations, while awaiting a convenient opportunity to revive them under new names and with a new symbolism.

The palmy days of the Carbonari in Italy ended in 1821. Of course, the society continued to exist there, and was also carried abroad by exiles; but henceforth the bulk of the revolutionary plotting in Italy was carried on by societies bearing other names.

Various attempts seem to have been made to establish a central directory of the Carbonari at some place outside the borders of Italy, but this never became a power, even if ever set at work, which is doubtful—accomplishment in such things usually lags far behind intention.

Some light is thrown upon the state of secret societies in the north of Italy after the debacle of 1821 by the narrative

of a young German, by name A. Buloz, who, under the pseudonym of Jean de Witt, wrote a book ¹ in which, though he allows his imagination ample scope, some information of possible value is contained.

De Witt, to give him his pen-name, was born in 1800 at Altona, and studied at Kiel and Jena universities. In 1818 he had to fly to England, because of his association with the Black Knights, a secret German student society founded in 1815, whose members were pledged to the cause of political freedom. In England De Witt supported himself, or so he says, by contributing scandalous articles about German affairs to the newspapers. He entered into connexions with French and Italian conspirators, and according to his own account joined secret societies of all kinds. From England he went to Paris at the invitation of an uncle, Baron Eckstein, and while there was protected by Count Serre, the Minister of Justice. In 1821 he was in Geneva, where he was appointed Inspector-General of the Carbonari of Switzerland and Germany. In the exercise of this office he was arrested on the soil of Savoy and imprisoned in Turin and Milan, during which period he had the opportunity of studying the Italian secret societies at close quarters. He escaped from his Italian prison into Germany, only to be arrested at Bayreuth as a conspirator against the State. After a long delay he was tried, and acquitted on all charges. On his release he abandoned the profession of conspirator, married an heiress, and lived to grow old as a wealthy landed proprietor who professed extremely conservative principles. Needless to say, he has been accused of acting as spy for the absolutist governments.

In the book already mentioned De Witt gives the following account of Carbonari activities.

When the Austrian troops entered Naples, the society of the Carbonari dissolved itself, not from fear of being discovered, but in order to check the activities of the subordinate bodies, and to make some modifications in its constitution which were rendered necessary by the

¹ Jean de Witt, *Les Sociétés Secrètes de France et d'Italie*, Paris, 1830.

huge masses of persons affiliated to the three (*sic*) first grades (1).

In the summer of 1821 the eleven Chiefs of the society assembled at Capua. They resolved (10th June) to send two initiates abroad to come to an understanding with the Chiefs of the Grand Firmament, and to see if they could make arrangements for altering the seat of the Directory of the Carbonari. They were inclined to favour Paris because of its central position, and because the wealthiest and most influential members of the Grand Firmament resided there.

De Witt goes on to say that the Grand Firmament was the Directory of the Secret Societies in France, but that its origin and even the names of its members were veiled in obscurity . . . and he adds nothing to lessen that obscurity.

“The most ancient authentic decree of the Grand Firmament I know of is addressed to the Adelpes, and proves how extensive was its power at that epoch. General Malet’s conspiracy shows that the influence of the Adelpes and Philadelphes was not without importance, and yet a decree was sufficient to dissolve them.

“Decree of the Grand Firmament supplementing the Statutes of the *Sublimi Maestri Perfetti*.

“The Grand Firmament decrees as follows:

“2. The association of Adelpes and Philadelphes is incorporated with this Order.

“3. Every Adelphe or Philadelphe will receive at once when he is admitted, unless he is already a Freemason, the three symbolic Degrees, without any expense save what is indispensable to his reception.

“4 and 5. Every Adelphe or Philadelphe can be presented to the Orient . . . and immediately afterwards his reception shall take place according to the statutes. Those received in this way are exempt from all fees.

¹De Witt’s statements here and in other places about the organization of the Carbonari must not be relied on implicitly. It is quite possible that he may have confused some other society with the Carbonari and believed its ceremonies to be a superior degree of the Good Cousins.

“Given under the Equator, the 22nd of the 7th lunar month 5812.” (?1812)¹

Having quoted this amazing document, De Witt tells us that the distinctive tendency of the Grand Firmament was to incorporate in itself all other societies, even those whose direct aims were contrary to its own; and it endeavoured to do so in such a way as to save appearances and to make all foreign societies serve in executing its plans.

The two envoys charged with the embassy to fuse the Alta Vendita with the Grand Firmament were the Duke of Garatula and a Neapolitan gentleman Carlo Chiricone Klerckon, son of the Duke of Fra-Marino.

Klerckon met De Witt in Geneva and offered him the post of Inspector-General of the Carbonari for Switzerland and Germany, which De Witt accepted under pressure, for the same reason, he says, as a similar office controlling the north of Europe was accepted by a “highly honoured Prince,” unnamed, who neutralised the power of the League in his bailiwick by refraining from putting its orders into operation.

There are many Carbonari, continues De Witt, even as there are many Freemasons, who know really nothing about their Order; and very few of them even know how many grades it comprises or where the Alta Vendita has its seat.

Then follow some interesting but unauthenticated statements about the origin of Carbonarism. The Carbonari, in his opinion, really sprang from Freemasonry (*Franc-maçonnerie*), using this term as having a distinct connotation from Masonry (*Maçonnerie*), meaning thereby the regular Lodges which Napoleon turned into a police institution by favouring them. When that happened, the Freemasons who had supported the defunct Republic formed another association inside the Lodges, and this association was known as the Philadelphes. Besançon was the headquarters of these *Maçons-Charbonniers*, and their chief was Colonel Oudet.

¹ This date together with everything else about this document seems to me suspicious. If the French Society of the Philadelphes ever had an existence, it never had anything to do with General Malet's conspiracy. See chapter XVI for the evidence about the Philadelphes.

They it was who propagated the order of Carbonari in Piedmont and the north of Italy, and established the first Vendita at Capua in 1809. The society was founded in Naples and Sicily by the English, who wished to use it as a weapon against Napoleon, and Lord William Bentinck was one of the most ardent evangelists of the system.

The spread of Carbonarism throughout Southern Italy was certainly surprising; but few knew its real tendency. The ordinary initiate imagined the first three (*sic*) grades inculcated just morality, and the unity and independence of his country; but in the 4th grade, the Apostoli, the candidate swore to overturn all thrones, particularly those occupied by a Bourbon.

Only in the last grade of all, the 7th, Principi Summi Patriarcho, was the veil completely withdrawn. It corresponded, according to De Witt, with the highest degree, Homo Rex, of the Illuminati, and its object was the same. The initiate swore to work for the destruction of every religion and every *positive* government, whether despotic or democratic.

To attain this every means was looked upon as justifiable. "I obtained this grade S.P.P. under the name of Giulio Alessandro Jerimundo Werther Domingone, and yet took no oath. . . ."

De Witt goes on to say that it was conferred on him not by formal initiation but by communication, a method adopted when it was desirable that the initiation should not be generally known or when done at a time or in a place where members were not numerous.

Here again, if De Witt did actually receive such a degree from a secret society, it was certainly not from the Carbonari, as that term is understood throughout the present account of their activities.

Let us pass on to his account of the secret societies in the north of Italy.

The political societies which played the leading parts in Upper Italy, where the police spared no efforts to extirpate them, were the Filadelfi and Carbonari, to whom De Witt joins the "Francs-Maçons," the name bearing his own

peculiar connotation, that section of the Freemasons who professed revolutionary principles and taught them in their Lodges. Most of the members of these secret societies, says he, had played a part in State affairs under Napoleon and regretted their lost importance; while with these were associated a certain number of Lombard nobles who had been slighted by Austria.

There had also been formed a new society known as the Federates, which numbered 100,000 initiates by the beginning of 1821. It aimed at preparing public opinion, so as to ensure bringing about a revolution at a favourable opportunity. The Federates were divided into two classes; the first consisted of the commonalty, and the members were told that their object was to drive the Austrians out of Italy; the second class consisted of men of standing, whose aims were a United Italy and constitutional government.

Opposed to all these revolutionary bodies was one known as the Society Della Santa Fe. According to De Witt, this reactionary body was spread all over Europe with the object of restoring the pre-Revolution order. To cover its designs it purported to aim at the liberation of Italy from the Austrians; and it was known by a variety of names—Societa della Santa Fede, del Anello, and even Bruti. Its adepts called themselves: Consistoriali, Crousignati, Crociferi. The order was most active in Piedmont. Its grades were three in number. Since the members promised to report to their chiefs any discovery of interest, it formed a real secret police; and, needless to say, De Witt believed it to be closely connected with the Society of Jesus.

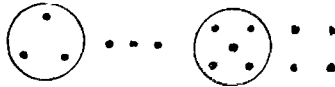
That such a society was believed to exist in the south of Italy and to have been the origin of the Calderari, we have already seen. It may well have existed; but, if so, most probably divested of many of the trappings with which it is carparisoned in De Witt's picture.

He tells an even stranger story, however, about another secret body, named the Society of European Regeneration. This association, according to De Witt, was modelled on one known as the Francs Régénérés, which had been suppressed in France when Decazes was Minister there (1815-19).

The new society, on the contrary, had the approbation of the French government, who instructed a secret police-agent to gain the confidence of political refugees from Piedmont and initiate them into the society, which was designed to ferment trouble for Austria in Italy. This was actually done, and while the Richelieu government lasted the society was protected in France. Things changed, however, with a change of government. There were four grades in this society: Initiate, Knight, Provost, and Grand Provost. The new French Ministry persecuted the Society of European Regeneration, and allied itself with the Sanfedists of Italy in order to continue the same policy of stirring up trouble for Austria in that country.

Whether the whole of this story or any part of it is true, calls for no opinion here; but there is no doubt that De Witt believed that this particular society was at work in northern Italy when he was imprisoned in Turin. One day, he says, on returning to his cell after an interview with the magistrate he found on his bed the following message:

Chi che tu sia, in questa dimora chi entre,
Attente legge che sulla porta sta scritto



He hastened to the door, whercon was found written:

Colpeval 'or innocente, mai tu convienc
Del tuo delcrite-

followed by the same symbols as before. His explanation of these is, that the three points signified the Carbonari; the four, the Society of European Regeneration; the encircled three points, the Chiesa degli Sublimi Maestri Perfetti; and the encircled five points, the latter's Synod. He took the messages as proof that his friends in the federated secret societies were interesting themselves in his fate.

If the story is true, and it contains no inherent impossibility, it shows how widespread and powerful the secret societies had become. Nor was it the only occasion on which De Witt was to benefit from his connexion with them. After his escape from prison and while making his way out of Italy in disguise he was hampered by lack of funds, and determined to make use of the Macstri Perfetti.

“We sent a notice to the neighbouring lodges, and within three days I was possessor of 1,200 francs. It was the first and last time that necessity obliged me to make use of the influence I possessed. Some time later my family provided me with money, and the first pressing use I made of it was to repay the sum I had received.”

He goes on to say that during the time of his escape there was neither town nor village in which he was not sure of a safe resting place and men devoted to his interests. “I passed through the country under the protection of the Sublimi Maestri Perfetti.”

Before leaving this author, whose information is unfortunately more entertaining than reliable, it will be worth while to quote his judgment on the secret political societies of his day.

“Governments imagine that they have completed their work, when the suppression of such-and-such a society has been decreed; nothing could be more senseless. You strike at the hydra, and lop off one head; a hundred immediately spring forth to replace it What is the good of fighting against the effects of unrest? The causes of it are what should be destroyed.

“Any other method of action is mere folly, and sure to fail. The surest means of destroying secret societies is to let them flourish in the open (*les rendre publiques*); for few public societies contemplate wicked or revolutionary objects. They only become dangerous when exploited by wicked members; thus it was that Napoleon ruined Franc-maçonnerie by favouring it. . . . Secret societies never enjoy more influence than when the authorities are persecuting them . . . *Victrix causa diis placuit, sed victa Catoni.*”

With which tag we may allow De Witt to take his departure.

After 1821 the main direction of the revolutionary movement in Italy had devolved on secret societies other than the Carbonari. The latter continued to exist, however, in foreign countries for some time longer.

The Carbonaro leaders who were exiled from Italy carried the society abroad with them. In France it had already been established in 1820 by some young Frenchmen who had been initiated at Naples. Here it was to be the progenitor of many similar bodies.

As for the refugees, General Pepe fled, after the counter-revolution, to Barcelona, where he was joined by other Carbonari from Piedmont. London and Geneva proved cities of refuge also.

The circumstance of so many Carbonari leaders having been driven to find new homes all over Europe, together with the success which the recently established Carbonari society was achieving in France gave Pepe the idea of forming an international secret society to embrace political reformers in all the States of Europe. He accordingly approached some ultra-Liberal deputies in Madrid, and expounded to them the objects of the proposed society, chief of which was a regular correspondence, so as to preclude a lack of union among the separated groups of patriots.

“Several deputies of the Cortes were inclined to regard such an association as extremely beneficial to the public cause, more especially in their own peninsula, where a great want of concord existed between the Portuguese and Spaniards. The Society was accordingly founded; several members of the Cortes formed part of it, as well as General Ballesteros,¹ Councillor of State. I still preserve the regulations of the Society, the great object of which was to open a communication between the most enlightened patriots of the different cities in Europe. It was decided that I should exert myself to give it extension in Lisbon, London, and Paris; and that, in the event of my success, other

¹ Later one of the founders of the Comuneros in July, 1822.

members should proceed to propagate it over Germany and Italy."¹

The first Circle of the Constitutional Society of European Patriots was accordingly instituted in Madrid, whereupon Pepe proceeded to Lisbon, where he was given an even warmer welcome, and a flourishing Circle was formed in that city under the direction of Almeida-Moraes, the president of the Portuguese Cortes. From Lisbon Pepe went to London, where he was unsuccessful in his endeavour to induce the leaders of English Liberalism to engage in anything of the nature of a secret political society with an international circumference. He next entered into communication with Lafayette, who was then engaged with his friends Manuel and Argenson in the reorganisation of the French Carbonari on a new system.² It can also be assumed that he was keeping in close touch with the veteran conspirator Buonarotti, who was now at Geneva engaged in trying to reorganize the Carbonari with a special eye to effective action in Italy.

During Pepe's absence from Spain a split had taken place in the political party of the Freemasons, which resulted in the formation of the new society of the Comuneros,³ but both these antagonists had joined in discouraging the Carbonari society established by the refugees from Italy; and as for the Constitutional Society of European Patriots, no Liberal-minded Spaniard could perceive any advantage to be drawn from international correspondence at a moment when a French army was massing to the north of the Pyrenees in order to invade the country and restore absolute monarchy.

This emergency, however, gave Pepe the chance of making one last effort to keep life in his moribund bantling. His correspondence with Lafayette was directed to an attempt to make the French Carbonari corrupt the discipline of the army collecting round Toulouse for the invasion of Spain. His scheme was that the money for this purpose

¹Pepe, *Memoirs*, quoted by Frost, II. 3.

²This triumvirate was also supposed to have directed the French Associated Patriots of 1816.

³*Vide* chapter XXIV.

should be supplied by Zea, who was an emissary in Europe from the revolted Spanish colony of Colombia; and the return to be made by Spain was an acknowledgment of the independence of Colombia and Mexico. This proposition was submitted by Pepe to the leading ultra-Liberal members of the Cortes at Riego's house in Madrid. They refused to accept it, on the grounds that such a surrender to the revolted colonies would be too unpopular in Spain. As a consequence, no money was obtainable from South American sources for purposes of corruption or defence, the French army entered Spain in April, 1823, and soon after constitutional government there was at an end. With it ended the political secret societies of the Freemasons, Comuneros, Carbonari, Constitutional European Patriots, and every other body, secret or public, that opposed absolutism.

Meanwhile towards the end of 1822 Andryane, an agent of the exiled Carbonari, had left Geneva for Milan to prepare for a renewal of the struggle in Italy; but he was arrested and imprisoned before he could accomplish anything. The same fate befell most of the Carbonari leaders in Lombardy; they were arrested *en masse* and after mock trials sent to Austrian dungeons. For the time being the Holy Alliance had triumphed; the remnants of the Carbonari had to remain inactive, and await events.

The news of the 1830 revolution in France set the Italian Carbonari, or perhaps it would be more correct to say the federated societies, plotting once more. This time the scheme was to drive out the Austrians, and unite the Kingdom of Sardinia, the Papal States, the minor duchies, and the Lombardo-Venetian provinces under the sovereignty of the Duke of Modena, who had given his encouragement to the plot through his friend Menotti. Thus in the autumn of 1830, while Milan, owing to the presence of a large body of Austrian troops, remained to all appearances peaceful and contented, Modena, Parma, and the Papal States were seething with unrest. Bologna was the centre of the conspiracy, but the relations between the leaders there and those in Parma and Modena were anything but

satisfactory. The Duke of Modena waited on the course of events, greatly desiring a crown, but as greatly hating Liberal institutions. The Carbonari were badly in want of funds, but they firmly believed that help would come from France, in which they had miscalculated, for the new French king, Louis Philippe, had hastened to attach himself to the Holy Alliance. Having satisfied himself about the certainty of this turn in the political situation, the Duke of Modena turned traitor to the Carbonari. Had there been any real unity of aim among the leaders of the conspiracy, much might have been accomplished; for when in February, 1831, the rising took place it soon proved general and popular, and in a short time there was not a Papal or Ducal authority valid between the Apennines and the Po. However the conspirators had aimed not at a United Italy, but a mere expulsion of Austrians and the concession of local constitutions by native princes in separate States. The house was divided against itself, and when the Austrian armies were reinforced they made short work of the insurgents by units; by the end of March the old order had been re-established once more. France not only did not raise a finger to intervene, but even prevented Italian refugees from returning to their country to take up arms in the quarrel.

Once again the remnants of the Carbonari went to prison or into exile.

CHAPTER XIX

YOUNG EUROPE AND ITS FEDERATED SOCIETIES

In April, 1834, a group of political refugees from several countries of Europe met at Berne, and following the lead of the dominating personality present agreed to form an international revolutionary secret society, to be known as Young Europe, each country represented having its own branch. Of all then established by far the most famous subsequently was the one nearest to the heart of the founder.

The secret society *La Giovine Italia*, Young Italy, eldest child of Young Europe, was, with its parent society, the conception of Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-72). This extraordinary man was a conspirator almost from his childhood, and while still extremely young, was initiated into the Carbonari by a man named Doria, in days when the admission ceremony had perforce become shorn of most of its attendant pomp.

“He informed me . . . that the persecutions of the government and the caution and prudence required in order to reach the aim rendered numerous assemblies impossible; and that I should therefore be spared certain ordeals, ceremonies, and symbolical rites. He questioned me as to my readiness to *act*, and to obey the instructions which would be transmitted from time to time to me, and to sacrifice myself, if necessary, for the *good of the Order*. Then after desiring me to kneel he unsheathed a dagger, and recited the formula of oath administered to the initiated of the first or lowest rank, causing me to repeat it after him. He then communicated to me two or three signs by which to recognise the brethren, and dismissed me.”¹

¹*Life and Writings of Joseph Mazz. . .*, quoted by Frost, II, 143.

This description is interesting, showing as it does the straits to which the Carbonari conspiracy had been reduced; and it is not surprising to find that Mazzini soon became dissatisfied with this society, and considered its aims vague and indefinite and its plans badly conceived. He also took exception to the fees (five francs monthly) charged the members, which was a sum large enough to debar working men or poor students from joining. The Carbonari, moreover, seemed to pin all their hopes of success on Lafayette and the Grand Lodge of France; and since Mazzini believed that heaven helps those who help themselves he ultimately withdrew from the society and set about organizing a new one.

Before he had perfected his plans he was arrested for conspiracy, and after an imprisonment of six months was banished from Italy. He went to Marseilles, where he formed among the Italian refugees the new society he had projected. These refugees had already founded an association called the Apophasimenes, which seemed to Mazzini to consist of "a sort of military organization—a complex mixture of oaths and symbols, with a multiplicity of grades and ranks, and an exaggeration of discipline calculated to destroy that enthusiasm of the heart which is the source of all great enterprises, and utterly devoid of any dominant moral principle."

At the head of this association was Carlo Bianco acting under the orders of Buonarrotti.¹ Mazzini would have nothing to do with it.

He drew up the statutes of his own body which laid down: "Young Italy is a brotherhood of Italians who are convinced that Italy is destined to become one united nation. They who join the association intend to consecrate both thought and action to the task of reconstituting their country, so that it may indeed become a nation sovereign, united and independent. The unity of Italy is to be established in a republican form. The means adopted are to be education and insurrection. The character of the insurrection must be national."

¹ Philip Michael Buonarroti (1761-1837), Italian patriot and conspirator. He played a certain part in the French Revolution as adherent of the Jacobins.

There were only two grades in Young Italy, the Initiated and the Initiators. The former were not allowed to admit members, and only men of prudence and intelligence were promoted to the second rank. Members paid 50 centimes a month. The central committee, in Marseilles or elsewhere beyond the Italian frontier, with Mazzini at its head, had the general direction of affairs; details were managed by local committees in the Italian cities. The groups of Initiated with an Initiator at their head were called Congregations. Their flag was the present Italian tricolour. The symbol was a branch of cypress, in memory of the martyrs of Italian liberty, with the motto "Now and for ever."

By the most important clause of the initiation oath the candidate swore:

"To dedicate myself wholly and for ever to endeavour to constitute Italy one free, independent, Republican nation—to promote by every means in my power, whether by written or spoken word or by action, the education of my Italian brothers towards the aim of Young Italy. . . . To abstain from enrolling myself in any other association henceforth—to obey all the instructions in conformity with the spirit of Young Italy given me by those who represent with me the union of my Italian brothers, and to keep the secret of these instructions, even at the cost of my life—to assist my brothers in this association both by action and counsel—Now and For Ever.

"This do I swear, invoking upon my head the wrath of God, the abhorrence of man, and the infamy of the perjurer, if I ever betray the whole or a part of this my oath."

Mazzini claimed that this new society of his was distinct from all previous and existing secret societies by the forms which he had given it—some of which, such as the abolition of a death penalty in the initiate's oath, certainly were novel.¹ He formed the nucleus of the society at Marseilles,

¹This is worth bearing in mind, because Young Italy was repeatedly accused of having employed assassination as a political weapon. Mazzini himself was often attacked on the same score. Thus De la Hodde in *Histoire des sociétés secrètes et du parti républicain de 1830-48* accused him of decreeing the assassination of two members who had withdrawn from Young Italy. Such charges have never been substantiated.

and then by means of correspondence with trusty friends established it in Italy. Genoa and Leghorn were the first places to receive it, but it soon spread all over the rest of the country.

No signs of recognition were adopted; but a piece of paper cut into a peculiar shape and a grip were used to accredit messengers between the central committee and the Congregations. This grip and symbol were changed every three months.

At the end of 1831 a manifesto setting forth the aims of the society was circulated. There followed the publication of a journal edited by Mazzini, *La Giovine Italia*, in which he was assisted by friends who acted as volunteers in every capacity from type-setter to distributor. Expenses were borne by contributions paid to the society as well as by the sales of the journal. *La Giovine Italia* was smuggled into Italy regularly and successfully, and as a consequence the society spread swiftly there. The demand for the journal was ever increasing, and its perusal by the uninitiated helped to recruit the society with a great number of new members.

In less than a year Young Italy was the dominant Society of the peninsula.

Representations were made to the French Government by all those authorities in Italy against whom the movement was aimed, and as a result in August, 1832, Mazzini was ordered to leave France. Deeming his presence in Marseilles necessary, he remained there for a year in hiding still carrying on his work.

About this time changes were made in the constitution of the society. Every member received a *nom de guerre*; contributions were reduced or suspended in the case of needy members; everyone was ordered to provide himself with a musket and ammunition; and a sign, subject to alteration every three months, was adopted for use by all the initiates.

Young Italy then absorbed into itself not only the Apophasimenes but also the weaker lodges of Carbonari in Italy; and by this time the society had grown so strong that it thought it might proceed to action.

The first rising was attempted in Piedmont, and proved a failure. The outcome of this failure was that Mazzini had to remove himself to Geneva, where he set on foot another abortive insurrection, this time in Savoy. The campaign was to begin with an invasion of that State by Italian refugees from France and Switzerland simultaneously. It was hoped that the French Carbonari would assist, but their leader, Buonarotti, held aloof. There was no co-operation between the two societies.

The attempt took place at the beginning of 1834, and was completely unsuccessful. In consequence, many of Mazzini's friends withdrew from Young Italy. In August, 1836, he was expelled from Switzerland, in consequence of representations addressed by the Austrian, Prussian, and Russian Governments to the Swiss authorities, and had to take refuge in London.

From England he directed some other unsuccessful attempts at revolt; and in 1848 went in person to Milan and later to Rome to play a great part in the stirring events of that time. When, in 1849, the battle of Novara seemed to have destroyed all hopes of a free united Italy for generations, there was no place left for Mazzini in Italy but a scaffold, and he had to retire to Geneva and resume his plotting.

It is uncertain whether he had anything to do with the next development of secret societies in Italy of which an account was given to the Press in June, 1852.¹

“The two societies of Carbonari and Young Italy have joined in an association which bears the name of Reunited Italy. . . . This body which is identical with the Carbonarism of Young Italy has for object the overthrow of every throne and foreign influence. It wishes to found *Italian Unity*, render Italy strong and independent, and free her from every stranger element.

“The society is divided into Circles. Each Circle has forty members at most, with a President, four Councillors, a Quæstor and a Master. The rest of the members are named

¹ *Augsburger Gazette*, quoted in the *Paris Constitutionnel*.

Associates. There are five kinds of Circle: the Grand Council, the General Circle, the Provincial Circle, the District Circle, and the Communal Circle.

"All the Associates are divided into three Orders: (1) Reunited Adepts, or simple Unitarians; (2) the Presidents and Councillors of the different Circles; (3) the Grand Unitarians or members of the Grand Circle, and Presidents of the General Circle. Only the Grand Unitarians know the designs of the society and are informed of the violent methods of action that are intended. The society has three secret pass-words; the Associates know one of them, the Unitarians, two, while the Grand Unitarians know all three. The Grand Council, with supreme and absolute power, is composed of seven Grand Unitarians. Every member owes blind and impassive obedience to its orders.

"There are seven General Circles, situated at Rome, Turin, Milan, Venice, Florence, Naples, Palermo, and Cagliari. A Grand Unitarian presides over each of these.

"As for the Provincial and District Circles, they may follow actual territorial divisions. Contributions are collected after every meeting of the Circle by the Quæstor. The copper of the artizan is valued as highly as the gold of the wealthy. Part of these funds is employed by each Circle for its own expenses, and the remainder is sent to the Grand Circle, which decides great affairs that demand great sums.

"The Unitarians have the right to initiate Adepts. Any Associate may propose a candidate. A special point is made of propaganda among the troops; and the greatest distinctions are offered them. Workmen and people from the lower classes are also accepted. If a member from these classes possesses the necessary education, he is preferred for the rank of Unitarian. He may himself found a Circle and become its President. Every candidate has to undergo a severe examination. After he has been received and has taken the oath, he is given the pass-word, the insignia and the medal of the society. Disobedience and the violation of secrecy are punished with death. Every member has the right to demand protection and help. If an Adept dies poor, the Association takes charge of his children, particularly if he died in the sacred cause of liberty.

"Every three months exact lists of all the members of the society are transmitted to the Grand Council. These lists, which are secret, must contain information about the social

position, family, fortune, capacity, age, influence, and social connexions of every Adept. Every Grand Unitarian is provided with secret instructions to enable him to solve every doubt and remove every difficulty that may arise."

Interesting as is this latest development of Young Italy, its subsequent history belongs rather to that of the State from which it took its name than to a chronicle of secret societies; and its founder was not to die before he had seen part of his object realised, a United Italy, even if it were not that revived republic of which he had dreamed, to whose attainment he had devoted his life.

Young Poland was a branch of Young Europe, the proposed international society formed by Joseph Mazzini at Berne in April, 1834, his supporters being Italian, German, and Polish refugees, who pledged themselves to spread the principles of liberty, fraternity and equality throughout Europe.

Each nation was to have a national committee round which, in Mazzini's own words, "all the elements of Republican progress might rally by degrees"; and these national committees were to be linked with a central Provisional Committee by correspondence.

Secret ceremonies for the affiliation of members were settled, the form of oath agreed on, and the ivy leaf chosen as distinguishing symbol.

Among the Poles present at the formation of the society was Simon Konarski, who had been a Polish Templar, and fought in the insurrection of 1831, rising to the rank of captain. He had also taken part in the abortive rising of 1833. He now determined to employ the newly-formed society in the service of his country.

In pursuance of his idea he journeyed to London in 1835, and while there unfolded to a central committee of his compatriots, exiles all, a plan for raising another insurrection in Poland. His hearers were dubious of success, but gave him all the help they could.

Konarski thereupon travelled back to Poland, and established there the society of Young Poland. In spite of the

fact that the Russian authorities were conducting incessant searches after conspirators known or suspected, the new society at once took root and began to flourish, rapidly increasing in strength. It soon embraced all classes of Poles, officers, priests, landed gentry and peasants.

If its rise was sudden, so was its decline. In May, 1838, Konarski was arrested in Vilna, and after nine months of imprisonment and torture was hanged.

The society which he had established did not long survive him. Whether it had only been kept alive by his enthusiasm or whether his fate terrified the members into dissolving it or whether under a changed name it continued the work which he had inaugurated, still remains to be told by some historian of that new Poland which has at last realized the vision granted to its martyred patriots.

The society Young Germany was another branch of Young Europe founded in April, 1834, by political refugees from Italy, Germany and Poland.

The central committee as representing Young Europe sat at Berne and was intended to serve as a liaison body between the daughter societies, Young Italy, Young Germany, Young Poland and Young Switzerland. Mazzini appears not to have expected great immediate results from it. He wrote: "I knew that it embraced too vast a sphere to allow of any practical results, and that much time and many stern lessons would be needed to teach the nations the necessity of a true European fraternity. My only aim therefore was to constitute an apostolate of ideas different from those then current, and to leave them to bear fruit how and when they might."

Young Germany consisted mainly of workmen nomadic in their habits who thereby escaped overmuch attention from the police.

The aim of the society was political propagandism. Every member bound himself by oath to remain in it till he had reached the age of forty, to shirk neither labour nor personal sacrifice in attaining its aims, and to destroy every document by which the society or its members might be traced. In 1837 a schism took place in the ranks, and

many members joined the Communists; but its numbers increased rapidly later, and by 1845 it was supposed to have a membership of 25,000 German workmen resident in Switzerland.

In Germany branches were formed in several large towns, including Stuttgart, Carlsruhe, and Darmstadt. Among the members was Freiligrath, the poet. At the head of affairs in Lausanne, where the seat of the society had been fixed, was Wilhelm Marr, a journalist.

There was a growing desire in Germany for a constitutional union of the whole nation, and this found a voice after the French revolution of 1848. In opposition to the constitutional reformers, Young Germany decided on armed revolution, and launched an insurrection in Baden. It met with no success, and the leaders decided that the German masses were not yet ripe for an appeal to arms to establish a republic. The failure of the German Governments to come to any satisfactory agreement at Frankfort in devising a constitution for a United Germany led to a congress of the democratic parties at Berlin in the autumn of 1848. At this congress Young Germany was represented, and a manifesto was published expressing very advanced views on State ownership of land, free education, etc., etc. This was followed early the following year by another insurrection in Baden, which spread apace, and met with some measure of success at first, only to be stamped out by Prussian troops in June, 1849. This was followed all over Germany by a counter-revolution, in which Young Germany gradually became extinct.

The society, later known as Young Switzerland, was founded in Berne towards the close of 1834 with the object of altering the anomalies that existed in the Swiss electoral franchise whereby many citizens were left without representation in Parliament. After a short interval the society proceeded to affiliate itself to Mazzini's Young Europe movement, and adopted the name of Young Switzerland.

In 1835 it undertook the publication of a periodical entitled, *La Jeune Suisse*, which was edited by French and German political refugees; but it had no long life, for in 1836

representations from the Government of Louis Philippe led to the arrests of its editor and some of the contributors, and shortly after it became extinct. This failure of its journal checked the progress of the society, which thereupon assumed a new name, the Association of the Grutli, and severed its connexion with Young Europe.

In 1844 it was denounced under its new name in the Canton of Zurich as one of the three illegal and secret societies existing in Switzerland, the other two being Young Germany and the Communists. The aims of the society, however, had by this time become the ideals of a majority of Swiss citizens, as was proved by the outbreak and issue of the civil war of 1845. As a result of this event, the constitution of the country was revised, the objects of the Grutli accomplished, and the society thereupon dissolved itself.

CHAPTER XX

THE ASSOCIATED PATRIOTS

ON the restoration of the Bourbons in 1814 France became an unpleasant domicile for anyone professing liberal views in politics. The Charter granted by Louis XVIII limited the exercise of political power to the large landowners and upper classes; the Press was muzzled; freedom of speech became non-existent. A Royalist campaign of reprisals, known as the White Terror, broke out in the southern districts, and the murders and riots that accompanied it enjoyed the tacit approval of the Government, for their perpetrators were never punished.

The partisans of reaction having obtained complete power, the Chambers passed in the session 1815 a measure for the "repression of sedition" which was so comprehensive as to render it "difficult in the extreme for any person who might be obnoxious to the Government to avoid falling into the meshes of the police."¹

In 1815 Cours Prévôtales (Provost Courts) were established, which met in every department and were presided over by a Provost, who was usually an old Royalist officer. The Provost executed his functions without a jury, and there was no appeal from his decree. His special object was to arrest and bring before the court all persons disaffected to the Government or engaged in any conspiracy, and in this he was assisted by Royalist committees self-instituted in every considerable town. The iniquities committed by these courts in the name of law and order but really for motives of revenge led to their suppression in 1817; not before they had become an index to the spirit of the Government that employed such means of repression.

¹ Thomas Frost, *The Societies of the European Revolution*, I, 267.

It was in these bad times that the short-lived secret society known as the Associated Patriots was founded. Its object was to effect a revolution and re-establish a republic. Paris was the seat of its Directorate, and it had branches in many other towns.

The true personnel of its Directorate was never proved; but the Government suspected Lafayette, the veteran Republican leader, with his friends Manuel and Argenson, both leading Liberals, of being the secret leaders of the conspiracy. The rank and file of the membership consisted mainly of dismissed officers who had held important positions under the Republic or Empire, non-commissioned officers and privates who had also been disbanded from the army, and workmen with a grievance.

The society began its operations before the close of 1815. A gunpowder plot, in which the Tuileries Palace was to be blown up with the royal family, such were its intentions as the Government believed, or pretended to believe; but no sufficient evidence has ever been produced to warrant the charge.

Much as the Government was afraid of the conspiracy, it was even more afraid to take the bold step of arresting Lafayette and his friends on mere suspicion based on nothing but rumour. In default of the big fish any victim would be welcome in the net, so the authorities adopted the system of *agents provocateurs* in order to sweep in some of the smaller fry. According to Vidocq, these police agents were sent into the *guingettes*, the singing clubs held in cheap taverns, in order to inflame the discontented artizans with patriotic declarations and draw the more dangerous of them into mock conspiracies. This method had a certain amount of success, for as a result three poor wretches were arrested, found guilty of treason, and executed with attendant circumstances of peculiar barbarity. These victims were accused of preparing and circulating a treasonable document. The chief evidence produced against them at the trial was that they had been found in the possession of cards revealing their membership of the society of Associated Patriots.

When merely the membership of a society was sufficient

to entail a violent and painful death, few would be strong-minded enough to persist in retaining their connexion with such a dangerous body; it is not surprising, therefore, that these executions for high treason were followed by a collapse of the Associated Patriots.

A couple of spasmodic outbreaks at Grenoble and Lyons which seem to have occurred quite independently of the Associated Patriots led shortly after to a change in the French ministry. Though this was little change for the better, the Republican party had been taught caution, and the leaders of the Associated Patriots made no effort to revive the society. No doubt those former members who wished to go on conspiring found an opportunity to do so in the ranks of the French Carbonari and other successive secret societies that aimed at revolution.

CHAPTER XXI

THE FRENCH CARBONARI

It seems a strange turn of destiny that an association that began as an innocent mixture of trade guild and benevolent society in one country should be carried into another and there devoted to revolutionary purposes, and be finally brought back to the country of its origin altered, if not out of all recognition, out of all conformity to its primal purpose. That is what happened when the Carbonari were established as a French society in Paris in the year 1820.¹

It was introduced there by two young Frenchmen who had been initiated as Carbonari in Naples. On their return to Paris they initiated five of their friends, remodelled the ritual, excising from it the religious elements that had been prominent in the Italian version, and proceeded to declare their group of seven the Grand Lodge of France.

One cannot help believing that the organization which they gave to the new body was also an importation from Italy and the work of heads much older than theirs in the business of conspiracy; for it was specifically designed to secure unity of purpose between revolutionaries in every country. Pepe had proposed to accomplish this by correspondence in his Constitutional Society of European Patriots;² the aim of the French Carbonari was to have a few unknown heads in each country directing the movement, with dictatorial powers that could not be called in question by the rank and file, and free, therefore, to settle any common course of action with the chiefs of the society in any other country, should such a policy be desirable.

¹ *Vide* p. 91 for an account of the original French society of the Carbonniers.

² *Vide* p. 153.

The Society, according to the plan laid down in its organization, was to be directed in each separate country by a junta consisting of a few men. These would give their orders to subordinate juntas, who would have no knowledge of each other. All the power would be vested in the hands of the Central Junta, the members of which would remain unknown to all but a few trusted agents.

The proceedings adopted by the Grand Lodge of France to increase its membership and influence were equally well calculated to ensure secrecy and safety. The utmost care was taken to secure the right kind of recruit, and members were only enrolled after minute enquiries had been made about their antecedents. The meetings were held at night in lonely places. All orders were transmitted verbally. When necessary the members communicated with one another in public by signs. At his initiation the candidate swore on a dagger cmity to all monarchies thenceforth.

In the formation of new Lodges, two members of the Grand Lodge initiated the first member of it and made him its president. They became its vice-president and censor, while the president himself remained in ignorance of their rank in the Grand Lodge, all communications with which passed through the vice-president. All the proceedings in the Lodge itself were controlled by the censor. To lessen the risk of treachery a Lodge was limited to a membership of twenty; and communication between subordinate Lodges was forbidden. As a further means of baffling the vigilance of the police, a double organization was devised, and the society was divided for military purposes into legions, cohorts, centuries, and maniples.

The movement began to spread so fast that the originators doubted their own ability to control it. The Grand Mastership was offered to Lafayette, and his acceptance of the office was followed by the adhesion to the society of Manuel, Argenson, Corcelles, and other leading Liberals.

Emissaries were then sent all over France to spread the movement in the provinces, and they met with great success. In 1822 the number of the French Carbonari were estimated at 60,000. Their ranks were filled mainly by students,

subaltern and non-commissioned officers and the superior class of artisans. Every member was ordered to provide himself with a musket and twenty rounds of ball, for the chief end of the society was revolution by force.

All its plots miscarried from the first. The 29th December, 1821, was fixed for a general rising and the proclamation of a republic, but it had to be deferred at the last moment till New Year's Day, because Lafayette was late in arriving at the rendezvous appointed as the scene of the outbreak, which was B efort, in Alsace. The postponed attempt was a complete fiasco. Once again Lafayette did not arrive in time, and this fortunate absence from the scene of events saved him from inclusion in the subsequent prosecutions.

By this time, however, the directorate of the Carbonari must have become a *secret de Polichinelle*, for when in February, 1822, further equally abortive attempts at insurrection at Saumur, Lyons and Marseilles demonstrated that the conspiracy was a far-reaching one and engineered by the Carbonari, the Royalist party began clamouring for the arrest of Lafayette, Manuel and Argenson. The Ministry was afraid of making political martyrs of such popular national heroes, but had no such scruples in regard to lesser fry; an example was needed to inspire fear; so some Carbonari soldier conspirators who had been arrested after a futile attempt at insurrection in La Rochelle were publicly executed in Paris, in spite of plots laid to rescue them by armed force. This incident, known to French political history as that of the Four Sergeants of La Rochelle, created immense public excitement at the time.¹

These revelations of the Carbonari activity caused Louis XVIII and his ministers extreme uneasiness; and since the Carbonari movement was supposed to have come from Spain the French Government was the more ready to play in that country in 1823 the part which Austria had played in Italy in 1821.

How General Pepe planned to defeat the invasion of Spain by tampering with the Carbonari in the French army and was shipwrecked on Spanish *pundonor* has been told elsewhere.²

¹Vide p. 92.

²Vide p. 155.

The French Carbonari continued to exist, and no doubt to plot; but they took no prominent part in the July Revolution of 1830, and only one of their leaders, Dupont, was included in Louis Philippe's first ministry.

A lack of union had developed in the society, for the provinces had grown far from content to go on following guides whose identity was not to be revealed to them. This discontent came to a head in the year 1833, when the Lyons Lodges demanded to be told who their unknown superiors might be. The information was not accorded, and the dissidents set themselves to revise the statutes of the Order. A secession took place, and the Lyons Lodges formed a new society which had nothing secret about it.

As for the original Carbonari, they soon dissolved as a separate entity, and those members who wished to continue the conspiracy were absorbed into one of the new revolutionary societies which began to make their appearance in France about this time.

CHAPTER XXII

THE FAMILIES AND KINDRED FRENCH SOCIETIES.

AT the beginning of the year 1833 there was formed in Paris a secret society for the purpose of overthrowing Louis Philippe, who had succeeded his cousin Charles X as King of France after the revolution of 1830. This society adopted the name of *Droits de l'Homme*, the Rights of Man,¹ and at once began to attract those who were dissatisfied with the results of the late Revolution.

The society had a ladder-like organization whose bottom rung was a group of twenty men. It ascended by various other steps to eleven Directors, who had supreme power and issued all orders. From the moment of its formation the increase in numbers was rapid, and by the beginning of 1834, 3,500 members had been enrolled; but from the first there were internal dissensions, because its adherents were never able to agree among themselves in defining the true Rights of Man. Owing, perhaps, to these internecine disagreements, all its initial attempts to embarrass the Government failed miserably.

In April, 1834, the French Chambers passed a law enacting that no society should be formed for any purpose without the authorization of Government, if consisting of more than twenty members, even if divided into sections of less than twenty persons, whether meeting periodically or not.

¹ For most of the details about the early history of this society I have followed, *Histoire des sociétés secrètes et du parti républicain de 1830-48*, by Lucien de la Hodde, Paris, 1850. De la Hodde, though a witty and entertaining writer and a master of his facts, for he was one of the leaders of the society, often is unreliable and careless in his statements. He belonged to that large class of successful conspirators who do not obtain what is in their opinion an adequate reward for their services, and indemnify themselves by decrying their fellow-plotters and questioning their motives. His judgment of his contemporaries, therefore, should not be accepted unquestioningly.

This was followed later in the year, as the result of Fieschi's attempt to assassinate Louis Philippe in July, by the famous September Laws, whereby the Press was forbidden to publish any criticism of the King or to discuss the principles of Government.

The result of all these measures of repression was to drive the opponents of reaction into the ranks of the secret societies.

In the year 1835, according to De la Hodde, though other authorities make the date 1834, the Society of the Rights of Man was dissolved and immediately reconstituted under the name of *Société des Familles*, The Families. The new society was of a military character, and so constituted that the names of its chiefs should remain unknown to the members generally till the hour for action came.

The first Directorate consisted of Louis Auguste Blanqui, Armand Barbès, and a less celebrated man, Martin Bernard, a printer by trade, and able revolutionary organizer by confirmed habit—indeed the man last named is said by Louis Blanc to have been the moving spirit in the plot.

Admission into the Families was by a very awe-inspiring ceremony.

The candidate was blindfolded, and while in this state questioned about his political views. When he had declared himself ready to take up arms for the sake of his republican doctrines he was called upon to repeat an oath couched in the following terms:

“I swear never to reveal to anyone, not even to my nearest relative, what is said amongst us. I swear to obey the laws of the association; to pursue with hate or vengeance traitors who may insinuate themselves into our ranks; to love and serve my Brethren; to sacrifice my liberty and life.¹”

He was then instructed to procure arms and ammunition for himself, given various orders about how to behave if arrested, and told to recruit for the society. Every member assumed a *nom de guerre* by which he was known.

None of the society's plans was to be committed to paper.

¹De la Hodde, *Op. cit.*

Six members—De la Hodde says twelve—formed the unit of the society known as a Family. Five or six Families united under the same Chief formed a Section; and two or three Sections a Quarter, the chief of which received his instructions from the unknown members of the Directorate, through one of them who pretended to be merely their agent.

The aim of the society was to secure a democratic form of government by armed revolution.

It did not increase its membership rapidly at first. By 1836 it had no more than 1,200 sworn adherents, but some of these were soldiers of the regiments garrisoning Paris. Moreover, it had succeeded in establishing a store of arms and a factory for making gunpowder.

Before the year was out, however, the gunpowder-factory was raided by the police. Blanqui and Barbès were arrested, tried for conspiracy, and sent to prison.

Though the society had not become implicated in the discovery of the gunpowder plot, it was known that the police had obtained an inkling of its existence, so it was thought advisable to reconstitute the body under another name. This was done, and the old *Les Familles* became the new society of *Les Saisons*, The Seasons.

There is quite a Chestertonian flavour about its constitution. Six members commanded by a *Sunday* formed a *Week*; four Weeks commanded by a *July* formed a *Month*; three Months obeyed a *Spring* or *Season*—four Seasons were under a *Revolutionary Agent*.

The system of isolation which had been enforced in the Families was abandoned, and the members encouraged to assemble together as often as possible in taverns and similar places where they might appear to be a mere gathering of acquaintances. But it was still strictly forbidden to write a word about any business of the society.

Martin Bernard was at first the sole director, but Blanqui and Barbès were soon released on an amnesty granted to political prisoners and rejoined their old associate as joint-leaders.

The mode of initiation was more or less the same as that employed by the Families, and the oath ran:

“In the name of the Republic, I swear eternal hate to all kings, to all aristocrats, to all oppressors of humanity. I swear absolute devotion to the people, fraternity to all men, save aristocrats; I swear to punish traitors; I promise to give my life, and even to mount the scaffold, if necessary, to bring about the reign of the sovereignty of the People and of equality.”¹

In 1837 the society began to try to influence public opinion by bringing out a clandestine newspaper entitled the *Moniteur Républicain*, but it was a failure, and was succeeded by another venture of the same kind, named *L’Homme Libre*. This, too, had no very long life, for the police soon discovered the whereabouts of its printing-press, and the producers were sent to prison.

These events, which happened in the year 1838, succeeded in working the Seasons up to a fine pitch of excitement, so that the members were eager for action. The society had no more than 1,200 members, but they relied upon getting the support of all those discontented elements in a city which are ever ready to join in any revolt, so in 1839 plans were made for an armed rising, and Sunday the 12th May was the date chosen.

It was a complete failure. All the chiefs, Blanqui, Barbès, and Bernard were arrested and tried, and all sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

The society was then reorganized under new leaders, chief of whom was a worker in ebony named Grand-Louis. Later, Dourille, a book-seller, was made chief.

In 1840 the society began to be recruited from the Communists who just then were beginning to make their presence felt in Paris. About the same time, too, De la Hodde became one of the leaders, and made himself responsible for printing the “Orders of the Day,” which were issued at regular intervals to all the members.

¹ De la Hodde, *Op. cit.*

The decline of the society had, however, set in by this time, partly owing to Dourille's incapacity as leader, partly because the Communists had begun to introduce open propaganda instead of secret plotting.

At the end of 1842 Dourille retired from the leadership, and the Directorate was carried on by a junta of four, of whom De la Hodde was one; the leading spirit, however, was Caussidière, later Prefect of Police under the Provisional Government of 1848. He, however, retired from the Directorate in 1846, and the leadership devolved on Flocon, a journalist, and a workman named Albert, who later also found a place in the Provisional Government of 1848.

At this time a split took place in the society, the seceders forming another group entitled the Dissidents, which, however, had identical aims with the mother society, the establishing of a democratic form of government by force.

The societies determined to bide their time; not to initiate an armed revolt themselves, but to wait till parliamentary agitation provoked public disturbances, when they were prepared to act with vigour.

The hour came in February, 1848, when the Government forbade a Liberal demonstration in Paris. Barricades had been thrown up and the capital was in a state of dangerous unrest, but no serious encounter had taken place between the troops on guard and the populace, when on the evening of the 23rd the secret societies, the Seasons and the Dissidents, armed themselves and marched to capture the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It has been estimated that their actual members cannot have been more than a few hundreds, but they swept into their wake everyone with a fighting spirit who had a grudge against the existing political and social order. The upshot was the flight of Louis Philippe, and the formation of a Provisional Government, which (after the mob had expressed its sentiments by the methods best known to mobs) declared itself to be Republican.

Barbès and Blanqui were released with other political prisoners, and were not long before they began to plot against the Provisional Government which their followers had helped to establish. This time, however, the influence of

the secret societies was not strong enough to cause another upheaval. Both these leaders and many of their followers went into prison or exile; and the *coup d'état* which made Napoleon III Emperor of the French extinguished at the same time the last sparks of life in the secret societies that had helped to make the revolution of 1848. .

CHAPTER XXIII

THE HETAIRIA

VARIOUS origins have been ascribed to the Greek revolutionary society Hetairia, whose name means "Union of Friends," and several patriots are put in competition for the honour of having formed it. The earliest date mentioned is 1796, when the Greek poet Constantinos Rhigas formed a plot in Vienna for an insurrection in Greece, but before he could take any active steps he was handed over by the Austrian authorities to the Porte, and hanged in Belgrade in 1798. If he did found the society, it died with him. The next claimant is Prince Alexander Mavrocordato, ex-Hospadar of Wallachia, who when an exile in Russia at the beginning of the nineteenth century formed a society with the ostensible object of educating the youth of Greece, but actually, some say, to effect a revolution in that country. Then in 1812 another society, Hetairia Philomuse, was planted at Vienna, to deal with the preservation of Greek art, etc., and on this body Count Capo d'Istria is said to have grafted the militant Hetairia, when the Philomuse had proved itself impotent, for its appeal to the Congress of Vienna in the cause of Greek liberty fell on deaf ears. Another story is that the society was founded in 1814 at Odessa by a group of obscure Greek exiles, including one Xanthos of Patmos, who was a Freemason and devised a ritual for the association; while yet another story says that it was formed in 1814 in Vienna by Prince Alexander Ipsilanti and other young Greeks residing in that city.

All these conflicting versions seem to point to the true origin of a knot of educated Greeks, including Count Capo d'Istria, private secretary to the Tsar of Russia, and Prince

Alexander Ipsilanti, all members of the Philomuse, who having found that nothing politically useful could be accomplished by the latter society copied the example of the German Tugendbund and established the revolutionary Hetairia.

The members were divided into five grades: (1) Adelphoi or Brothers, who simply took an oath of secrecy and fidelity, but remained ignorant of the society's real object; (2) Systemenoi or Bachelors, who were told that the liberation of Greece was to be effected by revolution; (3) Priests of Eleusis, who were kept informed of the progress of the movement; (4) Prelates, who received the most secret information and were deputed to superintend the provinces; (5) the Grand Arch, which exercised supreme control and consisted of about a dozen members, self-elected.¹

The oath of the society bound the candidate to be faithful to his country, to labour with all his might for her regeneration, to preserve secrecy, and to put to death even his nearest relatives if they were guilty of treachery to the cause of Greece. Each initiate bound himself in writing to pay a certain contribution to the funds proportionate to his means, and signed this declaration with a cipher, which was used as a test of authenticity. Some of the signs and pass-words were common to all the grades; but the superior grades had special modes of recognition.

Every member had the right to initiate candidates, but he was held responsible for the subsequent behaviour of those whom he had introduced.

The identity of the persons who formed the Grand Arch is doubtful, and accounts are misleading, because the society has often been confused with the Philomuse, which was an *open* body² used by the real Hetairia as a cloak for its conspiracy. The probability is that both Capo d'Istria and Ipsilanti were members of the Royal Arch. This Directory was removed to Moscow soon after the formation

¹ Heckethorn, *Secret Societies*, says there were seven grades as follows: (1) Brother; (2) Apprentice; (3) Priest of Eleusis; (4) Shepherd; (5) Prelate; (6) Initiate; (7) Supreme Initiate; the last two grades being military and intended for those who were prepared to take up arms. The text follows Thomas Frost's statement on the matter.

² Meaning a society whose meetings and aims were not concealed in mystery.

of the society, and issued its orders to the Prelates from there. The leaders asserted that they had a secret understanding with the Tsar Alexander.

Agents known as Apostles were despatched to Paris and London to collect secret information and win support for the movement; but nothing was achieved in either city. In southern Russia and the Danubian region, on the other hand, the society gained many supporters.

In 1816 a propagandist revolutionary movement was undertaken in Greece by Anthymos Gazi, a famous scholar, and others. They found good human material waiting to be employed against the Turk, for the French had disbanded a battalion of Albanians in Corfu, and the British two others that had been raised in Albania and the Morea; and there is no better stuff for kindling a revolt or leading a forlorn hope than recently disbanded troops whose occupation is gone. The other Apostles who were travelling through Europe at the same period under the veil of the Philomuse were tolerably successful in raising funds, but in nothing else.

Among the Greek people at large the Hetairia began now to take on the aspect of a national institution, for it soon embraced every class of society, from the Princes John Caradja and Michael Soutzo, who hoped to become rulers of Wallachia and Moldavia respectively, down to the wealthy agriculturists of the Morea and the Greek clergy generally.

In 1820 the Grand Arch removed from Moscow to Kishenev, a town in Bessarabia. It is quite probable that this action might have been taken as the result of correspondence and deliberation with other European secret societies, for the year 1820 was one of general revolt. This move was accompanied by increased propaganda of a much more public character in Greece. It was while engaged in such a task that Count Galati, a member of the Royal Arch, was assassinated at Hermione; some said because he had betrayed the secrets of the Hetairia to the Turks, while others ascribed the crime to Ipsilanti's jealousy and a dispute about the disposal of the society's funds. Whatever the real truth may be, there is no doubt that serious differences

of opinion existed at this time in the councils of the Hetairia.

The main rift was between Ipsilanti, who was all for raising a revolt in Moldavia, and Mavrocordato, who opposed this scheme. The former carried his point, however, and was appointed Procurator-General of the Order, which was enjoined by circular to yield him implicit obedience.

Ipsilanti's belief was that Bulgaria, Serbia, Wallachia and Moldavia would all rise given the chance, whereas those best informed knew that only in Moldavia could the movement count on some support, and that but small. To make the situation even less hopeful, news of the intended Greek revolt was soon conveyed to the Turkish Government, which, however, was so dilatory in taking any steps to prevent it that the plot might as well not have been betrayed, for any use the Porte made of the knowledge.

The death of the Hospodar of Wallachia, Prince Soutzo, on the 30th January, 1821, was the signal for the revolt, which was characterized by horrible cruelties perpetrated by the Christians on the Mohammedans in Jassy and Galatz. The insurgents declared that the revolution had been undertaken with the full approval of the Tsar, but when on the 11th March the standard of the Hetairia, bearing the phoenix as emblem, was unfurled at Jassy, Russia at once informed the Porte that, far from approving, she had no sympathy whatever with the revolt.

In the outcome, the people of Moldavia did not rise as Ipsilanti had expected, so he marched his forces into Wallachia where a similar lack of enthusiasm for the cause of the Hetairia was shown. The ensuing military operations were distinguished by treachery, bad leadership, rapine and plunder. After having been worsted in several engagements, Ipsilanti led the remnants of his army into Austrian territory, where it was interned, and its chief confined in the Hungarian fortress of Munkacs, where he was kept a prisoner for the next seven years and released only to die soon after. By July, 1821, the last band of insurgents had been exterminated by the Turks.

In the meantime, however, the Hetairia had struck again and this time with better results. In April a revolt fostered by the society broke out in the Morea, was successful, and spread into Attica, the advance of the triumphant Greeks being attended by massacres of the Moslems, while in Constantinople and other towns where the Turks were predominant massacres of the Greeks took place in retaliation. On the 27th May the Greeks defeated the Turks at the battle of Valtezza. Had a skilful general been available to lead the 20,000 insurgents now in arms, much might have been accomplished towards Greek freedom, but leadership was lacking. The Grand Arch had done its best by despatching Prince Demetrius Ipsilanti, brother to the prisoner of Munkacs, to be their general, and he arrived on the spot about a fortnight after the day of Valtezza, only to find that the Greeks were not disposed to recognize his authority. However, on his threatening to leave Greece at once, if not accepted as general-in-chief, his claim was granted.

In August, Prince Alexander Mavrocordato and other leading Hetairists landed at Missolonghi. An assembly of deputies from the provinces of continental Greece was convened in November, and adopted a system of government for the eastern districts. A national assembly was established later at Argos, when a republican form of government was declared, with Mavrocordato president of the executive council. At the beginning of 1822 the independence of Greece was proclaimed. Shortly afterwards a constitution was promulgated, and the seat of government removed to Corinth.

The fall of the fortress of Janina, where Ali Pasha had been defying the Porte, set free large Turkish forces to march against the Greeks. The latter, however, continued to hold their own in the field, and none of the Turkish successes had any decisive result.

In diplomacy, however, the Hetairia was not so fortunate. Its envoy Count Metaxa was refused admission to the Congress of Verona. Nor were internal politics running smoothly. At Corinth quarrels broke out in the Senate, of which Mavrocordato resigned the presidency in the hopes

of achieving unity by this act of renunciation, only to witness renewed quarrelling between the new leaders. As for the Greek army, its chiefs would accept orders from no one. Things were in this unsatisfactory condition when in January, 1824, Lord Byron arrived on the scene. He set himself to restore order in the young republic, and achieved much, but perhaps his early death, which cast a halo of self-sacrifice round his fame as a poet, did more for the cause of Greek independence than all his efforts in life. Dying with his task incomplete, the sound of his name resounded through Europe like a word of power to bid the generous of heart take their stand on the side of Greek liberty.

By this time the revolutionary movement in Greece had become too strong to be cramped by the directions of any secret society. The Grand Arch and all its squabbling factions, for it had split into groups with conflicting aims, gradually sank into impotence, and then out of existence. It was probably no more than a ghost when in the year 1827 Great Britain, France and Russia agreed to intervene and secure the recognition of Greece as a semi-independent State. That Capo d'Istria was chosen president for seven years, with the unexpected result of producing greater harmony in the new State, was probably not due to any influence of the Hetairia.

The society had completed its useful work long before. It had been a means of bringing together men who loved their country; it had provided them with a means of striking a blow for her liberty; and, when that blow had been successfully struck, there was no proper place for any such secret society as the Hetairia in a free Greece.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE COMUNEROS

LODGES of Freemasons had existed in Spain from the time of Charles III (1759–88), but on account of the hostility of the Inquisition they were forced to remain clandestine, and cannot have been very numerous. The invasion of Spain by Napoleon abolished the Inquisition, and the Freemasons were able to meet openly; the French soldier Freemasons spread a knowledge of the society, and Spanish prisoners were initiated in France; by which means it came about that Spanish Freemasons copied the practice of the French Lodges and took to meddling in political matters, for after the restoration of Ferdinand VII in 1814 they proceeded to make themselves a powerful party in the State.¹

The new Freemasonry of Spain probably came from several sources. A branch of it was active at Cadiz in 1812, and attracted attention only on account of its toleration and philanthropy, which would seem to argue a derivation from the pure source of British Freemasonry through the regimental Lodges at Gibraltar or in Wellington's army. But those Spanish Officers and soldiers who had been prisoners in France and come in contact with Freemasonry there brought back to their country quite another conception of this society, which was that it could be legitimately used for furthering political and revolutionary objects. Unfortunately the course of events in Spain was to give the Freemasons every excuse for making what use they could of their organization. The restoration of Ferdinand

¹*Vide Memoirs of Ferdinand VII*, by an anonymous Spanish author, translation by M. J. Quin, London, 1824.

meant the re-establishment of the Inquisition, which at once inaugurated a régime of persecution and arrested men in hundreds for the sole crime of being a Freemason.¹ It was in these circumstances that the Spanish Freemasons assumed a definitely political and revolutionary tendency.

They formed a central directing body known as the Grand East, which was situated at Madrid in 1816, but must have been active before then, because it was the party of the Freemasons which planned and supported the unsuccessful conspiracies of Porlier in Galicia in September, 1815, and of Lacy in Catalonia in April, 1817. They, too, it was who brought about the successful revolt of the army at Isla in January, 1820, which wrung a constitution from the reluctant King Ferdinand.

"All the operations of the army which proclaimed the constitution were arranged in the Lodges, and everything done through the medium of Freemasonry."²

The Freemasons were now for the time being all-powerful in the State as a political party; but it was not long before the men who had been the mainsprings of the Spanish revolution split into two camps, the Constitutionals who were content when despotism had been curbed, and the Liberals who aimed at giving the fullest possible effect to the constitution.³

The disagreements seem to have come to a head in July, 1822, when a new Ministry was formed under the leadership of Evaristo San Miguel, a prominent member of the Freemason party, which had chosen him as political chief. The new Government was not prepared to go far enough to suit its ultra-Liberal supporters, who, led by Ballesteros, Morales, and Palarea, now seceded, and formed a third party in the State.

It was only natural that the dissidents should try to adopt a form of organization similar to that which had

¹ Michael Joseph Quin, *Voyage to Spain*, London, 1824, from which book much of the following information about the Comuneros is drawn.

² Quin, *Op. cit.*, p. 61.

³ Its third article ran: "The sovereignty is vested in the nation, to which therefore the right of making its fundamental laws exclusively pertains." This became a watchword with the Comuneros.

brought them and their friends into power in 1820, so they proceeded to form a new secret society named "The Confederation of the *Comuneros*."¹

The name was taken from a memorable event of the reign of Charles V, when the *comunidades* of Castile revolted against their king in order to defend the people's rights against the burden of taxation imposed by his far-reaching foreign policy and against the employment of foreign favourites. The *Comuneros* were routed at the battle of Villalar in 1520, when their leader Juan de Padilla was taken prisoner; and although his heroic wife, Maria de Pacheco, continued the struggle for some time longer at Toledo, the revolt was finally crushed and Padilla executed in 1521.

The new society of *Comuneros*, established just three hundred years later, appealed by its name and avowed objects to the liberal element in Young Spain. It soon acquired a membership of 60,000, women being admitted as well as men, each sex having its own *Torres* (towers) or Lodges.

It attracted the most advanced section of the Liberals, and some of its members were out-and-out republicans, yet its statutes, oaths, catechism, etc., contained no other profession of political faith than this:

"The essential object of the Confederation is to support at any sacrifice the rights and liberties of the Spanish people, as laid down in the Political Constitution of the kingdom."

The aims of the society were: to promote by all means in its power the freedom of mankind; to defend in every way the rights of the Spanish people; and to help the poor and distressed, especially among its own members.

The Lodge was known as a *Torre*, and consisted of from seven to fifty members; a group of less than seven was known as a *Fort*, and attached to some particular *Torre*. The members in each province constituted a *Comunidad*.

A Supreme Assembly, to which a delegate was elected

¹I retain the Spanish word instead of translating by communist. *Comunero* signifies pertaining to or upholding the *comunidades*, provincial assemblies of Castile. It must be carefully distinguished from *comunista* and *comunismo*, meaning communist and communism, in the modern sense.

from each Comunidad, directed the affairs of the society. Its officers were a Commander, Lieutenant-Commander, Alcaide, Treasurer, and four Secretaries. An important part of their functions was to change periodically the pass-words, signs, and countersigns. This Assembly was divided into three committees charged with affairs of justice, vigilance, and administration.

The place of meeting was entitled the *Alcázar* (Castle). In the assembly-room were placed three battlemented towers. "The door shall be fortified by a portcullis and drawbridge, which shall be raised during the sitting, and guarded by five pike-men."

A similar organization existed for each Comunidad, formed by delegates from the Torres. The place of meeting in this case was termed the Castle of Liberty.

The officers of a Torre were an Alcaide, Treasurer, Secretary, and Captain of the Keys, who was Doorkeeper and Master of Ceremonies combined.

The candidates were known as *recruits*, and the initiation as *enlistment*.

The recruit was to be apprised "in a vague manner" of the objects of the Confederation before being proposed as a member. Neither the Torres nor the Comunidades had the power to admit candidates. All names had first to be submitted to the Supreme Assembly, where they were considered by the committee of vigilance. Admission was by ballot, and required a majority of six-sevenths in the Supreme Assembly, and a later majority of two-thirds in the province, when the candidate could be admitted to the Torre in which he had been proposed. Here he was blindfolded, and took a preliminary oath of secrecy, and answered certain questions; whereupon the bandage was removed, and he was left alone in a room hung with arms and patriotic inscriptions. Later he was admitted to the presence of the presiding officer, who informed him that he stood beneath the shield of their chief Padilla, and called upon him to repeat an oath whereby he bound himself to fight for constitutional liberty and to avenge every wrong done his country. The recruit was then declared a Comunero,

and invested with a scarf; a flag and sword were put into his hands, signifying a readiness to face death in defending the liberties of his country; he then covered himself with the shield of Padilla, while the knights present pointed their swords at it with this exhortation: "The shield of our chief Padilla will cover you from every danger, will save your life and honour; but if you violate your oath, this shield shall be removed, and these swords buried in your breast."

In point of fact, while the statutory punishments for offences ranged from fines to total expulsion, there is no suggestion of a death penalty in the ritual.

Members might freely withdraw from the Confederation, but had to hand over any document that happened to be in their possession, and also had to preserve secrecy, and refrain from any conduct that might reflect on the society.

So far as is disclosed by the statutes and ritual, the society intended to proceed by purely constitutional methods.

The most important centres were New Castile, Aragon, Catalonia, Valencia, and Murcia, because the real strength of the society was drawn from the barracks and workshops of Madrid, Saragossa, Barcelona, Valencia and Cartagena.

The famous Spanish patriot Rafael Riego y Nuñez is said to have been a member of the Saragossa Torre, and to have taken an active part in the councils of the Assembly. Certain it is that when, mainly as the result of Comunero effort, the extreme Liberals gained a majority in the elections of 1822, Riego was chosen President by their votes; but, though in a minority, the Freemasons still clung to office, a circumstance that shows how difficult must have been the path of the constitutional reformer in Spain. . . . a path rendered still more thorny by the absolutist tendencies of King Ferdinand and the policy of the Holy Alliance, whose avowed object was the extinction of all forms of constitutional government in Europe.

Metternich had proposed at the Congress of Troppau that a Russo-Austrian army should be sent by water to Spain to restore Ferdinand as absolute monarch, but England protested against this so forcibly that an alternative scheme had to be devised by which France was jostled into

the unenviable rôle of policeman of reactionary Europe. On the 30th November, 1822, at the Congress of Verona, Russia, Austria, Prussia and France agreed to send separate notes to the Court of Madrid protesting against the "thralldom imposed on the monarch of Spain" and the general unsatisfactory state of affairs in that country. All but France did so forthwith, and withdrew their ambassadors. Then after lengthy and futile diplomatic proceedings, in which England made a half-hearted attempt to effect a compromise, France set about invading Spain.

The Spanish Carbonari¹, who had hitherto been discountenanced by both the Freemasons and the Comuneros, now made common cause with them against external enemies, and attempted to raise a mutiny among the French Carbonari who were numerous in the regiments now massing on the frontiers for the invasion of Spain. This attempt had no success, and the mutual contest of Freemasons and Comuneros for office prevented the Spanish Constitutionals from presenting a united front at home. Riots occurred at Cadiz and elsewhere. Civil war seemed imminent.

Then in February, 1823, the Comuneros approached the king with a warning that the party in office, the Freemasons, were about to proclaim a regency and remove his person from Madrid, and declared that they as a party would oppose any such plan.² Ferdinand thereupon dismissed his Ministry, and formed a more Liberal one, in which General Torrijos, an ardent Comunero, was Minister of War, and Morales, a reputed Comunero, Minister of the Interior. The Comuneros, however, were not satisfied with the new Government, and the new ministers soon resigned, all save Torrijos and one other.

In April, 1823, the French armies began their march into Spain. The Court withdrew to Seville, and little opposition was offered to the invaders. On the 23rd May the Duke of Angoulême entered Madrid, and a Provisional Government was established. The last stand of the Constitutionals

¹This society had been established in Spain by Italian refugees in 1821
See p. 154.

²Quin, *Op. cit.*, p. 246.

was made at Cadiz, which, however, was forced to surrender on the 1st October, whereupon Ferdinand was restored as an absolute monarch. His first act as such was to have Riego arrested and hanged. Torrijos escaped for the time being, but on entering Spain again in 1831 was captured, and shot after a drum-head court-martial.

Angoulême had induced Ferdinand to declare a general amnesty, but the exceptions to it included nearly everyone who had ever worked for the cause of the Constitution. The return to the old order meant the immediate suppression of all secret societies in Spain, and both the Freemasons and the Comuneros ceased to exist as organized bodies, the former for a time, the latter for ever.

CHAPTER XXV

THE UNITED SLAVONIANS AND POLISH TEMPLARS

ABOUT the year 1820 the Society of United Slavonians was formed in Russia by some young officers who had been with the army of occupation in France and imbibed revolutionary ideas there.

Members of this society were divided into four categories: the first was supposed to watch over charitable organizations supported by the State and to report to the Government any abuses that they might discover in their management; the second was directed to watch over educational matters; the third was to be concerned with the manner in which the laws were administered; the fourth was to devote itself to a study of political economy. Any one member might belong to all four classes of activity.

It is doubtful if any subversive secret society were ever set afoot with more altruistic and praiseworthy objects.

Prince Troubetzkoi was the Grand Master of the Order, whose membership contained many young men drawn from the best families in Russia.

What originated in the idea of unselfish social service in time developed into something quite different; and within the society there was gradually evolved a plan for a general insurrection in order to force the Tsar to grant a constitutional form of government. The troops were involved, for the plot had found supporters in the armies of Poland and Bessarabia, and even soldiers in the Imperial Guard were implicated.

On the 1st December, 1825, Tsar Alexander died. His brother the Grand Duke Constantine was the next heir, but in 1822 he had renounced his rights of succession in

favour of the Grand Duke Nicholas. The conspirators determined to use this crisis in the State for their own ends and to proclaim Constantine as Tsar, despite his renunciation, for they thought that Nicholas would be willing to retire in favour of his brother, and that they would then find it an easy matter to wheedle a constitution from Constantine, who was reported to have few interests beyond his own sensual pleasures.

For the outbreak of the revolt the United Slavonians chose the moment when the oath of allegiance was about to be administered to the troops, the day after Christmas; but a hint of the plot had reached Nicholas, and he proceeded to take precautions to defeat it.

At the ceremony of the oath-taking about 3,000 troops actually revolted, but the insurgent ranks were full of hesitation and uncertainty, for they were without an accredited leader, Prince Troubetzkoi, who was to act in that capacity, having failed to put in an appearance.

In the upshot a battle took place in St. Petersburg, and by six in the evening the loyalists had defeated the rebels.

Poushkin, the famous poet, was one of the conspirators, and was only prevented by an accident from being present to take part with his friends in the battle and, later, on the scaffold.

Troubetzkoi was arrested, and among his papers ample evidence about the society and its members and objects was discovered.

The members were arrested by hundreds and brought to trial. Most of them were quite frank in confessing their aims.

"I knew before I engaged in it," said Ryleif, the poet, who was one of those implicated, "that the enterprise would ruin me; but I could no longer bear to behold my country under the yoke of despotism; the seed which I have sown will one day germinate, and in the end bear fruit."

Of course the prisoners were accused (and found guilty) of more crimes than they had ever contemplated, including the assassination of the royal family. They were tried by a military court-martial, and thirty-six were sentenced to death,

convictions which were commuted in all but five cases; and 130 others were condemned to long terms of imprisonment.

The United Slavonians were probably in part responsible for another secret revolutionary society that arose in the Russian Empire about the same period.

The Polish Templars was an association formed in 1822 in Warsaw with the objects of restoring national independence and establishing a constitutional form of government. Its structure resembled that of the United Slavonians, with which at the first it had a good understanding. After the downfall of the latter society in 1825, inquiries were set afoot by the police in Warsaw, anxious to trace the ramifications of the United Slavonians, and suspects were arrested in great numbers.

The Polish Templars, however, escaped discovery.

The Directors of the Templars at this time were Mazefski, by whom the society had been founded, Soltyk, a historian and member of the Senate, Uminski, Jablonowski, and Krzyanowski, all of whom held high ranks in the Russian army.

The society had become most popular in Warsaw among the younger officers in garrison and the artizans of the city, and after the French revolution of July, 1830, it began to spread as well among the students of Vilna and Cracow universities.

Increasing membership gave increased confidence, and it was finally decided to launch a revolt in the kingdom of Poland at the end of 1830. The active leaders of this rising were two young lieutenants, Wysocki and Zaleski.

On November 29th the insurrection broke out in Warsaw. The Polish troops joined the insurgents; the capital was captured and a Provisional Government established.

The history of subsequent events belongs to that of Poland and not to the Templars, who having helped to launch the revolt had nothing much to do with steering it through a heroic though unsuccessful nine-months' struggle.

With the failure of the insurrection the Polish Templars as a secret society went out of existence.

CHAPTER XXVI

SOME CRIMINAL SOCIETIES OF THE MIDDLE AGES AND LATER.

Honour among thieves! then all honour to that fifteenth century close corporation known as the "Mercelots," which numbered among its initiates no less a celebrity than François Villon, the great poet and beloved *mauvais enfant*.¹

The prosperity of France, which had increased immensely owing to the gradual enfranchisement of the serfs, an object much encouraged by the Church from the eleventh century onwards, disappeared almost completely during the English Wars, 1336-1452. These wars gave rise to a dangerous class of criminal, who got the length of forming themselves into an order with their own Government, hierarchy, and laws, to say nothing of a separate language, specimens of which have been preserved to this day in the jargon poems of the student-poet mentioned above.

These Gueux or Beggars were recruited from malefactors escaped from the towns, ruined labourers, the unemployed in every trade, deserters from the armies, quacks, fortune-tellers, ballad-singers, bankrupt merchants, and, to complete the list, the *declassés*, sons of good families, clerks, and scholars fallen into evil ways. The hosts of crime were divided into five "Tribes": soldiers; the pedlars or packmen, known as *merciers*, *mercerots* or *mercelots* (Villon was of this band); beggars, known as *gens du Grand Coesre, du royaume de Thunes*; gipsies; robbers.

Right up to the time of Louis XIV the Beggars and Mercelots formed two analogous twin bodies wherein all sorts of scoundrels were included. This order of iniquity was said to have been founded about the year 1455.

¹ Auguste Vitu, *Jargon et Jodelin de François Villon*, Paris, 1889.

According to a book published in 1596 and entitled *Pechon de Ruby*, the grades in this fraternity were: (1) Pechon, or apprentice; (2) Blesche, the first degree of initiation, corresponding to Mercelot, petty trader; (3) Coesme, Coesmelotier, Coesmelotier Huré, wholesale merchant.¹ All these titles were borrowed from the legitimate business and corporations of honest mercers. The Beggars had three superior degrees: Cagou or Pasquelin, provincial officers, who instructed the novices in villainy; Archi-suppôts, who formed a sort of Upper Chamber of crime; Le Grand Coesre, the supreme chief. According to Sauval, this officer sometimes assumed the name of Roi de Thunes.

That this gang of scallywags should have stolen the phraseology of the Gild of genuine Merciers may be due to the fact that the latter possessed a strict code of moral duties, as is shown by a document of 1585. According to this evidence, a fellow of the Gild was obliged to guard another's merchandise and work for him as for himself; none might attract another's customer; he had to protect his fellow's wife, and help her with money; to aid him in sickness; and to sell the merchandise of one who fell sick on a journey, and retain no more than a third of the profits for himself.

These admirable rules were parodied by the Beggars to suit their own ends. This French sodality forms a curious parallel to the somewhat similar English organization described by Thomas Harman. Some details about the initiation ceremony have come down to us,

After having made his first journey and sold his first bale, the Pechon became a candidate for the first degree of Gucuserie. After the fair was over, he stood treat to his superiors in the Order, whereupon one of his elders delivered a harangue about the rights and duties of the fraternity. The Pechon, with his head bared, raised his hand, and swore that he would not reveal the secrets to the Petits Mercelots who had not been initiated. He was then given a stick and a bale to prove if he could lade the bale on his back while he kept off a dog with the stick. Thereafter he was

¹ Pechon means little child; Blesche, fool, or novice; Coesme, probably beggar.

given a fencing lesson with the stick, and was passed to the degree of Blesche.

The parliament or general assembly of these sons of Esau was held in the Cour de Miracles, in Paris, and the genius of Victor Hugo in *Notre Dame* has made many of their customs common knowledge.

Almost at the same time, but probably a little later in the fifteenth century a similar association developed in England, and spread so rapidly that it became a public nuisance and danger in the reign of Elizabeth, when a Kent magistrate went to the trouble of writing a book to advise his fellow-justices how to deal with the crowds of wandering beggars and malefactors.

Like the French beggars, the English had evolved their own peculiar language or cant, and it is needless to remark that this custom has continued down to our own times. Harman, writing in 1567, says that this pedlars' French or canting began "but within these thirty years, little above," and that the "first inventor" of it was hanged. This, if true, would place the date about the time of the suppression of the monasteries and the consequent increase in unemployment.

In England, even as in France, there was a variety of different professions among these ruffians. According to one recorder, by the beginning of the eighteenth century they had even adopted the custom of electing a king, though it is doubtful if this title were ever conferred by any general assembly of the profession. Bamfylde Moore Carew, who in his autobiography claimed the honour as his own, may not have been strictly veracious. Born of a good West-country family, he ran away from school to join a band of gypsies, and spent years in vagabondage. If the ceremony of his enthronement as monarch of the mumpers ever took place, it probably had no more significance or validity than has a modern initiation into the Worshipful Society of Froth-blowers.

At any rate in the days of Elizabeth there was no supreme head of the beggars' order, but the authority was divided, according to districts, among a series of petty chiefs who might be compared to the robber barons of an earlier day.

These rulers of a district were known as the Upright Men, and seem to have won their authority by brute force and pugnacity.

Any thief, beggar, horse-stealer, trull, sham-madman, or any other member of the various degrees of crime who frequented the countryside where one of the Upright Men held sway was obliged to become a loyal subject, and submit to the taxation which loyal subjects all the world over have levied on them by their governors.

The Upright Man also acted as the initiator in the curious ceremony by which a novice in the art of begging was bound to his new fraternity. These initiatory rites were known as "Stalling to the Rogue," and a full account of what took place has come down to us in the book already mentioned.¹

With the spelling modernized this account runs thus:

"These Upright Men will seldom or never want; for what is gotten by any Mort or Doxy (*woman or mistress*) if it please him he doth command the same. And if he meet any beggar, whether he be sturdy or impotent, he will demand of him, whether he was ever stalled to the rogue or no. If he say he was, he will know of whom and his name that stalled him. And if he be not learnedly able to show him the whole circumstance thereof, he will spoil him of his money, either (*or*) of his best garment, if it be worth any money, and have him to the bowsing ken (*ale-house*) which is to some tippling house next adjoining; and layeth there to gage (*pawns*) the best thing that he hath for twenty pence or two shillings: this man obeyeth for fear of beating. Then doth this Upright Man call for a gage of bowse, which is a quart-pot of drink, and pours the same upon his peeled pate, adding these words: 'I, G.P., do stall thee, W.T., to the Rogue, and that from henceforth it shall be lawful for thee to Cant,' that is to ask or beg, 'for thy living in all places.' Here you see that the Upright Man is of great authority. For all sorts of beggars are obedient to his hests and he surmounteth all others in pilfering and stealing."

¹ Thomas Harman, *A Caveat or Warening for Commen Cursetors Vulgarly called Vagabones*, 1567.

The Order of Upright Men, says Harman, was recruited from disbanded soldiers and masterless serving-men, displaying scars "got in the Gallic wars," disdaining to beg charity, but never missing a chance to rob women or defenceless travellers on the king's highway—the prototype of to-day's ex-officer motor-bandit.

Some of the vagabonds, however, had a hereditary yearning for a life on the roads. "I once rebuking a wild rogue because he went idly about, he showed me that he was a beggar by inheritance—his grandfather was a beggar, his father was one, and he must needs be one by good reason."

Among the different professions practised by the Elizabethan beggars were those of the Hooker or Angler, who stole linen from hedges and clothes from houses by means of a hook at the end of a long stick; the Prigger of Prancers, who was a horse-thief; the Palliard or Clapperdudgeon, who went begging in company with a female who passed as his wife . . . "and if any doubteth thereof he showeth them a testimonial with the minister's name . . . there be many Irishmen that go about with counterfeit licences"; these people also raised sores on their bodies by the use of herbs to evoke pity. Then there was the Abraham Man, who shammed madness; the Counterfeit Crank, who simulated epilepsy; the Dommerar, who feigned dumbness; the Bawdy Basket, a woman pedlar who stole more than she sold; Walking Morts and Doxies, who formed the harem of the Upright Men, and added to their income by pilfering and prostitution; and at the summit of the female side of the Order of Canters, the Autem Mort, who was a married woman, if not strictly respectable, being, in Harman's phrase, "as chaste as a cow I have" that had a catholic taste in mates.

There were degrees of apprenticeship to these dismal trades. The Dell was a young girl being reared up to join the ranks of the Morts and Doxies; a Kynching Mort was a much younger girl; while a Kinchen Co was a young boy brought up "to such peevish purposes as you have heard of other young imps before, so that when he grows up he is fit for nothing but the gallows."

No wonder that the profession tended to become hereditary!

Such was one of the aspects of social life in Merry England in the good old times, and since it is one over which we do not willingly linger, let us, in their historian's fine alliterative phrase, turn over the leaf on "all these rowsey (rough), ragged rabblement of rakehells."

The Spanish criminal was even more fortunate in finding a biographer; he enlisted no less a genius than Cervantes, who in one of his "Exemplary Novels," *Rinconete y Cortadilla*, has depicted the Fagans and Artful Dodgers of his day and nation with a humour and exactitude of detail that could only have sprung from careful personal observation.

The story tells how two young rogues named Rincon and Cortado, aged fifteen and seventeen respectively, came to Seville, and began to ply the only trades they knew—thieving and trickery. Another promising youth, a native of the city, having caught them red-handed in a theft, congratulated them on their address, and then enquired why they had not been to the custom-house of Señor Monopodio? This evoked the not unnatural question from Rincon, whether a duty on thieves were payable in Seville; on which he was informed that all of this fraternity had to register themselves with Monopodio, who was their father and master and protector, and it would be as well for the new-comers to swear fealty to him at once, for if they ventured to go on stealing without his permission it would **cost them** dear.

Rincon and Cortado accordingly went to the house of Monopodio, who on discovering their genius in the profession accepted them as full members of his band and dispensed with the usual year of novitiate. The disabilities of a novice consisted in having to hand over more of the proceeds of his thefts, and to do menial duties such as going round to collect contributions from the older members. They were not allowed to drink what they pleased nor to make a feast without permission of one of the older Brethren; and were obliged to hand over half their takings when one of these seniors should happen to demand such a subvention.

Monopodio was on good terms with the police; and was ever ready to render a *quid pro quo* to the alguaciles who afforded him protection. He inculcated morality of a sort in his band, for his decree ran that each thief out of his earnings should devote a small sum from the proceeds of every successful piece of business towards providing oil for the lamp that burnt before the shrine of a famous saint. This is quite on all fours with the custom later prevailing in the Neapolitan Camorra; whether the alms in either case ever passed through the chief's hands into the sacred lamp is quite another matter.

The usual contribution payable by every member of the band went to swell a common fund, which was divided among the members according to their merit and usefulness.

The fraternity had its own jargon and laws. A considerable part of its revenues came from undertaking to revenge the timorous-hearted on their enemies, and a fixed tariff existed for such deeds as slashing a man's face with a dagger or nailing a Sanbenito, a scapular with a St. Andrew's cross, to the door of a man's house, as an insinuation that his family was of Jewish origin, since the Inquisition compelled relapsed Jews to wear such a badge.

A much later Spanish secret society, which though lawless was of quite a different type of criminality to that presided over by Señor Monopodio, may, though out of due order, be given a mention here.

A criminal association existing among Latin immigrants to the United States, and known as the Black Hand, occasioned a great deal of outrage and violence in the early years of the present century, and since its origin has been ascribed to a Spanish society of a similar name, this will be a convenient place to give a short account of the latter as it existed in its country of origin.

The association of the *Mano Negra*, the "Black Hand," arose in the south of Spain about the year 1835. Its supporters were drawn from agricultural labourers and small peasants who had been deprived of their rights on the communal lands, where they had been used to cut timber and pasture their herds.

The Mano Negra had a centralized organization, and resorted to assassination or incendiarism as its *ultima ratio*. Its manifestations, like those of all agrarian societies, have been sporadic. There was a particularly fierce outbreak of this type of civil war in Andalusia in 1883. Whether this was due to a society revived in accordance with country tradition or betokened that the peasants' league for self-protection had never died, it is impossible to say. In either case the movement was a purely local one, begotten of oppression and hunger. It is said that foreign anarchists on visiting Spain attempted to utilize the Mano Negra to further their own subversive schemes, but were unable to gain any influence with it.

Blasco-Ibáñez's novel *La Barraca* presents in fictional form an excellent description of the agrarian situation in Valencia which might have given rise to the Mano Negra or any other similar secret society having its sinews in the soil.

The criminal society of the same name which has at times provided occupation for the police of the United States probably had nothing to do with this peasants' league of Southern Spain.

Another Latin society that existed for redressing grievances, occasioned some stir, and is still remembered, was the Beati Paoli. This was a secret society that arose in Sicily on a model similar to the Vehmgericht, and proceeded against those whose power was too great to be attacked openly. It had some partially salutary effects by restraining the arbitrary licentiousness of the nobles and tribunals; for in time it was spread all over the island, and inflicted death, mutilation, and corporal punishment at will. The society continued to exist till the eighteenth century, when it was finally stamped out, though memories of it still linger in the popular mind. "Ah, if the Beati Paoli were still in being!" exclaims the Sicilian on receiving some injury from which the law will not protect him.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE CAMORRA

THE authentic history of that curious Neapolitan fraternity of the underworld known as the Camorra does not go back beyond the year 1820, when secret societies of all sorts became very active in that part of the peninsula. The institution probably existed long before that in Naples, its customs as well as its name having been introduced from Spain.¹ That very similar associations of criminals were flourishing in Spain in the sixteenth century is demonstrated by Cervantes's little masterpiece of description, *Rinconete y Cortadilla*; while another institution of the same kind, if not yet named the Camorra, was rooted in Naples in 1573, in which year the Viceroy Cardinal Gran Vela wrote: "It has come to our knowledge that in the prisons of la Vicaria a great number of extortions are practised by the prisoners, some of whom constitute themselves commanders, and levy contributions for providing oil for the lamps, and claim other illegal taxes; in a word, they act as masters in the aforesaid prisons." Other contemporary documents show that this state of things continued in the Neapolitan prisons despite all the efforts of the authorities. So far as is known, no centralized authority, such as arose later, gave cohesion to these bands of blackmailers, but each of them was practising the same methods of extortion, in the same ways, and gaining its ends by the same means.

What these bands had developed into three centuries later has been so well described by a witty French observer that it will be well to begin this account of the Camorra by quoting his exact words.²

¹ Camorra is Spanish, and signifies quarrel or violent dispute.

² Marc-Monnier, *La Camorra*, Paris, 1863, pp. 10 *et seq.*

“What the Camorra is, or what it was not so long ago, I shall tell you in two or three words: it is an association formed by corrupt and violent members of the commonalty who intimidate and blackmail the vicious and the cowardly. . . .

“Among the lowest ranks of the people there exists a society (*secte*), very select, quite localized, well organized, and spread through the whole extent of the former Kingdom of Sicily. I said that it blackmailed the vicious; its dominion is wherever they are gathered together, and chiefly in those places where dire necessity assembles them in the mass, that is to say, in the prisons.

“The Neapolitan guttersnipe begins life as a beggar and rapidly develops into a thief . . . he ends up sooner or later by finding himself in a prison. Then only two ways lie before him: if he is a coward he lets himself be exploited by the Camorra; if he has courage he aspires to become a Camorrista himself.”

To arrive at this rank he has to pass through certain degrees of initiation, says our informant. At first he is merely *garzone de mala vita*, a servant of the servants of full members of the society, and performs the hardest and most unremunerative work. He remains of this degree till he has given proofs of zeal and courage. He then passes from the condition of a candidate to that of a novice, the second degree in this fraternity of crime, and becomes *picciotto di sgarro* (error).

Some authors divide these two stages into three. According to them the neophyte begins by being a simple *tamurro*; once accepted, he takes the name of *picciotto* or *picciotto d'onore*, and becomes a *picciotto di sgarro* only after a year of service in which his discretion and assiduity are found equal to the pains and dangers undergone.

While it is possible that such divisions existed in the primitive rite of the Camorra, Marc-Monnier was assured by old Camorristas that they had never even heard of the term *tamurro*, and had come into the society as *picciotti di sgarro* at the first step.

The *picciotto* was a person of some importance; he formed part of the society once he had arrived at this grade, which

was not too easy to obtain. The conditions governing the admissions were originally strict, and even argued a kind of morality in the association. For the Camorra was far from being scorned or despised by the masses—and what is more, to a certain extent the Camorra respected itself. It admitted only men who were relatively honest, that is to say, relatively honest according to the society's notion. At one time, tradition has it, thieves were excluded. To be eligible one had to belong to an honourable family, that is, owning neither wife nor sister devoted to public prostitution; and further, a certain moral standing was needed, never to have been convicted of crimes against nature. An insuperable bar was to be connected in any way with the police.

In Marc-Monnier's time most of these rules had been dead-letters for many years. The principal requisite for admission was to prove one's sincerity and courage. The aspirant had to show that he could keep a secret, and did not fear the knife. There were several modes of being advanced to the grade of *picciotto di sgarro*; by undertaking some crime of violence decreed by the society; or by the *tirata*, a duel with knives fought against a *picciotto* chosen by ballot, in which the knife was aimed only at the arm, and the first blood drawn ended the contest.

In former times there was yet another mode of reception. A coin was placed on the ground, and at a given signal a group of Camorristas proceeded to stab at it with their knives. The aspirant had to plunge his hand between the weapons and possess himself of the coin. Sometimes his hand was transfixed by a blade, but he became *picciotto di sgarro*.

The novitiate of the *picciotto* lasted any time from two to eight years, for which period he had to do all the hard work of the society without receiving any of the perquisites. He was usually attached as henchman to some particular Camorrista, who made him man-of-all-work for no other reward than a few copper coins bestowed from time to time; but the aspiring *picciotto* shrank from neither toil nor danger. When a murder was decreed by the society, every

picciotto volunteered to do the deed; when it was done, every *picciotto* volunteered to bear the guilt of it, if guilt had to be borne by somebody. Lots were drawn to decide who should have the honour of accepting responsibility for the crime, and though the fortunate *picciotto* might go to prison for any period up to twenty years, he became at once a full Camorrista.

To commit murder or undergo imprisonment did not constitute the only methods of attaining the desired rank in the society. After several years of service the novice could address a petition to one of the chiefs praying to be received Camorrista. The leader would assemble his group of followers, and the qualifications of the postulant would be discussed. If the decision was favourable, the reception was attended by a solemn ceremonial.

The members being seated around a table on which were placed a dagger, a pistol, a glass of poison, and a lancet, the aspirant was brought into the room. A vein was opened in his arm with the lancet, and dipping his hand in the blood he stretched it out towards the assembled company and swore to keep the society's secrets and to obey its commands in all things. Then he took up the dagger and stuck it into the table, cocked the pistol, and raised the glass to his lips, typifying by these actions his readiness to kill himself at a word from the chief. The chief then took the glass from his hand, and made him kneel down before the table. After that the pistol was fired in the air, the glass broken on the floor, the dagger drawn from the table, put in its sheath, and presented to the candidate, who then exchanged embraces with all present beginning with the chief. He was then considered to have become a full Camorrista, entitled to all the rights, privileges and profits of the society, every section of which was informed of his promotion.

This ceremonial was no longer in vogue by the middle of the nineteenth century, when the formalities had become much simplified. The section having voted for the admission of the candidate as Camorrista, the chief presented him to all the members, and said to him: "From to-day you

are our fellow; you will share in the profits of the society with us. Do you know what are the duties of a Camorrista?" The reply was: "I know them. I have to fight a *tirata* (mock duel) with one of my comrades; to swear to be faithful to my fellows, to be the enemy of the public authorities, to have no dealings with anyone attached to the police; moreover, not to denounce my comrades who are robbers, but on the contrary to love them more than the others because they are always risking their lives."

Thereupon the candidate took an oath to the foregoing effect upon a pair of crossed knives, fought with a comrade chosen by ballot, embraced the chief and all those present, and was proclaimed Camorrista.

A Camorrista admitted in the city would be acknowledged as such in a provincial centre, and vice versa.

The society seems to have spread from the prisons into the city some time about the year 1830, and of course released criminals were the means by which it was established as a canker on the civil life of the community.

In 1860 the Camorra consisted of small groups of criminals, independent of each other but with well developed means of intercommunication. One of such groups existed in every Neapolitan prison, while Naples itself possessed twelve, one for each district.

These city districts were subdivided into special *paranze*, which acted independently and managed their own budgets.

Each district had its chief, and in the golden age of the Camorra the chief of the Vicaria quarter was looked upon as a kind of Grand Master, but that state of things had come to an end before 1860.

The chief of every group or centre was elected by those who would have to obey him. His powers were wide, but he could not take any important step without submitting the matter to a council of his subordinates, all of whom, when not under suspension, had a voice and vote in the decision. The main qualification for election to the office of chief was bravery; and his most important duties were to preside at the gatherings of the body and to act as treasurer. This last function entailed the distribution of

the camorra, a term applied to the common funds of the society as well as to the society itself. This fund acquired by their extortions was also known as the *barattolo* (gallipot). The chief appointed an accountant (*contarulo*) to keep a note of the sums paid into the common fund and to determine the share which fell to each member of the band.

The distribution of their ill-acquired revenues took place every Sunday, and was made by the chief, who had power to inflict fines and deduct sums advanced to his subordinates; nor did he forget to take first of all his own lion's share before paying out the remainder in order of demerit.

In common with every other secret society through the the ages, the Camorra possessed its peculiar customs and jargon. The latter need not be illustrated, but some of the usages are worth a mention.

No quarrel between two Camorristas was supposed to be carried to extremes before being submitted to the chief, who, if he failed to secure an amicable settlement by arbitration, would ultimately sanction a duel with knives, a much more serious affair than the *tirata*.

A Camorrista could resign active membership and yet, in a way, remain bound to the society. He ceased to share in the duties and profits, but was still at liberty to join in its deliberations, and continued to enjoy the prestige of being connected with it. For if the Camorra was feared, it was also respected. Whether it originally came into being to defend the weak against the strong or from some less worthy motive, is immaterial; it had certainly come to possess a power superior to that wielded by the public authorities and could enforce better discipline than the latter. Hence in his district the chief Camorrista acted as a kind of civil magistrate; there was no appeal from his judgments, which were often just and always accepted.

The society was not without its charities. Members who had grown old and infirm were supported; pensions were awarded to the widows and children of those who had died by violence while on active service; the sick were helped, and the dead avenged.

Of course the Camorra had its own code of laws which was strictly enforced. This code in all probability was never committed to paper, but handed on by oral tradition, varying according to times and districts, each chief administering it according to the letter that had been taught him during his novitiate.

Breaches of discipline in the society were punishable by suspension, which entailed temporary loss of income from the common fund, or by permanent expulsion or in extreme cases the penalty of death. This last punishment was awarded to the disloyal member who had swindled or betrayed the society, by embezzling its funds or defrauding it in any way, by committing any wilful act or criminal negligence tending to its detriment, by attempting to seduce a fellow-member's wife, or, occasionally but not invariably, for having undertaken a robbery or a murder at the instigation of a non-member.

Sentence was pronounced after trial held in an assembled council of the society, and the executioner was chosen by casting lots. Refusal to act in this capacity was punished with death—"He who will not be executioner shall be victim. He who refuses to draw the knife shall perish by the knife!"

When a man was clapped into a Neapolitan prison he at once fell into the hands of the Camorra. A bravo would accost him demanding money for oil for the Madonna's lamp, a custom which had been in vogue, as we have seen, from at least as early as the year 1573, a time-honoured initiatory piece of blackmail. If this first forced contribution was paid, other demands ensued; the new-comer could neither eat, drink nor smoke without paying tribute, and had to surrender a tithe of all the money that passed through his hands—in short, he was taxed for every action in life, and even if he was the poorest of the poor, he was forced to hand over what little he did call his own. Those who refused ran the risk of being cudgelled to death. The majority of the prisoners, therefore, chose the path of least resistance and paid blackmail to some particular Camorrista, who in return protected them from the extortions of others.

Horrible as such a state of affairs must have been, the system seems not to have been lacking in a rough and ready sense of equity. Monnier¹ tells a story of a priest who having been cast into the common prison on account of a scandalous love-affair was unable, when accosted, to contribute to the lamp of the Madonna, for the very good reason that he did not own so much as a single copper coin. The blackmailer threatened to strike him with a stick, and the priest thereupon told him that he would not dare to do so if they were both equally provided with weapons. The Camorrista reported this to his chief, who armed both men with knives (for the Camorra could always dispose of such weapons even in a prison), and in the ensuing duel the priest, who came of brave Calabrian peasant stock, killed his antagonist. The Camorra of the prison hushed up the affair without the least difficulty; and not only did the priest remain unmolested thenceforth, but received all through his period of imprisonment a small sum of money paid regularly each week, his share of the Camorra, as though he were a newly-elected member.

It is probable that at a period when criminals and political prisoners were herded together the Camorra may have been formed as a safeguard and in the interests of the prisoners themselves. It is certain that even under the Bourbons the Camorra maintained a kind of tranquillity and security in the prisons. In assuming the monopoly of violence and disorder the Camorristas prevented others from following their example and infringing what they looked upon as their rights. They extorted money, but discovered and punished thieves; they possessed knives themselves, but disarmed all others; they stabbed, if need arose, but prevented assassinations. So everyone who valued his purse or his life, when cast into a Bourbon prison sought the aegis of the Camorra, and chose his patron Camorrista. Furthermore, the society often aided the prison authorities in maintaining discipline.

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 44.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE MAFIA

THE Mafia is a Sicilian secret society, recruited from the criminal classes, which possesses features of resemblance to the Neapolitan Camorra, yet is distinct from it.

Heckethorn¹ attributes the invention of a name for the society to Joseph Mazzini, and says it was unheard of prior to his visit to Sicily in 1859-60. His explanation of its meaning is that the word comprises the initials of the phrase: *Mazzini autorizza furti, incendi, avvelenamenti*—Mazzini authorizes thefts, arson, poisoning—all of which shows more ingenuity and political bias than shadow of probability.

The generally accepted version says that the society originated at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the Court of Naples, driven from Italy by Napoleon's armies, took refuge in Sicily, where it was protected by an English fleet under Nelson. The island was overrun by brigands, and in order to control their activities to a certain extent the king took some of the bands into his pay, and set them to police the island under the name of rural gendarmes. They prevented some crimes without themselves refraining from similar breaches of the law when the temptation was too strong, and in time became so powerful that enlistment was looked upon as a fine career for any young man. The respectable classes were obliged to submit to their exactions, and the commonalty regarded them with admiration and dread. The brigands having ceased to be employed by Government continued in organized existence for their own benefit, and attracted to the ranks of their

¹ *Secret Societies*, 1897.

supporters every one with a grudge against the social conditions of the times.

Since those early days of the Mafia's inception there has unfortunately been no lack of potential recruits in Sicily, for the island has been notorious for industrial and agrarian misery existing among the labourers in the sulphur mines and on the small holdings. The large estates of the nobility were let and sub-let until the exactions of the middlemen drove the peasants in despair to seek protection from any organization that promised to override the laws that would do nothing to lighten their burdens. To these were joined not only criminals by profession, but people of all classes who hoped to be helped by the powerful Mafia.

Since it was not only a secret society but one whose methods of enforcing its decrees made its instruments liable to heavy criminal penalties, exact knowledge about its constitution and proceedings is not to be had. The Mafia was rumoured, however, to have a regular code of laws known as the *Omerta*, that laid down the following regulations, amongst others, for its governance.

Every member had to be prepared to avenge any wrong done to another member. No member might give evidence in a court of law against another. Membership was of two classes: those who paid blackmail to the Mafia to gain its protection; and those who were its active instruments, and shared in the profits accruing from its smuggling and blackmailing activities.

No candidate was admitted until he had given proofs of courage, and he had also to be capable of earning his own living by some means or other. Members referred to themselves as *giovani d'onore*, youths of honour. Like all criminal secret societies it had its own slang and methods of mutual recognition.

The Mafia has at times given rise to sensational criminal trials, when extraordinary precautions have been taken to forestall any attempt to rescue the prisoners. The present Fascist Government of Italy has, of course, set itself to root out all such secret organizations in the State; and as a consequence the Mafia has disappeared for the time being. If,

however, any credence can be given to information from recent visitors to Sicily, the society is still alive, with supporters drawn from all classes, not excluding the magistracy; and, given a favourable change of regime, it may reappear **in all its former vigour.**

CHAPTER XXIX

THE WHITEBOYS

THE activities of the secret society known as the Whiteboys were, speaking broadly, confined to the decade 1761-71; but the name continued to be used as a designation for any agrarian criminal in Ireland to a much later period. In fact, the famous "Whiteboy Acts," passed by the Irish Parliament in 1765, 1785, and 1787, conferred a certain amount of legal immortality on a society that had ceased to exist on an organised basis several years before the last of these Acts was placed upon the statute book; and we shall see that as late as 1815 the word was still used as a term of reproach, meaning a man engaged in a secret plot against the State.

From the days when Henry VIII first began the real subjugation of Ireland the English Government in that country was opposed in its operations by an irreconcilable element of the population which adopted every species of guerrilla warfare to render that Government uneasy and its representatives contemptible. In the days of Elizabeth and up to the middle of the seventeenth century these rebels were known as the "Wood Kerne"; after the Restoration till the time of the Williamite Wars they were called "Tories" or "Rapparees," tory being Irish for robber, while the rapery was a half-pike carried by irregular troops. After the Treaty of Limerick had ended the revolutionary war in Ireland the disaffected to government continued to be called tories, and rewards were paid for their heads, since they were outlaws, down to the year 1740 at least. No evidence, however, is available to suggest that these marauders were ever associated in a society and bound to one another by a solemn tie. The first association

of an avowedly illegal character in Ireland which adopted that method of gaining greater security for its secret designs was the one known as the Whiteboys.

This society arose in the County Tipperary about the year 1761. A quotation from a recognized authority will describe in a few words the objects with which the association was formed.

“The White Boy association, which had its origin in 1759, in the south of Ireland, took its name from the frocks or shirts they were in the habit of wearing when they assembled; . . . armed with scythes, clubs and swords they sallied forth at night and committed many acts of agrarian outrage. The wrongs they professed to redress were those connected with the holding of lands on exorbitant terms, the inclosing of waste lands, the extortion of tythe-proctors, etc. Various laws were enacted to repress their excesses, all of which were of an agrarian character, wild, daring, ill-concerted, sometimes cruel, seldom premeditated, and eventually easily put down. The cause of these excesses is justly ascribed by Plowden to the agricultural distress which prevailed in the whole of the South of Ireland, consequent upon the practice generally adopted at this time of converting the large farms into grazing lands, which were let to wealthy monopolists, who turned the wretched peasantry adrift. At the close of 1762, Lord Halifax congratulated Parliament on the suppression of the insurrection of the White Boys.”¹

This sketch of the Whiteboys deserved inclusion mainly on account of the picturesque and distinctive style. Some statements in it, however, are misleading.

Arthur Young, who made a tour of Ireland in 1776 and collected evidence about the Whiteboys on the spot, declares that no such thing as a Leveller or Whiteboy was heard of before 1760. He adds: “No foreign coin was ever seen among them, though reports to the contrary were circulated; and in all the evidence that was taken during ten or twelve years, in which time there appeared a variety of informers, none . . . ever proved any foreign interposition. . . . No

¹ R. R. Madden, *United Irishmen*, London, 1842, I., 133.

foreign money appeared, no arms of foreign construction, no presumptive proof whatever of such a connection."

According to Young, the Whiteboy disturbances lasted about ten years from the first outbreak in Tipperary, whence they spread into the neighbouring county of Waterford and the adjoining districts.

George Cornwall Lewis, writing many years after the event but with all the acumen of a reliable historian, states that the first Whiteboy disturbance took place in October, 1761; that the movement had been nearly stamped out in Munster before 1770, but reappeared in Kildare in 1775, and continued sporadically till 1785, when the agrarian insurgents became known as the "Right Boys."¹

A Government enquiry into the outrages was held in 1762, and an official declaration inserted in the Dublin and London *Gazettes* to this effect: "The authors of these disturbances have consisted indiscriminately of persons of different [religious] persuasions, and no marks of disaffection to His Majesty's person or Government have been discovered in any class of people."

Yet the Government five years later produced detailed evidence to prove that the Jacobites had a connexion with the Whiteboys! This story was upheld by a witness who was put forward as King's Evidence in 1767 at a famous criminal trial in Clonmel, when several supposed Whiteboy leaders were convicted and executed. The man deposed that he took the Whiteboy oath "to be true and faithful to the King of France, and to the true king, Prince Charles, and to obey all the orders of his officers, and not to disclose his secrets to any one, except to a Frenchman, or one of his own party".² There is too much reason to believe that this deposition, with others in the same case, sworn five years after the alleged happenings, is not reliable; and more importance can be attached to the following document, published in 1762, when the Whiteboy disturbances were causing alarm all over Ireland, though actually confined to Tipperary and the neighbouring districts.

¹ *On Local Disturbances in Ireland*, London, 1836.

² Musgrave, *Irish Rebellions*, Dublin, 1801, Appendix 1.

“The following is an authentic copy of the oath tendered by the Whiteboys, otherwise Sive Oultho’s Children, to those who enlist themselves in their society.

“I do hereby solemnly and sincerely swear that I will not make known any secret now given me, or hereafter may be given, to anyone in the world, except a sworn person belonging to the Society called Whiteboys, otherwise Sive Oultho’s Children. . . .

“Furthermore I swear, that I will be ready at an hour’s warning, if possible, by being properly summoned by any of the officers, sergeants, and corporals belonging to my company.

“Furthermore I swear, that I will not wrong any of the company I belong to to the value of one shilling, nor suffer it to be done by others without acquainting them thereof.

“Furthermore I swear, that I will not make known in any shape whatsoever, to any person that does not belong to us, the name or names of any of our fraternity, but particularly the names of our respective officers.

“Lastly I swear, that I will not drink of any liquor whatsoever while on duty, without the consent of any one or other of the officers, sergeants, or corporals; and that we will be loyal to one another as in our power lies.”¹

It should be noted that in this oath, which is probably genuine, there is no reference to the King of France or Jacobitism in the person of “the true king, Prince Charles.”

The curious name “Sive Oultho’s Children” can be illustrated, in a way, by an extract from another deposition sworn by a witness for the Crown in 1766 (another case of King’s Evidence). The deponent asserted that he had been sworn to be true to “Shaune Meskell and her Children, meaning the Whiteboys;” and that on another occasion Father Nicolas Sheehy had tendered an oath to all present “not to disclose what had passed that night, and to be true to the King of France, and Shaun Meskill and Children.”

A corroboration of the use of the name “Sive” by the Whiteboys comes from an unexpected source. John Wesley, in 1762, was travelling through Ireland, and noted some common gossip about the Whiteboys in his Journal. He

¹ *Belfast News-Letter*, 13th April, 1762.

states that they sent threatchning letters, compelled everyone they met to swear allegiance to their leader "Queen Sive," and obedience to her commands, and threatened those who refused to comply.

It seems, therefore, as if Sieve Oultho (or Oultagh) and Shaun Meskill were predecessors of such personages as have been heard of later under such names as Molly Maguire or Captain Moonlight. It remains to consider what the meanings of the two earlier names may have been. "Oultho" may be connected with the Irish word *alltachd*, savageness, and "Meskill" with *misgeul*, evil repute.

CHAPTER XXX

THE DEFENDERS

THE Whiteboy movement was a southern organization, and was in a sense contemporaneous with two agrarian outbreaks in Ulster that were completely independent of it. The first of these was the Oak Boy movement in 1763, a revolt against the system of forced labour on the public highways. It was suppressed without much difficulty after a short time. The second, known as the Hearts of Steel, was more serious in its after effects. It arose in the year 1770 on the extensive estates near Belfast belonging to the Marquis of Donegall, where the tenants had been dispossessed at the end of their leases in favour of wealthy Belfast merchants who bid higher rents with the intention of making their profit out of the lands as middlemen.

The tenant-farmers were beaten, of course, and a goodly number hanged or transported, as was bound to happen when all the armed power of Government was marshalled in defence of the sacred rights of landed property; but retribution was exacted a few years later on the other side of the Atlantic, whither the Ulstermen had emigrated in their thousands after the suppression of the Hearts of Steel. There were no more bitter or more irreconcilable soldiers among the American revolutionists than these expatriates.

Though both the Oak Boys and the Hearts of Steel adopted the Whiteboy plan of swearing in recruits perforce, and no doubt took an oath of fidelity among themselves, no standard form of words has been preserved, nor seemingly was admission to either body accompanied by the use of any particular form of ritual, such as is hinted at in the Whiteboy oath. Beyond a mention they can, therefore, claim no place in this book. It is quite otherwise with the society, also an Ulster one, that next calls for notice.

In the early eighties of the eighteenth century there arose in the county of Armagh a Protestant association which was known as the "Peep-of-Day Boys." In 1795 these militant Ulstermen changed their title, though not their policy, and formed themselves into the still, existent and very powerful Orange Society, which will be described later. While the latter body possesses a ceremonial and ritual based on the model of a much older society, there is no evidence to show that the progenitors of the Orangemen, the Peep-of-Day Boys, had any such secrets.

The proceedings of the Peep-of-Day Boys in the early days of their existence were directed towards two ends: the disarming of their Roman Catholic neighbours, and then the inducing them to migrate to the less dangerous if less arable soil of Connaught. To further these ends it was the custom of the Peep-of-Day Boys to collect in armed bands and raid Roman Catholic houses at the hour of dawn in order to confiscate any arms they might find; whence the name "Peep of Day." Another of their practices was to affix a notice to the door of any Roman Catholic whose room was preferred to his company; the set form of this document ran:

"Peter Brady, you have . . . days your goods to sell, and get to Connaught or hell, for here you may not dwell."¹

Blessed with such neighbours, it is hardly surprising that the Roman Catholics should have formed a secret society among themselves to counter outrage by outrage. They did so; and thus arose the association known as the Defenders.

At first they were a purely Catholic society, but later on, in the seventeen-nineties, they joined hands with the United Irishmen who were undenominational. The following extracts from Madden will give a summary of the history of the Defenders.

"The Defenders had their origin in the year 1785, but they were hardly known as a distinct and formidable body

¹ Latocnaye, *Tour in Ireland*, 1797.

till the year 1792; their first object, as their name imports, was self-protection, when the exterminating system was carried into effect by the Ascendency party in the north. But as their strength increased, their views became more political, and resistance to aggression led them to offensive measures against their enemies, and the Government which protected the latter."¹

"The association of Defenders about 1792 had changed its character from that of a society engaged in religious feuds to one actuated by political motives, and the change was effected by the endeavours of the United Irishmen to reconcile the ultra-Protestants and Catholics. Their views, however, continued so indistinct that inquirers were ignorant of their objects, except that a general notion prevailed amongst them that 'something ought to be done for Ireland.' They had no persons in their body of the upper or even middling class in life. The only man known among them above the condition of a labourer, was a schoolmaster in Naas, who was executed in 1796. . . . In the same year, Napper Tandy, on the part of the United Irishmen at Dublin, had an interview with the Defenders at Castlebellingham, in the County of Louth, when the oath of secrecy was administered to him. The object of Tandy was to ascertain their real objects, and (though the fact has not been avowed, it cannot be concealed from any persons enquiring into the matter) to turn the strength of the association into the channels of the 'Union'.² One of the Defenders who was present when Tandy was sworn lodged informations against him, and he was fortunate enough to effect his escape out of the kingdom. The Defenders gradually merged into the United Irishmen, and in a short time there was no distinction between them."³

Madden has another passage about the Defenders which will have to be quoted since it refers to something in connection with their secret ceremonies that is, to say the least of it, unexpected. If his statement is correct, and he was particularly well informed on such matters, an affection

¹ Madden, *op. cit.* ² i.e. The United Irishmen's Plot. ³ Madden, *Op. cit.*

for the House of Stuart was still alive in Ireland a hundred years after its last king had fled from the Boyne.

“The Defenders were at first opposed to Republican principles, their chief end and aim was, as their name implied, defence against their persecutors. . . . The idea, however, seems never to have been wholly eradicated from the minds of the people who entered into these associations, that the descendants of James II had not ceased to be entitled to their allegiance, and they seem to have had a vague notion that the French king represented the interests of the dethroned Stuarts. . . . It is difficult to understand the allusions to French subjects, in their test and secret pass-words, and cabalistic jargon, without supposing that some slight tincture of the old Jacobite principles of 1689 was still mixed up with their modern views and projects.”¹

The statement that the Defenders were connected with Jacobitism must have been made by Madden on the authority of some evidence which has not found its way into print, and seems hard to credit when we bear in mind the period at which they flourished. Indeed, the next documents that have to be considered—they are probably authentic, though their recorder is Sir Richard Musgrave, a bitter partizan—tend to prove a direct contrary, to wit, that the Defenders in their early days were quite prepared to be loyal to the Hanoverian Succession, if they were permitted to enjoy the ordinary rights of a citizen.

What follows is a description of how the Defenders were extended over Ulster in the year in which the French Revolution began.

“The following discovery made in the year 1789 clearly proved that the Defenders were systematically organized. . . . One of their plans or constitutions was found in the year 1789, by a magistrate of the County of Armagh, on one of their leaders of the name of Sharky, and dated the 24th April of that year at Drumbanagher. . . . It must

¹ Madden, *United Irishmen*, Second Series, London, 1843, II., 401.

have taken up some time to bring this system to maturity, and they were probably numerous in the County of Armagh, as Sharky's lodge is No. 18. There must have been an intercourse and a communication between the lodges of different counties; for in this plan there appears a certificate that Michael Moor was a brother Defender, and he is recommended to the committee of Carrickarnan, No. 1, in the county of Louth. Sobriety, secrecy, the accumulation of arms, and the giving assistance to each other on all occasions, seem to have been leading objects with them. They were exclusively of the Roman Catholic religion. They knew each other by secret signs: they had a Grand Master in each county, who was elected at a general annual meeting, and they had also monthly meetings."

CONSTITUTION OF DEFENDERS

(This prospectus of the Defenders was found by Doctor Allot, Dean of Raphoe, and was sent to Government during the administration of the Marquis of Buckingham.)

"I, A.B., of my own free will and accord, do swear to be true to one another, will assist one another abroad and at home, and there are none to be admitted without the consent of the Committee appointed by the said body: and they must, in all things, be under subjection to the said Committee in all things that are lawful, and not otherwise; and all words and signs to be kept secret from all that are not concerned, or forfeit this oath; and we are to meet once a month where the committee thinks proper, and we are to spend what is agreeable to the company; and any person giving a lawful reason for his absence is not to be under censure; and all persons entering must be under all rules and regulations appointed by the said committee; and as in our former oath we are bound to his Majesty King George III and his successors to the crown, *so for this present year 1789 we promise faithfully the same obedience, and also while we live subject to the same Government.*

RULES TO BE OBSERVED

"1st, There is no defender to strike one another upon any account; or if they do, to be excluded from the company as long as the committee thinks proper.

- “2nd, There is no person to come to the meeting drunk; or if they do, to pay sixpence, and to be excluded for three months.
- “3rd, There is no person on any account to swear or speak loud in the company; and for every oath they are to pay what the committee thinks proper.
- “4th, There is no person that formerly belonged to another body (that is to say a strange body) to be accepted without a line from the body he formerly belonged to.
- “5th, There is no person to let any one know who belongs to their body, but those who went under the obligation.
- “6th, There is no body of men to go to a challenge without leave of three of the committee at least.
- “7th, There is no body to get a copy of these without the leave of the grand master appointed by the general year’s meeting, or deputies appointed by the said grand master, or his committee.
- “8th, Let no person know no words or signs without being concerned; and they are not empowered to give or make known by either words or signs or tokens any that may hereafter come forth, or make it known to any company or body but ourselves, or our body.
- “9th, There is no defender to make himself known as a defender after being excluded, under fear of perjury; and each man continuing six months from this day must find a gun and bayonet, with other necessary accoutrements, or be excluded at the option of the committee.
- “Given under our hands, the Grange committee to the committee of Carrickarnan, body of defenders No. 1, for the county of Louth.”

“We, the committee of No. 18, do certify the bearer, Michael Moor, that he has gone through the rules and obligations of a brother defender; and at his request he desires to be discharged that he may join your body.

“*Given under our hands at Drumbanagher, this 24th day of April, 1789.*

“N.B.—This prospectus and Michael Moor’s certificate were signed by fifty-one names in addition to the above, who were present and members of Lodge No. 18.”¹

¹ Sir Richard Musgrave, *Memoirs of the Different Rebellions in Ireland*. Dublin, 1801.

It will be noticed that in this obligation the initiate pledges himself to secrecy regarding the modes of recognition—"words and signs." He promises to be regular in his attendance at meetings; and he swears allegiance to the reigning House of Hanover. In view of this last clause, it is hard to understand how the Defenders can have been considered Jacobites.

Such were the regulations of the Defenders in the year 1789. From the year 1791 onwards efforts were in progress to amalgamate them with the society of United Irishmen. This took place to a large extent, and it will be apparent from some evidence to be produced later that the contact of the two societies had an effect upon the ritual of the Roman Catholic Secret Society.

An oath corresponding very closely to the one given above was quoted by Colonel W. Verner at the Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1835 as having been administered by one James Weldon, a Defender, who was hanged for high treason in 1795. The witness went on to state, that the means by which the Defenders were known to one another consisted in the following questions and answers:

"I am concerned. So am I.

"With whom? The National Convention (meaning thereby the National Convention of France).

"What is your designs? On Freedom.

"Where is your designs? The foundation of it is grounded on a rock.

"What is your designs? Cause to quell all nations, dethrone all —ngs (meaning thereby all kings), to plant true religion in the hearts, be just.

"Where did the cock crow when the whole world heard him? In France.

"What is the pass-word? Eliphismatis."¹

If the foregoing catechism is approximately correct, the influence exerted upon the Defenders after their joining

¹ Compare with this unintelligible word the one found later in the possession of a Limerick "Whiteboy."

forces with the United Irishmen is patent, since the latter body was for French intervention in Ireland, a matter of which some account will be given in the next chapter.

So far as the Defenders are concerned, they cease to be heard of after the year 1800. There can be little doubt that they had by then assumed a new title and became known as the Ribbon Society. Their subsequent history will be treated under that heading.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE UNITED IRISHMEN

THE Society of the United Irishmen was formed in **Belfast** on the 14th October, 1791. The originator of the idea was Theobald Wolfe Tone, a Protestant barrister, and it was first mooted in a pamphlet written by him and signed "A Northern Whig," though he actually was a Dublin man. Samuel Neilson, a Belfast linen merchant, of liberal ideas, who had been a National Volunteer in the year 1782, discussed this pamphlet with his friends who held similar opinions, and they decided to invite Tone down to Belfast for a conference. The result was the formation of the first Club of United Irishmen.

Tone, in his autobiography, describes the event thus:

"It is a kind of injustice to name individuals, yet I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of observing how peculiarly fortunate I esteem myself in having formed connections with Samuel Neilson, Robert Simms, William Simms, William Sinclair, Thomas M'Cube. I may as well stop here, for in enumerating my most particular friends I find I am, in fact, making out a list of the men of Belfast most distinguished for their virtue, talent and patriotism. . . . We formed our Club, of which I wrote the Declaration."

Tone goes on to tell how on his return to Dublin three weeks later he formed a second Club in the capital with the Honourable Simon Butler as Chairman and James Napper Tandy as Secretary. The Dublin Club adopted the Declaration of its Belfast predecessor and entered into correspondence with it.

To begin with the Association was not a secret society, and aimed at winning adherents by public meetings and

open propaganda. It was not republican in its principles at this time, though it became so later. Its avowed objects were:

1. The reform of the existing parliamentary system based on restricted franchise, rotten boroughs, patronage, and so forth.
2. Catholic emancipation.
3. The disestablishment of the Church of Ireland.
4. The abolition of pensions granted on the Irish Establishment.

It is hardly necessary to remark that all these reforms have been achieved since then.

One of the rules of the society was that each member should take a test to show the sincerity of his principles. It ran as follows:

“I, A.B., in the presence of God, do pledge myself to my Country that I will use all my abilities and influence in the attainment of an impartial and adequate representation of the Irish Nation in Parliament; and as a means of absolute and immediate necessity in the establishment of this chief good of Ireland, I will endeavour as much as lies in my ability to forward a brotherhood of affection, an identity of interests, a communion of rights, and a union of power among Irishmen of all religious persuasions, without which every reform in Parliament must be partial, not National, inadequate to the wants, delusive to the wishes, and insufficient for the freedom and happiness of this Country.”

The objects for which the Society was formed alarmed the Government of the day who proceeded to suppress it. Since it could no longer continue its labours in the open, on the 10th May, 1794, it was reconstituted as a secret society. The Belfast leaders were mainly Presbyterians and Republicans, and there is little doubt that in its new form the society expressed more completely the aspirations of such men as Samuel Neilson.

Later events made it patent that the aims of the new Society went much further politically than those avowed

by the original body, for it soon set itself to work to bring about an alliance with France, a revolution in Ireland, and the establishment of an Irish Republic.

In May, 1795, Tone was back in Belfast on his way to exile in America. He had become implicated in a questionable transaction with an agent from the French Republic, and had himself suggested to the authorities a voluntary expatriation in preference to being put on trial for sedition, and they had accepted this proposal. He has left this account of his final visit to Belfast:

“I remember particularly two days that we passed on the Cave Hill. On the first Russell, Simms, Neilson, McCracken and one or two more of us, on the summit of M’Art’s Fort took a solemn obligation, which I think I may say I have, on my part, endeavoured to fulfil—never to desist in our efforts, until we have subverted the authority of England over our country, and asserted her independence.”

As a matter of fact a very grave and important decision was come to during this stay of his in Belfast. The Ulster Directory of the United Irishmen had given him ambassadorial powers to approach the French Revolutionary Government and beseech its armed intervention in the affairs of Ireland. Tone had accepted the commission, and was in due course to acquire in performing it the rank of a national hero and the death of a Roman.

The Ulster Directory of the United Irishmen had been formed in the very month of Tone’s visit. It contemplated a programme for remodelling the State much more revolutionary than the original plan, for of course the designs as well as the Constitutions of the second and secret society differed in many important respects from that of the first and open one. An extract from Madden will make these differences clear.

“When the new organization of the Society was carried into effect, in the month of May, 1794, after the former Society had been suppressed, a complexion totally different from that of its first declaration was given to its proceedings;

a new constitution was drawn up. The test differed materially from the original one, which made it obligatory on the member to seek 'an adequate representation of the Irish nation in Parliament.' The new test made it binding on the candidate for admission, to seek 'an adequate representation of all the people of Ireland,' without any reference to Parliament, the word being omitted altogether in the test. It also bound its members to secrecy, and the constitution of committees provided for the representation of the whole people, in the baronial, provincial, and national committees, and subordinate assemblies of the society."¹

The test of the second Society was as follows:

"In the awful presence of God

"I, A.B., do voluntarily declare, that I will persevere in endeavouring to form a brotherhood of affection among Irishmen of every religious persuasion, and that I will also persevere in my endeavours to obtain an equal, full and adequate representation of all the people of Ireland.

"I do further declare that neither hopes, fears, rewards nor punishments, shall ever induce me, directly or indirectly, to inform on or give evidence against any member or members of this or similar societies, for any act or expression of theirs done or made, collectively or individually, in or out of this society, in pursuance of the spirit of this obligation."

The rule governing the taking of this test was:

"Every person elected a member of this society, whether ordinary or honorary, shall, previous to his admission, take the following *Test* in a separate apartment, in presence of the persons who proposed and seconded him, and one member appointed by the chairman; or in case of absence of one of the two persons, the chairman shall appoint another member to act for the absentee, after which the new member shall be brought into the body of the society, and there take the test in the usual form."

The form the society assumed was comparable to that of a triangle. The base was formed of an immense number of

¹ R. R. Madden, *Op. cit.*

small local societies, narrowing upwards through baronial, county, and provincial committees to the apex of a national executive directory.

The local societies consisted of twelve members, one of whom was elected secretary. The secretaries of five such societies formed a lower-baronial committee; and delegates from ten such committees constituted an upper-baronial committee. Delegates from these latter bodies composed the county committees, each of which returned delegates to the provincial committee. From these last bodies five members were selected by ballot to form the National Directorate, which had the supreme command of the whole Society. This election was so arranged that only the secretaries of the provincial committees knew those who had been chosen. Orders were transmitted downwards with the utmost mystery and secrecy. The society thus presented a union of opposed ideas, a democratic organization directed by an autocratic oligarchy.

An oath of secrecy and fidelity superseded the original simple declaration of political principle.

The only symbols in use among the United Irishmen were the Irish harp, the shamrock, and crossed hands.

The wearing of a green neck-cloth and the cutting short of the hair were shibboleths adopted to show their politics that soon became known to friends and foes alike, and consequently sometimes proved fatal to the displayers of these insignia. Traditions of the rebellious United Men's favourite colour are still preserved in a famous song, while their chosen style of hairdressing is commemorated in the use of the word "Croppie" as a term of reproach still current in Ireland among certain loyalists of the more militant sort, and one of the party tunes beloved of the Orange Order is entitled "Croppies, lie down!"

In an appendix to his great work on this revolutionary movement Madden gives an account of the secret ceremonies of the second society of United Irishmen, and we may assume these to be correct, for he had gone to great pains to collect all the information available from survivors of

the society, many of whom were still living at the time when his book was written.

His account of it all runs thus.

“The candidate for admission into the society, after it became a secret one in 1794, was sworn either by individuals or in the presence of several members, in a separate room from that in which the meeting was held. A paper consisting of eight pages of printed matter, called the constitution, was placed in his right hand, and the nature of it was explained to him: that part of it called the ‘Test’ was read to him, and repeated by him. The oath was administered either on the Scriptures or a prayer-book; and while it was administering to him, he held the constitution together with the book on his right breast. The constitution contained the declaration, resolutions, rules, test, regulations for the various committees, and form of certificate of admission into the Society.

“The mode of recognition was the following:—A member desiring to ascertain if a person was initiated, or to make himself known to another party—on meeting with a person not previously known as a United Irishman—repeated the first letter of the word ‘United’ in this manner—‘I know U’; the person accosted, if initiated, answered—‘I know N’—and so on, each alternately repeating the remaining letters of the word. Where further proofs of initiation were required, there was a form of examination in a series of questions, to which the following answers were required, in common use among the lower orders.

“Are you straight? I am.

“How straight? As straight as a rush.

“Go on then? In truth, in trust, in unity and liberty.

“What have you got in your hand? A green bough.

“Where did it first grow? In America.

“Where did it bud? In France.

“Where are you going to plant it? In the Crown of Great Britain.”

According to the account given by the leaders of the United Irishmen later, actual negotiations between the society and France began in May, 1796. Tone was already in that country, and for some time was unable to get any-

thing done; but an introduction to Carnot finally brought about an understanding and a promise of armed invasion by the French Directory.

This alliance with a foreign power was not welcomed unanimously by the society. Many far-sighted leaders, such as Thomas Addis Emmet, were always of opinion that dependence upon France was a mistake.

However, the die was cast, and in 1796 a delegate, in the person of Lord Edward FitzGerald, son of the Duke of Leinster, was dispatched to treat with the French Directory. Lord Edward had entered the British army at the age of 17, and served with distinction in the American War; but had sent in his papers in 1790 on being told he had barred his way to further promotion by having voted against the Government of the day in the House of Commons, where he sat as member for Kildare. To carry out his commission from the United Irishmen he made his way to Switzerland, accompanied by Arthur O'Connor, a wealthy landed proprietor; and near the frontier they had an interview with General Hoche, who had been appointed to command the expedition to Ireland. The outcome of the interview was that a French army of invasion set sail for Ireland.

That expedition miscarried, a storm driving the ships into Bantry Bay in a part of the country that was not organized for a rising; and the fleet of 43 ships with 15,000 trained soldiers returned to Brest without having effected a landing in force.

The society had made preparations for welcoming it elsewhere. In October, 1796, the organization underwent a remodelling, if only in name, because it was already well adapted for assembling large bodies of men at short notice. The local secretaries became sergeants; the lower-baronial delegates, captains; the upper-baronial delegates, colonels. For each county an adjutant-general was selected by the Directorate from names submitted by the colonels. The generals were appointed by the Directorate.

The strength of the movement lay in Ulster, where 100,000 men had been enrolled; but Munster, where Hoche

made his landfall, was hardly organized, and Connaught not at all.

The complete failure of the Hoche expedition depressed the United Irishmen, and if the Government early in 1797 had seen fit to grant parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation, it is more than probable that the society would have been quietly dissolved. A policy of repression had been adopted instead; and repression begat reprisals.

All through 1797 the condition of Ireland was terrible. Mutual intimidation and armed outrage were rife; but despite all assertions to the contrary, no evidence has ever been forthcoming to show that a system of terrorization and assassination had been approved by the responsible leaders of the United Irishmen.

The coffers of Dublin Castle were overflowing with secret-service money and attracted a swarm of spies, the blow-flies of the commonwealth who thrive on corruption. As a consequence, most of the leaders of ability had been cast into a gaol or a grave long before the conspiracy culminated in the abortive rebellion of 1798.

Of that rebellion and the subsequent fates of the leaders of it there is no need to give any account in a book which merely aims at tracing the motive forces that caused certain historical events and not at recording them in detail.

One particular phase of the United Irishmen movement has yet to be mentioned, because it has a bearing on the general subject of secret societies.

Since the Masonic system was widely spread through Ulster, where every small village at that time possessed its lodge of Freemasons, it was but natural that great numbers of the United Irishmen should belong to that fraternity, and also to be expected that some of them would make an effort to utilize Freemasonry for their own political purposes. Such attempts were actually made; but were ultimately sterilized, partly by the wise, tactful and firm action of the Grand Lodge in Dublin, partly by the good sense of the Ulster Freemasons themselves. This consummation was not achieved before the columns of the northern newspapers had published many

political resolutions passed by various Masonic Lodges for and against constitutional reform, etc. These sentiments varied, of course, according to the politics of the membership of the particular lodge; those who favoured the United Irishmen made themselves, on the whole, more vocal than the other side. This, perhaps, was the reason why in the year 1797 the northern Masonic Lodges were popularly supposed to be disloyal. There was undoubtedly this ingredient of truth in the belief: many of the leaders of the United Irishmen were Freemasons. The Government spy, John Henry Smith, *alias* Bird, reporting from Belfast in 1796 to his employers wrote:

“There’s scarcely a United Irishman who is not a Mason, nor a Mason who is not both.”

The same authority adds that the phrase “Up and Up” meant that a man was both a Defender and a United Irishman. The technical term “Up,” implying membership of an illegal association, is worth noting, because it will be met with again in treating of the “Ribbonmen.”¹

¹ My friend the late F. J. Biggar, of Belfast, had a true copy of Smith’s letters, from which the above statements are taken.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE RIBBONMEN

THE Ribbon Societies came into existence early in the nineteenth century and may be said to have continued down to the present day, though the purposes of the modern representatives of this movement differ widely from those of their original progenitors.

There is little doubt that they were the direct descendants or successors of the Defenders; and at times they are alluded to by contemporaries as Defenders or Whiteboys, which are used as interchangeable terms for Ribbonmen. It will be well to remember that after, say, 1803 these three terms are convertible and were often employed to describe one organized body which, for the sake of distinction as well as of strict historical accuracy, is referred to in this book as the Ribbon Society.

The objects of the Ribbon Society were chiefly agrarian, but it seems to have contained a political element also, as was but to be expected.

Our best information about the secrets of the Ribbonmen comes from the Irish novelist William Carleton. A short sketch of his life will show what authority he had to be its historian.

William Carleton was born in 1794 at Prillisk, County Tyrone, the fourteenth child of a Roman Catholic tenant farmer. He was intended by his family to become a priest, and was given the best education available at local schools. At the age of nineteen he was still at his books, which did not prevent him from becoming initiated as a Ribbonman. In 1817 he left home, and went to seek his fortune in Dublin. Here later on he became a Protestant, and as a convert

won the patronage of several clergymen and other well-meaning people. An underpaid clerkship, improvident love marriage, drudgery as a literary hack, the "unpalatable bread and unending stairs" of Dante's hanger-on—such was his lot till in 1830 he published his *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*, which established his literary reputation both in Ireland and England. From then till his death in 1869 he continued writing with more or less success. Through the whole of his life he was poor, though a civil-list pension of £200 a year was given him in 1848. All his books deal with peasant life in Ireland, which he has described with surpassing fidelity and vigour. In his extreme old age he began his autobiography, but did not live to finish it, and from this interesting book, full of magnificent egotism, are taken the following accounts of his dealings with the Ribbon Society.¹

Carleton tells us that when at the age of nineteen he visited fair or merry-making, he used constantly to be asked what age he was, and the questioners, young men of his own religion, used to look disappointed at his truthful reply. Then one night at a dance he was led away behind a hedge by a knot of acquaintances, and before he knew what was happening was sworn in as a Ribbonman on a Catholic prayer-book.

"Now," said his initiator, "you're *up*—you're a Ribbonman; all you want is the words and signs; and here you are."

He then communicated these, and Carleton, though but a schoolboy, went home a Ribbonman.

Carleton saw fit to give in full these secrets, and they are transcribed here without comment on either his taste or his memory that purported to set down so exactly information of this kind after a lapse of fifty years. Perhaps he is his own best apologist in the following passage:

"I am not a friend to any of these secret societies, because they are nothing but curses to the country. The Orange system is a curse to the country, and will be as long as it

¹ David J. O'Donohue, *The Life of William Carleton, being his Autobiography, etc.* London, 1896.

exists. It is now comparatively harmless, but at the period of which I write (1814) it was in the very height of its ascendancy, and seemed to live only as if its great object were to trample upon 'Popery.' The truth, however, is, if there can be an apology for Ribbonism, that it was nothing more nor less than a reactive principle against Orangeism, of whose outrages it was the result."

This is Carleton's account of the Ribbon secrets.

"The following is the Ribbon oath, a curiosity in its way:—

"I, A.B., with the sign of the Cross do declare and promise, in the name and through the assistance of the Blessed Trinity, that I will keep inviolate all secrets of this Fraternal Society from all but those whom I know to be regular members of the same, and bound by the same solemn oath and fraternal ties:—

"1st. I declare and profess without any compulsion, allegiance to his present Majesty, George the Third, King of Great Britain and Ireland.

"2nd. That I will be true to the principles of this Society, dedicated to St. Patrick, the Holy Patron of Ireland, in all things lawful and not otherwise.

"3rd. That I will duly and regularly attend on the shortest possible notice, at any hour, whether by night or by day, to perform *without fail or enquiry*, such commands as my superior or superiors may lay upon me, under whatever penalty he or they may inflict for neglecting the same.

"4th. I will not deliberately or willingly provoke, challenge or strike any of my brothers, knowing him to be such. If he or they should be ill-spoken of, ill-used, or otherwise treated unjustly, I will, according to circumstances and the best of my judgment, espouse his cause, give him the earliest information, and aid him with my friendship when in distress as a Ribbonman.

"5th. I also declare and promise, that I will not admit or propose a Protestant or heretic of any description as a member of our Fraternal Society, knowing him to be such.

- “6th. That whether in fair or market, in town or country, I will always give the preference in dealing to those who are attached to our national cause, and that I will not deal with a Protestant or heretic—but above all with an Orangeman—so long as I can deal with one of my own faith on equal terms.
- “7th. That I will not withdraw myself from the Society without stating my reasons for the same, and giving due notice to my superior or superiors; and that I will not without permission join any other society of different principles or denominations, under penalty of God’s judgment, and whatever penalty may be inflicted on me—not including in these the Masonic Institution, Trade Societies, or the profession of soldier or sailor.
- “8th. That I will always aid a brother in distress or danger by my person, purse, and counsel so far as in me lies; and that I will not refuse to subscribe money, according to my means, for the general or particular purposes of this our Fraternal Society.
- “9th. That I will not, under the penalty inflicted by my superiors, give evidence in any Court of Law or Justice against a brother, when prosecuted by an Orangeman or heretic; and that I will aid him in his defence by any means in my power.
- “10th. That when forced to take refuge from the law in the house of a brother or of any person friendly to our national cause, I will not have any improper intercourse or foul freedom with his sister, daughter, wife, or cousin, and thus give cause of scandal to our Society.
- “Having made the above solemn declaration and promise of my own free will and accord, I swear true and real allegiance to the cause of Ireland only, and no longer to be true as a subject nor to bear allegiance to George the Third, King of Great Britain and Ireland; and I now pray that God may assist me in my endeavours to fulfil the same; that He may protect me and prosper our Society and grant us to live and die in a state of grace! Amen.

“I may as well give what were then the ‘Words’ and ‘Grip’ as I am on this subject. The words were as follows:

“*What age are we in?*” Answer: “*The end of the fifth.*”

“*What’s the hour?*” Answer: “*Very near the right one.*”

“*Isn’t it come yet?*” Answer: “*The hour is come but not the man.*”

“*When will he come?*” Answer: “*He is within sight.*”

“The grip was, when shaking hands, to press the point of the thumb on the second joint of the forefinger, and if the person with whom you shook hands was a brother, he was to press upon the middle joint of your little finger. Such were the words and grip of Ribbonism about the year 1814.”¹

The position of the Ribbon Societies in Ireland at this time can be further illustrated by statements made by Daniel O’Connell in a speech delivered on 31st December, 1813. He was speaking to a gathering of constitutional Emancipationists, and attacked political secret societies of all kinds. According to him, up to the year 1809 the County of Donegal had been free from secret societies, but at that date the society of Ribbonmen got a footing in the country in order to counter the proceedings of the Orangemen. By 1811 they had made such progress as enabled them to form a regular Grand Lodge sitting at Derry which had over 90 Lodges affiliated and a membership of over 20,000.

As for the obligations taken by the members, he asserted that the oaths were three times uttered. The first contained a “direct, positive, and unconditional oath of allegiance.” Another was then substituted, promising allegiance to the king, so long as he should protect the Catholic priests and laity. The third oath, “and that lately adopted,” omitted all mention of allegiance.

O’Connell went on to say that the Ribbon Society had promised to disband itself at the entreaty of the Catholic Board (the body he was then addressing), but he feared that the excesses of the Orangemen would make this promise impossible of accomplishment.

¹ *Op. cit.*

Whatever the cause, O'Connell was right in his fears. The Ribbon Society did not disband itself.

Colonel William Blacker, giving evidence in 1835 before a Select Committee of the House of Commons, told how in the year 1822 he arrested "in a kind of grocer's shop in Armagh some fourteen or fifteen persons, delegates from various parts, Ribandmen, who were from different parts of the country, from Dundalk, from the county of Derry, from the county of Antrim, and from Cavan." He produced two papers that had been found in their possession. The first contained an oath which may possibly have been the form taken by provincial delegates.

"I, A.B., do in the presence of Almighty God, and that of His Son Jesus Christ, declare and promise that I will keep secret all things that I will see or hear now and hereafter relative to this board, and these regulations which I am intended to hear."

The oath goes on to promise: (1) Allegiance to King George III; (2) Fidelity to his Brethren, and to the board "in all things lawful, not otherwise"; (3) To avoid quarrels with his Brethren, and help their needs; (4) Not to admit any bad character to the board; and to further brotherly love; (5) To avoid intoxication; (6) To give business preference to his Catholic Brethren; (7) "I also declare and promise, that I will not withdraw myself from this right honourable board; and should I ever join in where the enemies of our emancipation are, may the wrath of He who suffered for us fall on me (I do not mean trade societies or soldiers)."

The other paper found ran as follows:

"These times are distressing.

"Who are distressed? The poor.

"Who are poor? Only those that God hates.

"Our laurels are fading. Next spring will revive them.

"Do not abuse me, I am for peace. You shall not be abused."

These pieces of evidence go to show that at a period when education in Ireland was very restricted, and few of the peasantry could write or read, the Ribbonmen possessed members who were not without a certain amount of fluency in composition, and skill in inventing catechisms containing a double meaning.

Another point illustrated is the speed with which the society could extend its ramifications throughout a whole district. O'Connell was probably speaking no more than the truth in his reference to the state of County Derry.

An explanation of these phenomena is easily found.

The rapid spread of Ribbonism among the Roman Catholic peasantry was undoubtedly abetted by the fact that practically all the hedge-schoolmasters in Ireland "held articles," in other words, were Masters of Ribbon Lodges. Such a one was Patrick Devine, the ringleader in the murders at Wildgoose Lodge, in County Louth, in 1817, a dreadful crime, dreadfully expiated.

In another book of his, *Roddy the Rover*, Carleton gives an explanation of why the society was called the Ribbonmen.

"The two ribbons are to be two signs that will guide you—the *green* one is for Ireland and friendship, and the *red* one for revenge and blood; the one is for your friends—the other for your enemies."

When an Article Bearer had enlisted fifty men to form his own Lodge, he was bound to swear in another Article Bearer to carry on the work. When the whole parish was "up," that is, sworn in, the first Article Bearer became a Parish Delegate. He possessed the privilege of attending all meetings of the society in his district, to inspect the men and their proceedings; decided complaints; adjusted differences; expelled refractory or suspected members; and enforced discipline. He also collected a poll-tax from all members. He reported all these proceedings quarterly to the County Delegates, who reported in turn to the Provincial Delegates, who reported to Headquarters.

Exactly how far this chain of organization ever became efficient is uncertain. The existence of a central authority for all Ireland is extremely doubtful.

At the same time it seems possible that all the agrarian secret societies which existed in different parts of Ireland under different names (such as the Whitefeet, Caravats, Shanvests, etc.) during the first half of the last century were branches of the one Ribbon Society. All of them seem to have possessed rituals, which probably varied according to districts, such at least would appear to be indicated by documents taken from contemporary newspapers.

At Trim Assizes, 23rd July, 1815, the Ribbonman's oath was given in evidence as follows:¹

"In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! Amen!

"What is your name? I do come here and make oath on the Evangelists and Catholic Church, and enter into the following resolutions, that I will keep secret of all that I will see here this day, until death and after.

"That I will keep secret and help and aid and assist and support these articles until death and after and lead a Catholic life.

"That you will not connect with any Protestant or freemason or any other connection that is against you, but those that is connected with us.

"That you shall not quarrel, riot, brag or boast out of the strength of your confederacy.

"That you will not rob nor steal nor defraud any Brother to the valuation of from one sixpence to a shilling to your knowledge, or knowing without making a restitution.

"That no man shall be taken in here on your vigour or strength without two or more of the same society.

"That you shall not appear before Judge, Bar, Jury or Justice for the injury of your said Brother.

"That if anything derives between you and your said Brother, that you will leave it to the decision of two or more of the said Brothers.

"That you shall not leave one penny with a Protestant which you will get with a Roman Catholic as cheap.

¹ *Belfast News-Letter*, 4th August, 1815.

“That no man shall be received here but a true Catholic, and that alone unless he is duly inspected into his character by two or more of the same society.

“That you are not to let yourself be knowing to any man unless he is tried by word or sign, and to not divulge your secret in drunkenness, in your sobriety, in dread or fear, or let yourself knowing to any man but a Brother.

“That you will attend at all true and lawful causes, and if not that you shall give true and lawful account of your non-attendance That you are to stand for each other in all true and lawful causes till death.”

It is patent that this document was either drawn up or copied by a badly educated man; the main provisions of the code are, however, clear enough: secrecy, help to his Brethren,, etc., etc.

The next is a much more interesting production, and if it be genuine, which is quite probable, would indicate a survival from the days of the United Irishmen. It is entitled “Document dropped by a Limerick Whiteboy.”¹

“What are you? I am a man.

“How can you prove yourself to be a man? By being born a true member of the Church of Christ, which is the greatest river you ever met with. [*sic.*]

“Were you baptized? Yes.

“What name did you get? Truth and Liberty.

“What do you mean by Liberty? I mean the sons of Liberty, the North Star.²

“How long are you from the centre of Ireland? It lies in the centre of my heart.

“Have you any proof for that? Yes, God prosper the True United Boys.

“What are you up to? To the rights of my country.

“Who keeps your rights from you? My former Brothers.

“How comes it that we are equal to the builders of Babel? We do not understand each other.

“How long are you in the world? Since my baptism.

¹ *Belfast News-Letter*, 15th May, 1815. Cf. what has been said before about the survival of the name Whiteboy.

² Neilson's newspaper, *The Northern Star*, was the organ of the United Irishmen.

"What arms of protection do you carry? I carry the cross as a gift from God under my heart.

"What is your age? My age is my name, and my name is my number.

"What is your number? B.

"What is the chief countersign? Elephantio notes elisin Montique.

"What is that in English? Death to a traitor, or a traitor to death.

"Where do you keep your secrets? In a bone box in my left side.

"How high are you? Three steps towards paradise.

"Which are they? F.H.C.

"There are seven clouds over us. I hope heavy showers will bring them down.

"You are going on one side of your shoes. It is no matter to you whether I stand upright.

"Do you stand so? No.

"Why so? There is a heavy yoke over us since the Battle of the Boyne."

It would be fruitless to hazard a conjecture what language the countersign was supposed to be. This piece of ritual as a whole argues a considerable amount of organization in the society which practised it.

Evidence tendered at the House of Commons enquiry into secret societies held in 1835 contained more terrible versions of the Ribbonman's oath as said to be then current. Appended is the recension favoured by Colonel Verner, Grand Master of the Orangemen. Other versions given in evidence were more or less the same in sentiment, but not so clear in phrasing.

"I, A.B., in the presence of Almighty God, and this my Brother, do swear that I will suffer my right hand to be cut from my body and laid at the gaol door at Armagh, before I will waylay or betray a Brother; and I will persevere, and not spare from the cradle to the crutch, and from the crutch to the cradle; that I will not pity the moans or groans of infancy or old age, but that I will wade knee-deep in Orangemen's blood, and not do as King James did."

Verner could not state where he had learnt of this oath, and much value cannot be given his evidence, for in other respects he showed more bias than exact knowledge. Thus he labelled as "Ribandmen processions" those which were attended by the Roman Catholics on St. Patrick's Day and by the Freemasons on the 24th June—a statement dictated more by bigotry than ignorance, for it was a habit of the Orange party to call all processions in which Roman Catholics took part "Riband processions," and the epithet must be taken in this sense as merely a term of abuse, not as denominating the secret society of the Ribbonmen.

The term Ribbon Lodge was also used in Ulster quite wrongly about the year 1835 to describe a very curious association of which little is known. This was the Union Lodge, composed of persons of all religious denominations brought together for the purpose of securing the abolition of tithe and the reduction of rents. It had, of course, nothing to do with the Ribbon Society, and even members of the Orange "Black Lodges" were said to take part in the plottings of the Union Lodges.

In the north of Ireland the genuine Ribbonmen would seem to have become almost extinct by 1835. Various police witnesses from Ulster declared at the House of Commons enquiry in that year that they had never come across a genuine Ribbonman; but the body persisted in other parts of Ireland, particularly in Connaught, where it was extremely strong.¹

In process of time some of these Ribbon associations merged into the Irish Republican Brotherhood; others retained their original agrarian policy throughout the Irish Land War; yet others abandoned their militant activities, and became transformed into societies that were merely religious and provident. In the last case the ban of the Roman Catholic Church on secret societies was obviated by a rule declaring members of the priesthood *ipso facto* members of the society.

¹ "I gathered from various sources that it was easier, at nearly all times, to turn an Orangeman into a Fenian than to effect the same metamorphosis with a Ribbonman. . . . Connaught was (as indeed I fear it still is) the headquarters of Ribbonism."—O'Leary, *Fenians and Fenianism*, 1896.

The most famous of these transformed bodies was remodelled about the year 1825 under the name of the Brotherhood of St. Patrick. It was intended to be a benefit society, and membership was confined to Catholics. The oath was simple; the candidate, after having had the rules explained to him, merely swore to be true and faithful to his duties as a member.

Sometime in the eighteen-thirties the society was carried to America, and there rechristened the Ancient Order of Hibernians, which title was subsequently adopted by the parent stem in Ireland, but not universally so, the old name being retained by some branches till well within the present century.

According to a not very reliable authority, Pierce Nagle, the Fenian informer, in his early days joined the Brotherhood of St. Patrick, "the most conspicuous of the 'legal organizations' with which Ireland was then plagued, and under cover of which the I.R.B. made such amazing progress."¹

This statement is misleading, for while the Fenians absorbed some of the Brotherhood, the bulk of it seems to have held aloof; though as a body it might co-operate in public and legal demonstrations, as in 1861, when it took charge of the M'Manus funeral in Dublin.² "The Brotherhood was an open and legal organization, with objects rather undefined and vague. It was, however, ultra-National. . . . In reality this St. Patrick's Brotherhood was a feeder for the Fenian Society, which gradually absorbed all its members, and finally snuffed it out of existence altogether."³

This is another misstatement of fact. Fenianism may have absorbed some branches of the Brotherhood that desired to revert to militancy, but many of the older secret societies, whether militant or innocuous, would have nothing to do with the newer Irish Republican Brotherhood, either in Ireland or in America.

¹ John Rutherford, *The Fenian Conspiracy*, 1877.

² M'Manus was an exiled political felon who died in San Francisco, and whose body was given a public funeral in Dublin as a national demonstration of feeling.

³ Richard Pigott, *Personal Recollections of an Irish National Journalist*, 1882.

A historian better qualified than most to speak with real knowledge has declared:

“There is nothing common to Fenianism and Ribbonism but illegality . . . their aims and objects are as wide as the poles asunder. Ribbonism is purely agrarian and religious, i.e. anti-landlord and anti-Protestant, while Fenianism is purely National, i.e. anti-English. . . . I learnt to my astonishment that there were Ribbonmen or rather a Ribbon organization, ‘The Ancient Order of Hibernians’ in America. . . . I suppose the body to be now something of a trade union of a mutually supporting or charitable kind, and much a matter of habit and of that desire in human nature, and especially in Celtic nature, to belong to some gild, confraternity or other society.”

O’Leary goes on to say that the Ribbonmen in America would have nothing to do with the Fenian movement; and elsewhere he speaks of the former associations as being approved of by the priesthood.¹

Rutherford² also speaks of the “Hibernian Society” as being a form of Ribbonism, and says it was established at Toronto in 1851 in opposition to the Orange Order. Le Caron³ mentions the Order as being a purely benevolent body, and implies that it had, in itself, no political aims, though its branches had largely affiliated with the open political campaign being carried on in the United States in favour of Irish autonomy.

In Ireland the activities of the Ancient Order of Hibernians have been directed on the same principles. Before 1914 it represented an association of Catholic Nationalists pledged to support that political party; it was in favour with the Catholic hierarchy; and at the same time it strove as a secret society to countermine the political energies of the Orange Society. Its membership ran into many thousands.

¹ O’Leary, *Op. cit.*

² *Op. cit.*

³ *Twenty-five Years in the Secret Service.*

Whether its aims have altered since the year 1922 it would be futile to speculate. The position of the Lodges that are situated in Ulster would appear to be willy-nilly one of enforced warfare, particularly in County Armagh, where the burning of an A.O.H. hall by unidentifiable armed bands has been known to provide a "bonfire night" on more than one occasion; as for turning the other cheek—the Ulsterman has never learnt to do so to a religious opponent. The A.O.H. has probably not forgotten that it is the descendant of the Defenders.

The other descendants of the same body probably died out for the most part with the end of the Land War; and others have merged into modern organizations. It is doubtful if any still exist for the purposes that called them into being a century and a half ago.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE ORANGE SOCIETY

ABOUT the formation of the Orange Society in Ireland we have the evidence of one who was an eye-witness of the events that gave rise to it. At the parliamentary enquiry in 1835 Lieutenant-Colonel William Blacker, who had been a member of the society for forty years, that is practically from its start, told the following story.¹

About the 16th September, 1795, a body of Defenders made an incursion into the county of Armagh near the village of Loughgall with the intention of disarming the inhabitants. The Protestants assembled to oppose them and were helped by others from the neighbourhood of Portadown where young Blacker, then a mere stripling, was living. The opposing parties skirmished for a day or two without much harm being done, when a local gentleman Captain Atkinson and the parish priest, representing either side, intervened to effect a reconciliation, which apparently was successful. The Defenders agreed to retire, and the Protestants to return to their homes. This was being done, when unfortunately on Monday, the 21st September, there arrived in Armagh a fresh body of Defenders from Louth, Monaghan and Tyrone. They "were much disappointed at finding a truce of this kind made, and were determined not to go home without something to repay them for the

¹ On the 3rd April, 1835, the Grand Lodge of Ireland passed a resolution ordering any of its members who might be examined before the Commons Committee "to disclose all signs, pass-words, and secrets of the institution without any concealment whatever." It is only just to the society to state that, so far as one can judge from the printed evidence, the Orange witnesses gave their testimony fully, freely, and, except where long-ingrained political and religious prejudices were concerned, fairly. As a body they denied that the Orange Society sprang from the older Peep-of-Day Boys; but that this was actually so admits of no doubt.

trouble of their march. In consequence, they made an attack upon the house of a man named Winter at a place called the Diamond, it is a meeting of cross-roads, where there are only three or four houses. Word was brought to the Protestants who were on their return home of what had taken place. They returned to the spot, attacked the Defenders, and killed a number of them. . . . It so happened that my father was making some alterations in his house, which occasioned a quantity of lead to be removed from the roof; a carpenter's apprentice and myself took possession of a considerable quantity of this lead, ran it into bullets, and had it conveyed to the persons of my neighbourhood who were going to fight the battle of the Diamond." Blacker hastened to the scene, but was not in time to be under fire, only to see the Defenders retreating and a number of dead bodies. The Protestants were the better armed and had the advantage of position, so they suffered no casualties; the Defenders about thirty. The actual engagement had lasted about fifteen minutes. Immediately after the battle the first Orange Lodge was planned in Winter's house in the Diamond, and came into being in the house of one Sloan in Loughgall.

Whether this began the organization of all the militant Protestants in Armagh cannot be stated with certainty; but sure it is that the condition in the county became so bad before the end of the year that the Governor, Lord Gosford, convened the magistrates on the 28th December, and addressed them on the subject. A persecution was raging, he said, whose victims' only crime was professing the Roman-Catholic religion. "A lawless banditti have constituted themselves judges . . . and the sentence they pronounce is nothing less than a confiscation of all property and immediate banishment." He went on to describe the excesses of the Peep-of-Day Boys, and after declaring that he was as true a Protestant as any man present, said he could not shut his ears to the complaints of a persecuted people. The magistrates thereupon resolved to take steps to "stop the progress of the persecution now carrying on by an ungovernable mob against the Catholics of this county."

The inference has since been drawn that this orgy of outrages was due to the newly formed Orange Society. The matter is not proved conclusively. To affirm it would assume that the new organization had within three months banded together all the partizans of the "To hell or Connaught" watchword, and taken over the direction of the good work.

It is, however, quite impossible to state the exact date at which a Grand Orange Lodge was formed in Armagh, and began to issue warrants of regularity to local groups. It was certainly in existence by July, 1796, and later in that year Thomas Verner, a local gentleman, became the first Grand Master. The Orange Society was established by him in Dublin in 1797, joined by various men of good social position, and another Grand Lodge seems to have been formed there which eventually supplanted the independent one functioning in the County of Armagh.

The early Orange Lodges were stated, as is not unlikely, to have borrowed some of their symbolism and ritual from the older Masonic order.¹ The officers of a Lodge consisted of a Master, Secretary, Treasurer, and Committeemen. They were bound by an oath, and possessed secret modes of recognition. In the early days of the society two degrees appear to have been recognized, Orangeman and Orange Marksman; these may have been the originals of the two later standard Orange degrees, Orange and Purple. But in addition to these degrees there arose at a very early date in the history of the Order what came to be known as Black Lodges, offshoots which were not recognized by the Grand Lodge, and conferred an additional sequence of degrees with appurtenant secrets and oaths, and embraced the most determined and irreconcilable portion of the order.

As stated by one of its founders: "The original intention of the Orange Society was to support the constitution of the country and allegiance to His Majesty, in opposition to societies of a rebellious and treasonable nature, to join the

¹ Daniel O'Connell, who had himself been a Freemason, stated in the year 1812, when attacking the Orangemen publicly, "A feeble imitation of Freemasonry lent something of mysticism and much of regularity to the Orange Lodges."

Government in protecting the country in case of foreign invasion, and for purposes of self-defence.”

This, of course, is an idealistic statement of the case. From the first the Society was intended to be a thorn in the side of Roman Catholics; and it had not been in existence for very long before it began to publish manifestos on political questions of the day, such as the Union of 1800. It aimed from the first at acquiring great influence in State politics; and it has succeeded in that aim.

One of the gravest charges that has been brought against the society from its inauguration, to be alleged by its opponents and denied indignantly by its supporters to the present day, is that the loyalty of an Orangeman, whereof he makes a parade, is a conditional loyalty, terminable in the event of certain contingent possibilities, such as a change of religion on the part of the House of Windsor. Some early published documents of the Society will be enough to show how this misconception, if it be such, arose.

In the printed rules of the Society approved 20th November, 1798, the following is given as the obligation of an Orangeman:

“I, A.B., do solemnly and sincerely swear of my own free will and accord, that I will to the utmost of my power support and defend the present King, George the Third, and all the heirs of the crown, so long as he or they support the Protestant ascendancy, the constitution and laws of these kingdoms; and that I will ever hold sacred the name of our glorious deliverer, William the Third, Prince of Orange; and I do further swear, that I am not nor was not a Roman Catholic or papist; that I was not, am not, nor ever will be an United Irishman; and that I never took the oath of secrecy to that society; and I do further swear, in the presence of Almighty God, that I will always conceal and never will reveal, either part or parts of this I am about now to receive, neither write it, nor indite it, stamp, stain nor engrave it, nor cause it so to be done, on paper, parchment, leaf, bark, brick, stone, or anything so that it might be known; and that I am now become an Orangeman without fear, bribery or corruption.”

*"Secret Articles"*¹

- "1.—That we will bear true allegiance to His Majesty King George the Third and his successors, so long as he or they support the Protestant ascendancy; and that we will faithfully support and maintain the laws and constitution of this kingdom.
- "2.—That we will be true to all Orangemen in all just actions, neither wronging one nor seeing him wronged to our knowledge without acquainting him thereof.
- "3.—That we are not to see a Brother offended for 6d. or 1s., or more, if convenient, which must be returned next meeting, if possible.
- "4.—We must not give the first assault to any person whatever that may bring a brother into trouble.
- "5.—We are not to carry away money, goods or anything from any person whatever, except arms and ammunition, and those only from an enemy.
- "6.—We are to appear in ten hours' warning, or whatever time is required, if possible (provided it is not hurtful to ourselves or family, and that we are served with a lawful summons from the master) otherwise we are fined as the company think proper.
- "7.—No man can be made an Orangeman without the unanimous approbation of the body.
- "8.—An Orangeman is to keep a brother's secret as his own, unless in case of murder, treason and perjury, and that of his own free will.
- "9.—No Roman Catholic can be admitted on any account.
- "10.—Any Orangeman who acts contrary to these rules shall be expelled, and the same reported to all the Lodges in this kingdom, and elsewhere. God save the King.

¹ The compilers of the rules say in the preface: "The secret articles are as near as possible in their original shape." It is possible we may have preserved here some of the expressions used at the first Orange Lodge in The Diamond, 21st September, 1795.

“Marksman’s Obligation.”

“I, A. B., of my own free will and accord, in the presence of Almighty God, do hereby most solemnly and sincerely swear, that I will always conceal and never will reveal either part or parts of this which I am now about to receive; and that I will bear true allegiance to His Majesty King George the Third, and all the heirs of the crown, so long as they maintain the Protestant ascendancy, the laws and constitution of these kingdoms; and that I will keep this part of a marksman from that of an Orangeman, as well as from the ignorant¹; and that I will not make a man until I become master of a body, nor after I am broke; and that I will not make a man, nor be present at the making of a man², on the road, or behind hedges; and that I will be aiding and assisting to all true Orange honest marksmen, as far as in my power lies, knowing him or them to be such; and that I will not wrong a brother marksman, nor know him to be wronged of anything of value, worth apprehending, but I will warn or apprize him thereof, if in my power it lies. All this I swear with a firm and steadfast resolution, so help me God, and keep me steadfast in this my marksman’s obligation.”

The following extract from the rules of 1798 has a bearing on the Black Lodges mentioned above.

“Many persons having introduced various orders into the Orange Society, which will very much tend to injure the regularity of the institution, the Grand Lodge disavow any other orders but the Orange and Purple, as there can be none others regular, unless issuing from and approved of by them.”

At this date (1798) the Master of each Orange Lodge was appointed by the Grand Lodge, and he then appointed his Deputy-Master, Treasurer, and Secretary; but this was changed by the rules of 1800 to allow each Lodge to elect its own Master.

¹ This passage suggests that Marksman was the original name of the Purple degree in the society.

² “Man” in this sense undoubtedly means Orangeman.

In this later year also the Grand Lodge was reconstituted. Hitherto it had evidently been a self-appointed body, and it was henceforth to consist of all the Masters of Orange Lodges, who were to elect the Grand Master and other officers.

The system of splitting up the order into districts (consisting of five Lodges) and counties, both presided over by local Grand Masters, had thus early become firmly established; and the order had been introduced into the British Army, each regimental Lodge ranking as a district.

In the rules of the society published in 1814 the oaths were given an altered form. It will be enough to say that the Orangeman's began: "I, A.B., do voluntarily and sincerely swear that I will to the utmost of my power support and defend the present King George the Third, his heirs and successors, being Protestants . . ." while that of the Marksman, here printed Marchman, added to the Orange oath: "And that I will keep the signs, tokens and words of a Marchman from an Orangeman, as well as from the ignorant, unless authorised to communicate them by the proper authorities of the Orange Institution; and that I will not make an Orangeman or Marchman, except only whilst I shall act as Master of an Orange Lodge; and that I will not make nor assist at, or sanction the making of any member in any other order than the Orange and Purple, which are the original orders of this institution."

From these rules of 1814 the Secret Articles were omitted.

The rules printed in 1824 omit the oaths given hitherto, and give the forms of the oaths of Allegiance, Supremacy, and Abjuration, which are to be taken by every Orangeman. The preamble to the rules states: "This Association is formed by persons desiring, to the utmost of their power, to support and defend his Majesty King George the Fourth, the constitution and laws of this country, and the succession to the throne in his Majesty's illustrious house, being Protestant . . ."

In these rules of 1828 the Duke of Cumberland appears as Grand Master of the Orange Society of Ireland. To

the former oaths of Allegiance, Supremacy, and Abjuration is added one against Transubstantiation.

In the year 1824 Parliament passed an act abolishing all secret societies, and the Orange Society was stated to have gone out of existence till the year 1828. This was probably true of the Grand Lodge, but there is not the least doubt that many, if not the great majority, of the country Lodges continued to meet throughout that period in defiance of the law; so that there was not the least difficulty in reviving the society officially in 1828.

Changes in the ceremonies are said to have taken place at the time of this reconstitution; but the *Declaration of an Orangeman* which heads the rules of 1834 is simply the old oath of 1798 with a different heading. After the rules were published, it was discovered that such a declaration was illegal and a felony under the Act of 1824, and the society hastened to suppress it by tearing the page out of all available copies, and it did not appear in the rules published in 1835; still it would be more than one could expect from human nature to believe that the rank and file of the society had at the same time torn the declaration out of their ceremonies.

In fact, in view of all the printed evidence from 1798 that has just been recapitulated, one is forced to the conclusion that the society, despite of its having been dissolved twice, was very much the same in spirit and objects, and perhaps in ceremonies as well, in 1834 as it had been in 1795.

The official ritual of the order was printed with the rules for 1835, and reprinted in the Parliamentary report of the same year. The ceremonies of the two degrees, Orange and Purple, consist in the reading of passages from the Bible by the chaplain, and exhortations addressed to the candidate by the Master. No oath is prescribed for either degree. The candidate declares in the first: "Of my own free will and accord I desire admission into your loyal institution"; in the second: "Of my own free will and accord I desire advancement into the Purple Order of our loyal institution." The request in either case, so far as the printed ritual discloses, was sufficient to ensure compliance, without any

further pledge of fidelity. Such a procedure must be unique among secret societies.

It remains to be said that the Purple degree was looked upon as a reward for faithful service, and that all members of the Grand Orange Lodge must have received it.

The alteration in the form of oath shown in the printed rituals took place at an uncertain date. None of the witnesses examined in 1835 had been able to retain its wording in his memory; but all were unanimous in saying that oaths of every kind were abandoned in 1825 when an act of Parliament had made all secret societies bound by oath illegal.

All the witnesses were equally emphatic in denying that no oath was ever administered having as object the extermination of the Roman Catholics. These respectable people were no doubt telling the truth about what was personally known to them; their knowledge, however, admittedly did not extend to what took place in the Black Lodges, which had been under the ban of the Grand Orange Lodge from an early period. It seems extremely likely from the uneasiness of some of the witnesses under cross-examination that they had heard more about the proceedings of these Black Lodges than they cared to avow, and that a full avowal would have been, to say the least of it, inexpedient.

“The Grand Lodge,” said one high official, “were always desirous of having their two orders of Orange and Purple perfectly unshackled and unconnected with any other order whatsoever. They had reason to believe that those Black Lodges, over which they had not any control nor the slightest connexion, had induced some of their members to enter their body. They had also heard that there were certain rules among them, such as if a brother is struck, any brother who sees him struck is immediately to take up his quarrel without inquiring whether he has just cause so to do or not. They thought that this might lead to riots at fairs and markets, and also from the frequent admission of various improper characters who had been expelled from the Orange Institution for misconduct into those Black Lodges, they considered it their duty to warn all members

in connexion with the Orange Institution to avoid their meetings, and also thus clearly to disavow all connexion with societies of whose principles they were to a great degree ignorant, and over whose actions they had not the slightest control." The witness stated later that he had not the slightest idea how Black Lodges originated, but imagined "they arose from the desire of the lower orders to have something more exciting or alarming in the initiation of members; I think it may be a mixture of Freemasonry with that of the old Orange system, a species of mummery innocent in itself, and originating in the strong desire that vulgar minds in general manifest for awful mysteries and ridiculous pageantry."

In the light of the foregoing testimony one may perhaps assume that these Black Lodges demanded that their initiates should carry their "Protestant principles" to more extreme lengths than were required by the orthodox Orange and Purple orders.

Reference has been made above to the power of expulsion exercised by the Orange Society. This was the penalty, according to the official version, for "disreputable conduct as a citizen, a Christian, or a loyal subject;" but it might also follow the public expression of certain political views or actions not in themselves either immoral or subversive of the constitution. Such a case was recorded in a quaint minute of the Grand Orange Lodge dated 29th November, 1832: "That ex-Sheriff Scott be expelled the institution for entertaining Daniel O'Connell at breakfast on political principles which we do not approve."

It will be needless to give further instances of political questions in which the society interfered either by public manifestos or private punishment. It will be seen later that the Grand Orange Lodge of England adopted precisely the same methods; nor is it easy to see how any society composed of men with strong political and religious prejudices could avoid such courses.

The presence of such a society in the State will never be welcome to those charged with administering the law firmly and impartially between citizens of every political

and religious persuasion; so in its early days the Orange Society came in for some severe condemnation. Judge Fletcher, in 1815, in addressing a Grand Jury at assizes expressed his views on the matter in these terms:

“Those societies called Orange Societies have produced the most mischievous effects, and particularly in the north of Ireland. They poison the very fountain of justice. . . . I do not hesitate to say that all associations of every description in this country, whether of Orangemen or Ribandmen, whether distinguished by the colour of Orange or of Green, all combinations of persons bound to each other by the obligation of an oath in a league for a common purpose, endangering the peace of the country, I pronounce them to be contrary to law. . . . Of this I am certain, that so long as those associations are permitted to act in the lawless manner they do, there will be no tranquillity in this country, and particularly in the north of Ireland. There those disturbers of the public peace, who assume the name of Orange Yeomen, frequent the fairs and markets with arms in their hands, under the pretence of self-defence or of protecting the public peace. . . . Murders have been repeatedly perpetrated on such occasions . . . petty juries have declined (upon some occasions) to do their duty.”

The learned judge went on to condemn party processions as “producing embittering recollections and inflicting wounds upon the feelings of others;” and it was largely on account of having given such manifestations of their existence that the Orangemen had found themselves with a crow to pluck with the Government in 1835.

It has been the custom of the Orange Society ever since its formation to parade with bands and banners on the 12th July, the anniversary of the battle of the Boyne, but one hundred years ago these processions contained elements of danger that have since been eliminated. In the eighteenth-thirties the society marched with loaded fire-arms, for every Orangeman, no matter how indigent, belonged to a gun club that enabled him to purchase his weapon on an instalment system; the bands played party tunes—*The Boyne Water*, *The Protestant Boys* (the famous *Lillibulero* in an

Orange sash), *Croppies, lie down*, etc.—and too often a district was chosen for the parade where the music and banners and party taunts would not fail to raise up a volunteer army in opposition, only too ready to shed fresh blood in a dispute that had not died with either King William or King James.

The resultant riots and loss of life had become such a scandal that in 1832 Parliament passed a law prohibiting all processions for the purpose of commemorating any festival, anniversary or political event “connected with any religious or other distinctions or differences between any classes of His Majesty’s subjects . . . and who shall bear, wear or have amongst them any fire-arms, or other offensive weapons, or any banner, emblem, flag or symbol, the display whereof may be calculated or tend to provoke animosity between His Majesty’s subjects of different religious persuasions, or who shall be accompanied by any music of a like nature or tendency. . . .” In a word, anyone who did any of these things was on the first conviction to go to jail for a month, on the second, for three.

On the 20th October, 1832, the Grand Lodge issued a circular to all Orange Lodges ordering them to obey the law and discontinue their usual processions.

July, 1833, demonstrated that the country Lodges were not prepared to obey either their Grand Lodge or the law.

Processions took place as usual; so did attendant riots, woundings, and homicides. In the upshot many Orangemen were away from home for a month; others were let off with a caution, but not so one stalwart who, on being asked by the judge to express regret, when he would be set free, proceeded as sole response to whistle the stirring strains of *The Protestant Boys*. Orange magistrates were removed from the bench for encouraging the processions. Others resigned the Commission of the Peace to mark their disapproval of Government.

The fact was clearly demonstrated that the rank and file of the society did not intend to obey any law of which it disapproved; and also another fact, that the accredited leaders had no real control over the rank and file.

It was, of course, deplorable that the name of a Royal Prince, the Duke of Cumberland, should be lent as Grand Master to such proceedings; for his name meant much to the more ignorant type of Orangeman. When in July, 1830, a police officer produced a proclamation signed by the Duke of Northumberland as Lord Lieutenant forbidding a certain Orange procession, the Masters of the Lodges "treated the communication with respect, but said they had warrants for marching bearing the authority of Government, and that they considered themselves justified in marching until these warrants were withdrawn. They produced to informant some of these warrants, bearing as signatures His Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland, Lord Enniskillen, and some other individuals. I found they were under this delusion, that the Duke of Cumberland's name being attached to the document was as an authority equal to that of the Government of the country, or greater. . . . They stated to me that the Duke of Cumberland is a greater Duke than the Duke of Northumberland."

There was another matter came to light at this enquiry in 1835 which reflected on the Duke of Cumberland. It was discovered that in fifteen regiments of the British Army Orange Lodges existed, holding warrants with his signature, though he as a Field-Marshal must have been perfectly well aware that such associations were forbidden in the Army. Cumberland excused himself in a letter to the Commons Committee, stating that he had signed no warrant for a regimental Lodge, which statement he qualified by "I certainly have issued *no* warrant to that effect, as I have before said. It is true, I have signed many blank warrants, as far as they have no specific number of the lodge or even name."

In other words, Cumberland had lent his name to the society in return for their support, and had not troubled himself over much what use they might make of that name. But in the case of the Irish Grand Lodge he did not cast the blame on others in such cutting terms as he used later about the military warrants issued by English Grand Lodge. Perhaps he felt that the latter was more accustomed to his usual manners.

It appears that the first Orange Lodge to be established in a regiment was No. 47 in the Monaghan Militia in 1797. Many had been formed in the army afterwards, but in 1835 only fifteen of these were still in existence, because it had become the custom for the Lodges to exchange their Irish warrant for an English one on returning to England. This was done as a matter of course for a small fee.

The authorities had reason for their objection to Orange Lodges in the army. An instance had occurred in 1803 when the Moira Yeomanry, exclusively composed of Orangemen, had refused to be brigaded with a Roman-Catholic unit; but apart from such concrete instances of ill-feeling, it was plain that the presence of any such sectarian society in the regiments would lead to the formation of counter-societies; so that, as one military expert expressed it, "If its ramifications are allowed to enter into the army, there is no knowing what extraordinary collisions or divisions might take place."

The Orange processions, though suppressed for a short time, were legalized again a year or two later, and take place to this day, though mercifully they are no longer such a menace to the peace of the country, even if still looked upon as an offence by the bulk of its inhabitants. It would be fitting, however, before passing from the subject, to show that even in the worst days of these party processions (for of course the Roman Catholics organized counter-demonstrations on St. Patrick's Day and Lady Day, which were dubbed by the Orangemen Ribandmen processions) others took place, that were attended by all sects alike, and gave rise to neither rioting nor bad feeling. These were the Freemasons' processions on the 24th June. One that took place in 1835 is thus described.¹

"Several bodies of Freemasons assembled in this town (Newry) from Rathfriland, Poyntzpass, Market-hill, Warrenpoint, and various parts of the country; they all moved in procession, both Protestants and Roman Catholics, to

¹ The Freemasons had been expressly excluded from the operations of the act against oath-bound societies in 1824.

church with their aprons and sashes; they had drums and fifes, but no party tunes; two magistrates of this town formed part of the processions; and after the service was over they all dispersed in a most respectable, orderly manner. The evening passed over without the least disturbance."

The numbers of Orangemen in Ireland were estimated to be 200,000 in 1835. The figures could not be given exactly, because though it was known that about 1,600 Lodges were in existence, the majority of these failed to make any return to the Grand Lodge or to pay their dues to it of 2s. 6d. a year. Consequently, the Grand Lodge was sadly in want of funds; its greatest income in any one year had been £400, its normal income one-half that sum.

The influence of the society, however, was not to be measured in the terms of its income. Not only was it powerful in Ireland, and endeavouring to make itself so in England, but also in Upper Canada the society was preparing at this time to play a great political part. Vast numbers of Orangemen had emigrated there from Ireland, and the society had grown strong in the new country. It was freely stated in Orange circles in Ireland that the loyalty of these men to the Mother Country in the approaching conflict between men of French and British descent in Canada would depend to a large extent upon the home Government's attitude to the Orange Society in Ireland. These statements were certainly made on insufficient data, but the mere fact that they were made at such a time of crisis in Empire affairs did not tend to make such "conditional loyalty" any more popular in Great Britain.

Indeed the society in England was just then in very bad odour. The English have never approved of secret societies that meddle with politics, as has been discovered to their cost by many foreign missionaries who have attempted to introduce this method of securing influence. The Orange Society had just been exposed as violating this taboo; and in consequence the attention of the nation was keenly directed, not too benevolently, on its activities in England.

Some account must now be given of its settlement in that country.

Soon after the establishment of the Orange Society in Ireland the system seems to have been carried into England by lodges formed in marching regiments. The first English Grand Lodge acting independently of the Grand Lodge in Ireland was founded in Manchester in 1808, with a certain Colonel Taylor of Mostyn as Grand Master. The newly formed body apparently did not extend its influence very far, for in 1819-20 there were no more than two Orange Lodges in London, and one of those only just established by warrant from Manchester. Still the society had attracted some people of social position, among others Lord Kenyon. Taylor died in 1820. The headquarters of the Grand Lodge were moved to London in 1821, and the Duke of York in February of that year was offered and accepted the Grand Mastership. Within a very short time, however, he discovered that the society, as then constituted, was illegal, and he withdrew from it in June, 1821. This event led to a reconstitution of the society. Prior to that date every member on entering had taken an oath promising conditional loyalty to George III and his heirs while they continued to support the Protestant ascendancy; he further declared that he was not a Roman Catholic, no United Irishman, nor member of any treasonable society; that he would keep the secrets of the Order; and that "I now become an Orangeman without fear, bribery, or corruption." This oath was now omitted; and another circumstance led to what were in all probability even more drastic changes.

The Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland on the 29th January, 1820, wrote to the Grand Lodge of England stating that in consequence of the admission of "some persons of a most improper description" into the Order in Ireland who "were proceeding to take advantage of the circumstance by initiating rebels to His Majesty's Government into the institution," the Irish Grand Lodge had determined to change the signs and pass-words of the society, and that this had been done.

It so happened that owing to the Secret Societies Act the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland became dormant from 1825 to 1828, but on its resuscitation on 15th September in the later year it apparently adopted altered signs and pass-words which were communicated to the English Grand Lodge. The two systems were assimilated in 1831-32; so that in the phrase of the House of Commons Committee: "The new system of lectures, secret signs and pass-words has of late years been adopted by all Orangemen in Great Britain and the colonies Its whole institution is one neighbourhood within which every Orangeman is at home in the farthest parts of the world."

Incidentally, while the Irish Grand Lodge was in abeyance 1825-28, many of its subordinate Lodges continued their meetings, but those who had scruples sought for and obtained warrants from the Grand Lodge of England to give a varnish of legality to their proceedings.

Lord Kenyon, who had been Deputy Grand Master under the Duke of York, continued to direct the English society. The Duke died in 1827, and in 1828 his brother the Duke of Cumberland was elected Grand Master of the Empire. This title meant that he became Grand Master of the English and older Irish Grand Lodges, both of which retained complete independence of one another, while conferring upon their joint Grand Master as chief and supreme head a permanent office, not subject to re-election—"his powers and authority are discretionary, illimitable, and absolute."

Lord Kenyon was Deputy Grand Master of England, and the Duke of Gordon Deputy Grand Master in Scotland under the Duke of Cumberland. Scotland at this time had no Grand Orange Lodge. The activities of the society there were mainly confined to the neighbourhood of Glasgow.

There seems not the slightest reason to doubt on the evidence produced to the Committee of the House of Commons which was appointed in 1835 to inquire into the proceedings of the Orange Society in England that the society mainly existed at that time for organizing resistance

to the parliamentary and legislative reforms then in process under successive Whig Governments ¹; while a subsidiary, but not less actively promoted object was to bring some badly wanted popularity to the Duke of Cumberland. More doubt exists concerning a revolutionary object with which the society generally was at that time credited; no less a one than that of setting aside the succession of the Princess Victoria to the throne in favour of her uncle, the Duke of Cumberland. The charge has never been proved; but at the same time it has never been disproved. If only as a tradition it has to be mentioned in any account given of the Orange Society. Since the Orange Society itself saw fit to refer to the Duke of Cumberland in a draft circular of 1834 as the individual "nearest to the Throne," there can be little doubt that some of its members would have been prepared to support that opinion.

At any rate, the Duke of Cumberland spared neither time nor trouble in making himself agreeable to the society. He presided at all the meetings of its Grand Lodge in London, and was in continual touch with its officers whether in person or by correspondence.

The most active and, subsequently, the most notorious of these officers was Lieutenant-Colonel (by courtesy) W. Blennerhassett Fairman, the Deputy Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of England. He was appointed to this post only in January, 1832, but had previously, in 1821, been Deputy Grand Master for London on the transferring of the Grand Lodge to the metropolis. In the same year 1832 he was given a roving commission to make two tours through England and Scotland, all expenses being paid by the Grand Lodge, nominally in order to visit old Orange Lodges and communicate to them the new signs, etc.², and to establish new Lodges.

It is apparent from Fairman's correspondence with Lord Kenyon (produced to the Commons Committee) that his embassy had at least quite as much to do with a campaign

¹ e.g. Members who voted for Whig parliamentary candidates at the election of 1834 were expelled by Grand Lodge from the Order.

² Each Brother who received the new signs was to pay one shilling as fee.

to whiten the reputation of the Duke of Cumberland as to teach a few honest Protestant artisans a new form of ritual in exchange for a handful of silver.

Fairman had a very enjoyable trip, and was entertained wherever he went, but of no avail were all his efforts to make the country Lodges pay their dues to Grand Lodge, whose income remained very small, so small as to be quite inadequate to reward the Deputy Grand Secretary on the scale he considered he deserved. There were, however, contingent possibilities in the shape of a fat government post, should the Tories come back into power, and Fairman relaxed no effort in decrying the measures of their political opponents. He had a fluent and peculiar style, witness a sample from a proclamation which he had printed in Glasgow in 1833 and wished to have affixed in church-porches and other public places:

“The Church, which is the sister of the State, is exhibited to public view in the mangling embraces of a lustful ravisher.”

In 1835, in consequence of events which had happened in Ireland, the House of Commons appointed a Committee to examine the conduct of the Orange Society in England. At this inquiry Fairman was an important witness, and refused to produce his letter-book containing copies of letters written by him in his capacity as Deputy Grand Secretary. This refusal prejudiced the case of the society, which was not improved by the discovery that Orangeism had found its way into the army, though general orders forbade the existence of any secret society in a regiment, and that in one instance a non-commissioned officer acting as Master of an Orange Lodge had even been encouraged by the Deputy Grand Secretary of England to continue the Lodge in the regiment in direct violation of the orders of his commanding officer.

It further transpired at the same inquiry, that an Orangeman named Nucella had in 1833 gone on a trip to the Mediterranean, and had received a commission from the

Grand Master to further the spread of the Orange Order in the regiments in Malta and the Ionian Islands.

On the 24th August, 1835, just before the Committee proceeded to investigate these matters, the Duke of Cumberland issued a circular to the Orange Society stating that the warrants signed by him and issued to regiments were the result of indiscretion and negligence on the part of his Deputy Grand Master and other officers, and that he thereby declared all such warrants void. He was invited by the Committee to attend, and make any statement he wished on the matter; but he curtly declined the invitation.

In the outcome the Committee presented a report very animadversive of the Orange Society. It considered the evidence sufficient to show "the existence of an organized institution pervading Great Britain and her colonies to an extent never contemplated as possible; and which your Committee consider highly injurious to the discipline of His Majesty's Army, and dangerous to the peace of His Majesty's subjects."

The strength of the Society in England at this time seems to have been about 300 Lodges, of which thirty had been military.

The Society was shown to have extended into Canada and Australia, the latter being dependent on the Grand Lodge of England, the former probably already independent, but, if owing any allegiance, adhering to the Grand Lodge of Ireland.

The inquiry established that in England as in Ireland there were but two degrees recognized by the Grand Lodge, the Orange and the Purple. One solitary instance of a "Black Lodge" came to light. In London there had existed a short time previously a gathering known as the Britannic Society. Only Orangemen were eligible as members; it administered an oath, had secret methods of recognition, and kept up a correspondence with Ireland where there were many more Lodges of the same kind. This body, in the words of one witness, "continued orders [degrees] which the Orange society did not recognize." It was stated to have become extinct before the date of the inquiry.

The findings of the Parliamentary Committee of 1835 were condemnatory of the Orange Society, and the Government was advised to dissolve it. The Grand Lodges in both England and Ireland forestalled any legislation by declaring the Order dissolved, and it remained suspended from 1836 to 1847, when it was revived, and has flourished to this day in Great Britain and the Dominions overseas.

This period of suspension when there was no Grand Lodge exercising functions in Great Britain did not in many cases prevent the local Lodges in Ireland from continuing their existence clandestinely. They as well as the spirit of the Order were very much alive at the resurrection of 1847.

By one of those fatalities which have been so common in the history of Ireland the resuscitation of the Grand Orange Lodge synchronized more or less with the Young Ireland rising of 1848, and the latter event must have given an impetus to the former; for the support of a body of men oath-bound to loyalty to the Crown cannot but have been welcomed by the authorities. Nor since 1848 has there been any lack of other National movements in Ireland to provide the Orangemen with antagonists and a justification for continued existence. The inauguration of every movement, whether constitutional or otherwise, for Irish autonomy has been accompanied with an increase in the numbers and influence of the Orange Body, and that influence has always been exercised against making any change in the best of all possible Constitutions. Such activities have of course resulted in fostering other secret societies established as a counterpoise; and both sides thrive as opposition grows stronger, for action and reaction follow the same law in politics as in mechanics.

While awaiting a new *Œdipus* to solve the riddle of Irish disunion, the Orange Order continues to flourish not only in the British Isles but in some of the British Dominions.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE FENIANS OR IRISH REPUBLICAN BROTHERHOOD

IN the 'forties of the last century the left or advanced wing of the Irish political party working for the repeal of the Union with England became known as Young Ireland. On the 15th October, 1842, it published the first number of a journal, the *Nation*, under the editorship of Charles Gavan Duffy, assisted by Thomas Osborne Davis and other brilliant writers, which has been famous ever since, not only as the organ of the political movement but also as having produced some of the finest Anglo-Irish poetry that has ever been written. As a party Young Ireland had genius, enthusiasm, birth, position, and the courage of its convictions; but its efforts to remould the State were expended in writing and oratory, poetry instead of pikes, declamations instead of drilling, and consequently, its final despairing effort to raise a rebellion in the year 1848 was as crudely conceived as easily suppressed.

Young Ireland, though it had formed clubs all over Ireland, was no secret society, and the only reason why it has to be mentioned here is that it won the support of most of the young and patriotic Irish of every class, amongst others of two men who were later responsible for establishing the much more dangerous and powerful instrument of revolt, the Irish Republican Brotherhood or Fenian Society.

Towards the close of 1848 two Young Irelanders, John O'Mahony and James Stephens, found themselves exiles in Paris as a result of the parts they had taken in the unsuccessful rebellion. The former was a member of one of the oldest Irish families in Munster, the latter came of unnoteworthy Kilkenny folk, but difference in class did not

prevent the two from becoming friends and fellow-conspirators. In Paris they lived together for several years, Stephens employed as a journalist, O'Mahony as a teacher, and plotting all the time how they could best reverse the result of the unfortunate year '48.

In 1853 the friends decided that the time for action had come, and that preparations for an Irish revolution should be set on foot on both sides of the Atlantic; so O'Mahony departed for New York, and Stephens for Dublin. They seem to have agreed to work in double harness, but apparently each was free to make what use he could of the means he found at his disposal; the connecting bond was the determination to bring about a revolution in Ireland.

O'Mahony's early days in New York can be told very briefly. He got in touch with Irish exiles there, and discussed with them the situation in Ireland; it is probable, too, that he became connected with a body of Irishmen known as the Emmett Monument Association,¹ promising material as a nucleus for subsequent plots in favour of Irish freedom, but this is by no means certain. His important achievement was that he made the expatriated Irish in the States acquainted with the name of Stephens and with what he had gone to Ireland prepared to do. Towards the close of 1857 a messenger was sent to Stephens from those who were plotting in New York to urge him to launch

¹ In a most unreliable book, *The Secret History of the Fenian Conspiracy*, by John Rutherford, London, 1877, to this association is attributed an organization in every respect similar to what the Fenian Society adopted on its formation in 1858. The unlikelihood of the statement is increased to absurdity, when the author goes on to say that O'Mahony found this organization in existence on his arrival in America, had he been credited with founding such an organization, his close association with Stephens would make the story seem more plausible, for the two friends may well have been in agreement about the form their conspiracy was to take, but it would have been impossible for Stephens to establish in Ireland a very complicated system of which he had had no personal experience. That is, however, the miracle with which Mr. Rutherford credits him. The Emmett Monument Association was certainly secret and oath-bound, and consisted of men who wished to bring about a revolution in Ireland. Pigott, in his *Recollections*, says that as early as 1849 a secret revolutionary society existed in Dublin of which F. C. Luby and others, who later became prominent Fenians, were members, and that this Irish body was affiliated to an Irish-American organization set on foot just about the same time, the military branch of which later became known as the Emmett Monument Association. So accounts differ!

a conspiracy to win Irish independence, but, according to John O'Leary,¹ this communication did not come from any one society, though he credits the Emmett Monument Association with having been the precursor of the Fenian Brotherhood in America. Stephens replied demanding uncontrolled power and a subvention of money. To this demand the New York committee agreed; some money, a mere £90, was sent; and Stephens who had already been preparing his ground at once set about establishing his new secret society.²

On the 17th March, 1858, Stephens swore in his first recruit, T. C. Luby, who thereupon administered the same oath to his leader. Thus came into existence the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood, popularly known as the Fenian Brotherhood.³

Recruiting began at once, and Circles were rapidly formed. Stephens and his trusted friends travelled through Leinster and Munster spreading the society. Ulster at first remained untouched, and Connaught was unapproachable, because the old Ribbon Societies still had a hold on that province and desired to have no rivals.

In the conspiracy, Stephens was the Chief Organizer of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and was known as the C.O.I.R.B. He was assisted in deliberation, if he so pleased, by four Vice-Organizers, one for each of the Irish provinces, who were known as the Vs. Each V had to organize his province, which he did by picking for each district or place where it was a desirable to form a Circle a suitable man as Centre, known as the A or Colonel. The A, having taken the oath of the society and agreed to act as Centre, was instructed to choose and swear in nine Bs to act as his Captains. Similarly each B had to select nine Cs as his Sergeants; while each C recruited nine Ds or Privates.

¹ *Recollections of Fenians and Fenianism*, 1896.

² For this see O'Leary, *Op. cit.* This author's account of the conspiracy has been followed in preference to any other, whenever possible.

³ The name Fenian was O'Mahony's choice and not bestowed till 1859. In its early days the society was known to the members as, "Our Body," "Our Movement," "The Organization," "The Brotherhood." Stephens usually spoke of it as the "Army" or the "Irish Revolutionary (or Republican) Brotherhood."

“In theory an A should only be known to his Bs; a B to his Cs; and a C to his Ds; but this rule was often violated”¹. It was originally intended that no Circle should contain more than eight hundred and twenty men, but in practice the numbers were often twice as many.

When a new recruit was to be initiated, he was told to attend at a certain time with the rest of the squad he was to join. He was then handed over to an officer with the words: “Here is *a* friend.” The officer took him to some place where they could not be overheard, questioned him about his principles, and administered the oath. He then brought him back to the squad, and introduced him as: “This is *my* friend.” If the oath had not been administered, he brought him back and left him with the others, saying: “This is *your* friend.”

The original form of test or oath in Ireland was:

“I, A. B., do solemnly swear in the presence of Almighty God, that I will do my utmost at every risk, while life lasts, to make Ireland an independent democratic Republic; that I will yield implicit obedience, in all things not contrary to the law of God, to the commands of my superior officers; and that I shall preserve inviolable secrecy regarding all the transactions of this secret society that may be confided to me. So help me God. Amen!”

This test was very soon simplified and abbreviated:

“I, A. B., in the presence of Almighty God, do solemnly swear allegiance to the Irish Republic, now virtually established; and that I will do my very utmost, at every risk, while life lasts, to defend its independence and integrity; and, finally, that I will yield implicit obedience in all things, not contrary to the laws of God, to the commands of my superior officers. So help me God. Amen!”

Circles were also formed in the British Army. In such a case regimental rank was respected. The senior non-commissioned officer belonging to the Brotherhood became the A, and so on. The I.R.B. attached great importance

¹ O’Leary, *Op. cit.*

not only to forming such Circles in the regiments, but also to inducing seasoned soldiers to desert, for the purpose of acting as drill-instructors, etc.¹

About the numbers who joined the society it would be futile to speculate. Stephens, speaking in New York in 1866, claimed 200,000 in Ireland alone, but his habit of constantly exaggerating was notorious. To the forces available in Ireland had to be added those in England, where the society had been introduced at an early date, and was powerful in London, Lancashire, Glasgow, Sheffield, and wherever Irish labourers might congregate. In Canada, also, it soon got a footing, finding that the ground had been prepared for it by another secret society, an offshoot of Ribbonism, known as the Hibernian Society, which had been established there some years previously by the Roman Catholic Irish emigrants as a means of countering the aggressive Orange Order. Australia, too, had its Fenians. None of the bodies outside Ireland was, however, responsible to Stephens, but each managed its own concerns and, when necessary, communicated with America direct.

The Fenian movement, whatever the reason, did not attract the intelligentsia and well-to-do middle classes in Ireland. Its supporters were mainly peasantry, shop-assistants, artizans. While a certain amount of drilling was done, the provision of arms for the members was never undertaken on anything approaching an adequate scale, largely owing, no doubt, to lack of funds, and in consequence the final attempt at revolt in 1867 never had a chance of succeeding.

In 1858 Stephens, having established the society in Ireland, went to America, when the American Fenian Brotherhood was formed. Its name was supplied by John O'Mahony, who was a profound Gaelic scholar, and he took it from the ancient Irish national militia known as the Fiana-h-Erionn from Fionn MacCumhail their commander.

The American society was established on a more democratic basis. John O'Mahony was appointed Head Centre

¹ There was also a project of importing drill-instructors from America.

for North America, an office corresponding to that of Chief Organizer in Ireland, and he had the right of appointing two treasurers and secretaries to carry on the business affairs of the order; but, apart from this, most of the officers in the Centres were elected by vote. The American oath, too, differed from the Irish and ran:¹

“I solemnly pledge my oath as a Christian and an Irishman, that I will labour with earnest zeal for the liberation of Ireland from the yoke of England, and for the establishment of a free and independent Government on Irish soil; that I will implicitly obey the commands of my superior officers in the Fenian Brotherhood, in all things pertaining to my duties as a member thereof; that I will do my best to promote feelings of love, harmony, and kindly forbearance among all Irishmen; and that I will foster, defend and propagate the aforesaid Fenian Brotherhood to the utmost of my power.”²

In 1863 at a convention held in Chicago the American society was remodelled, and the position of every officer from the highest to the lowest was made subject to yearly election. Other changes were made whereby the Brotherhood claimed to have ceased to be a secret society and to have become an open movement, which claim was not conceded by its opponents, among whom were some American Roman-Catholic prelates. It may be added that in Ireland the Roman-Catholic Church as a body was greatly opposed to the Fenian movement.

This hostility of the Priesthood was impartially directed against all secret oath-bound societies; but it was accused by the Fenians of unduly favouring other societies equally secret that had sprung from the Ribbonmen. The Irish Republican Brotherhood of course did not follow the

¹ The mildness of the language used in all these Fenian oaths is noteworthy. The absence of blood-curdling penalties has not prevented the Order's being charged with organized assassination. Undoubtedly informers were murdered on several occasions; but such deeds were never authorized by any leader, says O'Leary.

² Richard Pigott, *Personal Recollections of an Irish National Journalist*, Dublin, 1882. O'Leary, *Op. cit.*, has commended this book for the accuracy of the information it contains about the Fenian movement.

example of America, but continued to be secret in the strictest sense, as did its offshoots in England, Canada, and elsewhere.

Broadly speaking, the activities of the American society were to be directed towards two objects, providing funds and training the immigrant Irish as soldiers, while the Irish society prepared the ground at home for a revolution. The second of the American projects was much better realized than the first, for the Irish joined the State militias in droves; and when the American Civil War broke out in 1861, it has been calculated that 200,000 Irish soldiers took part in the struggle. This same war prevented much money from being sent to Ireland. The total sum that reached the hands of the executive there from America during the period 1858-67 was some £25,000¹, ludicrously inadequate for the work of recruiting to say nothing of arming the levies. In fact, so pressed were Stephens and his fellow-conspirators for funds that in November, 1863, they started a newspaper, the *Irish People*, as the organ of Fenianism and a means of replenishing the war-chest. The paper, however, did not pay. It was finally suppressed in September, 1865, when the leaders of the conspiracy were arrested. As an instrument of propaganda its main effect had probably been to make the British Government keep a sharper eye on the Brotherhood, which had already become the object of close attention from the same quarter.

The suspicions of the Government had been aroused as early as December, 1858, when a complete Centre of young men was arrested in County Cork for illegal drilling, arming, and so forth. One of the prisoners was found guilty and sentenced to ten years' penal servitude, but afterwards set free on his associates' agreeing to plead guilty when brought to their trials. Though the authorities had learnt very little about the new movement from this occurrence, they had been made uneasy enough to issue a proclamation offering a reward of £100 for the conviction of any person guilty of administering an oath in any illegal secret society, or £50 for securing conviction on the charge of being a

¹ These are John O'Leary's figures.

member of such a society. Their feelings of uneasiness must have been increased in 1859 by reports received from America that a "secret envoy" from Ireland had landed in New York and received a public welcome, hailed by brass bands and floods of oratory hostile to England. What was his mysterious mission? The British Government naturally took steps to get better information about what was brewing; there is no doubt that their spies were soon busily at work within the ranks of the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

At the close of 1860 O'Mahony paid a visit to Ireland, and disagreements arose between him and Stephens about the management of the conspiracy. Stephens returned the visit in 1864. On this occasion he found the American Fenians totally misinformed about the true state of Ireland's unpreparedness to rise, and chafing at the inaction of the C.O.I. R.B.; while O'Mahony had no comfort to offer but merely the advice that was tantamount to a command: "Rebel or disband!" The upshot of the visit was a complete estrangement between the leaders on either side of the Atlantic. Stephens returned to Ireland determined to bring about a rising, despite his better judgment.

All things considered, the conspiracy had up till then progressed as well as could have been expected. Edward Duffy had been made V for Connaught and had induced the Ribbon Societies in that province to give some sort of support to the new movement, which had also spread into Ulster. The Brotherhood, however, was still hampered by lack of funds and the opposition of the Roman-Catholic Church. Drilling went on continuously, but little or nothing had been done in the way of providing arms. As an outlet to their suppressed energies, when occasion offered, the Brotherhood demonstrated its hostility to England in the most public manner.

The Government observed these demonstrations, kept its spies well employed, and bided its time.

In July, 1865, an emissary from O'Mahony to Stephens dropped in Kingstown, near Dublin, some compromising documents which were picked up and handed over to the authorities. This fresh evidence, coupled with that already in-

its possession, enabled the Government to lay its plans for a simultaneous arrest of the leaders of the movement in Ireland, and this was carried out on the 14th September. Stephens, lying concealed in disguise, escaped arrest till 11th November, when he, too, was captured. He did not remain long in custody, for on the night of the 24th November he escaped from his prison in Dublin, having been assisted by a warder who was sworn of the Brotherhood. He eventually reached America by way of France some months later. The other prisoners were tried and sentenced to long terms of penal servitude.

In February, 1866, the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended for Ireland, and hundreds of suspects arrested. A general search for concealed arms was carried on throughout the country, and the bulk of those that had been acquired for the Brotherhood were seized. In such circumstances to hazard a rising was madness, but this was actually attempted at the beginning of 1867, on the urging of some Irish-American officers who had been enlisted and sent over by Stephens for this purpose. The campaign began in February in England with a futile attempt to seize Chester Castle, where a large supply of arms was stored. On Shrove Tuesday, the 5th March, the day fixed for the revolt, isolated and abortive attempts at a rising took place in Ireland, all of which were hopeless from the very outset. The insurgents felt, says a contemporary writer,¹ "that any disaster would be preferable to the disgrace of defeat involved in submission without striking a blow. They rose then at the command of their leaders to save their honour, knowing that their enterprise was foredoomed to inevitable disaster." The rising, such as it was, confined its violence to struggles with the armed forces of the Crown; no civilian was subjected to plunder or outrage.

Several hundreds of the participants in this rebellion were subsequently found guilty of treason and sentenced to death or penal servitude; the major penalty was in every case commuted.

With this fiasco ended for some years the outward and

¹ Pigott, *Op. cit.*

visible signs of the existence of the I.R.B. in Ireland. It is doubtful if a central organization survived, though the Brotherhood itself was certainly kept alive.

Two events happened in England to keep the name of Fenian from being forgotten with the suppression of the Irish unrest. In September, 1867, a band of Fenians rescued one of their leaders from a prison-van in Manchester; a policeman was killed in the *mêlée*, and three men, subsequently hanged for the deed, have been known since then as the "Manchester Martyrs." Then on the 13th December an attempt to blow down the wall of Clerkenwell Gaol to rescue another Fenian prisoner caused a ghastly loss of life.

This was the last notable exploit of the Brotherhood in the British Isles, for the time being.

In America, however, the society continued to be active. When Stephens arrived in New York in May, 1866, he found a different state of affairs. At a convention held in Philadelphia in October, 1865, great changes had been made in the society. Supreme authority had been taken from the Head Centre, and was now vested in a Senate. The former Head Centre was now known as the President, and O'Mahony had been elected to this office. In January, 1866, a split took place in the society; one portion re-adopted the Chicago constitution of 1863, and chose O'Mahony Head Centre; the other section chose Colonel Roberts as its President. This split prevented the scheme to supply arms and money for the projected rising in Ireland from becoming really effective.

In April, 1866, the O'Mahony wing made a half-hearted raid on Campo Bello Island, New Brunswick, but the small force despatched was not able to effect a landing. In May the Roberts wing, not to be outdone, made a raid into Canada, near the city of Buffalo, and some bloodshed occurred. The only result of this raid was the arrest, trial and conviction of a number of Canadian Fenians for complicity. Some of these, including a priest, Father McMahan, were sentenced to death, but this penalty was commuted.

In the autumn of 1866 O'Mahony resigned his post as Head Centre, and was succeeded by Stephens. Since the-

latter's arrival in America he had been expressing his determination to return to Ireland to lead the insurrection there; but apparently he was convinced in his own mind of the hopelessness of the project; for he made no effort to leave America. This disgusted his followers, and towards the end of the year he was deposed from his position. Then, indeed, he left America, but made his way to France, not Ireland, leaving his friends to meet the disaster they had chosen in preference to the disgrace of a tame submission; thus was his chapter closed.

The Fenian Society, having split into several wings, continued to exist in America. In May, 1870, one of these wings undertook another raid into Canada with some 2,000 men, which was easily repulsed. By this time the British Government had perfected a system of espionage within the American Brotherhood, and was well informed in advance of every move that was contemplated.

An Englishman, Thomas Beach, who had assumed the name of Henri Le Caron, was *facile princeps* in this kind of service. In the book which he published later describing his exploits¹ will be found the most authentic account of what became the next most important event in the Fenian movement, the formation of the Clan-na-Gael:

“Away back towards the end of the 'sixties, there came into existence one of those temporal societies, an off-shoot of the permanent conspiracy, known under the name of ‘Knights of the Inner Circle,’ which was joined by many Irish conspirators, myself among the number. With its members there became associated, in the latter end of 1869, some three hundred members of the ‘Brian Boru’ Circle of the Fenian Brotherhood in New York City, who . . . seceded from their original body; and by these men, acting in concert with others under the name of ‘United Irishmen,’ what were really the first camps of the Clan-na-Gael were founded.”

Le Caron goes on to say that this association had for its object the same ideal which governed all Irish con-

¹ *Twenty-five Years in the Secret Service.*

spiracies in America—the freeing of Ireland by armed force from English domination. It was to differ from the others in being of an essentially secret character.

It was not till 1873 that the new movement became in any way general, when by merging almost all other societies in itself the United Brotherhood established Camps in all the leading centres of the United States.

“Secrecy was the text preached in every direction. Every member was bound by the most solemn of oaths to keep secret all knowledge of the order and its proceedings which might come to him, under penalty of death. A Masonic form of ritual was adopted; grips, pass-words, signs, and terrorising penalties were decided upon. . . .

“The ritual and forms of initiation were framed entirely upon Masonic precedent. . . . One great feature of similarity exists between the two ceremonies. In both the candidate is impressed with a deep sense of awe and respect, to learn subsequently that nothing very mysterious or wonderful is to come within his knowledge.”¹

The Clan was originally known as the United Brotherhood. One of its peculiarities was to make use of a simple letter-cipher in its written transactions, using the next letter instead of the one really meant; thus Ireland was referred to as Jsfmboe, the United Brotherhood itself as the V.C., and the I.R.B. as the S.C.

The original oath taken on initiation was as follows²:

“I, A. B., do solemnly and sincerely swear in the presence of Almighty God, that I will labour while life is left to me to establish and defend a republican form of government in J—. That I will never reveal the secrets of this organization to any person or persons not entitled to know them. That I will obey and comply with the constitution and laws of the V. C. and promptly and faithfully execute all constitutional orders coming to me from the proper authorities to the best of my ability. That I will foster a spirit of unity, nationality, and brotherly love among the friends of J—.

¹ Le Caron, *Op. cit.* What purports to be a Clan-na-Gael ritual is printed in *The Secret Societies of Ireland*, by H. B. C. Pollard, 1922. This book has a certain value for such facts as came within the author's own experience.

² *Ibid.*

I furthermore swear that I do not belong to any other J—— revolutionary society antagonistic to this organization, and that I will not become a member of such a society while connected with the V. C.; and finally I swear that I take this obligation without mental reservation and that any violation hereof is infamous and merits the severest punishment. So help me God.”

The Clan was divided into camps, always referred to as D's. The presiding officer of a D was known as the S.G., Senior Guardian.

In 1883 a split took place in the Clan, the seceding body becoming known as the U.S., governed by a directorate of three called the “Triangle.”¹ Whether united or divided, the Clan since its formation has exercised a dominating influence in all schemes evolved in America for effecting revolution in Ireland. The avowed champion of physical force in revolution, it was content to refrain from interference with the progress of the Land League and Home Rule movements. A circular issued in December, 1885, by the Clan executive explains the psychology of this conduct.²

“The achievement of a National Parliament gives us a footing upon Irish soil; it gives us the agencies and instrumentalities of a Government *de facto* at the very commencement of the Irish struggle. It places the government of the land in the hands of our friends and brothers. It removes the Castle's rings, and gives us what we may well express as the plant of an armed revolution.”

The aims of the Clan-na-Gael to-day are probably the same as when this circular was issued fifty years ago.

To return to the Irish branch of the Republican Brotherhood: it has undoubtedly continued to exist to the present day.

For some years after 1867 it gave few signs of life, for Parnell's Home Rule movement and Davitt's Land League

¹ Pollard, *Op. cit.*

² Quoted by Pollard, *Op. cit.*

were the matters that occupied Irishmen's minds most in the 'eighties. Isolated incidents occurred from time to time, however, to show that the I.R.B. was still in the land.

Pigott in his *Recollections* tells a curious story of a visit paid him by a deputation from the Dublin branch of the I.R.B. in 1880, who ordered him to change the policy of his newspaper *The Irishman*, on penalty of death. He refused, and nothing happened.

A more dubious instance is the evidence given in a criminal trial in 1882 by a Moonlighter who turned Queen's Evidence. He swore that money was received from Dublin for organizing outrages, and that an oath had been administered to his associates in the terms: "I swear to be true and faithful to the Irish Republic, to obey my superiors, and to take up arms when required. Death to the traitor. So help me God."¹

However, it may be stated with a fair degree of certainty, that up to the beginning of the present century the I.R.B. as a body in Ireland, either from necessity or choice, had made up its mind to remain passive, and let the Irish Parliamentary Party do the best it could to secure a National Government by constitutional methods.

The I.R.B. was, moreover, not responsible for the secret society of the Invincibles, founded in December, 1881,² by P. J. Tynan, known as "Number One." This was the body which perpetrated the Phoenix Park murders in May, 1882.

The resuscitation of the I.R.B. as an active party in the State was to spring from a most unexpected cause. In 1899, Arthur Griffiths, a Welshman resident in Dublin, established his paper *The United Irishman*, an organ in which he proceeded to attack the proceedings of the Nationalist Parliamentary Party and to advocate a scheme of passive resistance which would make the administration of Ireland by England impossible. So arose the famous Sinn Fein idea, which, however, did not actually become the war-cry of a definite political party until 1905. Then what seemed of

¹ Pollard, *Op. cit.*

² The date is taken from Pollard, *Op. cit.*

all things the most unexpected happened. The party of passive resistance, Sinn Fein¹, saw its policy adopted by the I.R.B. and the Clan-na-Gacl. The spokesman of the latter announced:

“It is because Ireland is to-day unable to overcome England on the battlefield we preach the Sinn Fein Policy.”²

It is not the purpose of this book to deal with events that must still be fresh in men’s minds, and were but the early scenes in a drama the last act of which has not yet been played; but to round off the story it is necessary to stress the reminder that the Irish Rebellion of Easter Week, 1916, was an I.R.B. or Irish Republican Army undertaking. This, with a surprising unanimity of misinformed journalism, was broadcast all over the world as a Sinn Fein Rebellion. A little known movement suddenly became famous. With its fame Sinn Fein accepted new responsibilities, including the abandonment of the policy of passive resistance and the consequent adherence of the I.R.B. In October, 1917, Eamonn de Valera was elected its President instead of Griffiths. From a passive-resistance body it blossomed into one whose promulgated constitution contained the clauses:

“Sinn Fein aims at securing the International recognition of Ireland as an independent Irish Republic.

“This object shall be attained through the Sinn Fein Organization which shall . . . make use of any and every means to render impotent the power of England to hold Ireland in subjection by military force or otherwise.”

It would seem as if the Oath of Allegiance included in the 1922 treaty were now, some ten years later, to be relegated to the limbo of this “otherwise.”

¹ It seems hardly necessary to say that these Irish words mean “We ourselves,” and are usually translated as “Ourselves alone.”

² R. M. Henry, *The Evolution of Sinn Fein*.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE KU KLUX KLAN

THE original Ku Klux Klan was formed at Nashville, Tennessee, by a group of Confederate army officers in the year 1867. The South had been beaten in the Civil War, the slaves had been freed, and in many of the southern States social and economic chaos had ensued.

The whites were in a very difficult position. Not only had the slaves been freed, but they had been granted complete suffrage; the consequence was that in many of the States a portion of the population that but a few years before had no rights of any kind now formed a majority of the electorate, was in a position to assert its power, and not unnaturally disposed to make that power be felt by those who had hitherto been the ruling caste. Some means of self-defence against this state of things had to be found, and since the law of the land would grant none, the southern whites had to grasp at extra-constitutional means. Hence arose the secret society of the Ku Klux Klan, whose avowed object was, by intimidation and violence, if necessary, to restrain the negroes from those excesses against the white population that were only to be expected, nor had been long in becoming manifested.

The first activities of the Klan aimed merely at intimidating the negroes by fantastic costumes, night assemblies, flaming crosses, and high-sounding proclamations, mixed with a little conjuring hocus-pocus to impress the superstitious blacks. But, unfortunately, the campaign did not continue to be so harmless. Southern gentlemen in the uniform of the Klan patrolled the roads, and inflicted lashes upon any negro found on them after an arbitrarily fixe

hour; and even more brutal repressions took place, including lynching.

The name Ku Klux Klan is said to be an attempt to reproduce the noise made by the cocking of an old-fashioned rifle.

This secret society having spread all over the southern States, its continued existence became a menace to Federal Government, which in the year 1871 passed an Act of Congress to suppress it.

It is doubtful if legislation in such a case would have effected much; but conditions were gradually changing. The spirit of revenge and repression had ceased to animate the north, and the federal troops were being withdrawn from the south. The southern States by various electoral devices managed once more to disenfranchise the negro. The whites again became dominant economically, electorally and socially. With the passing of the former state of things went the need for such an instrument of coercion as the Ku Klux Klan, and it was finally declared dissolved by its head, General Forrest.

From the report of the committee appointed by Congress in 1871 to take evidence concerning the Ku Klux Klan or "Invisible Empire of the South" we learn that the organization was secret. The lodges were known as "Dens" whose presiding officer was a "Cyclops." The following oath was taken by every initiate:

"I, A. B., of my own free will and accord, and in the presence of Almighty God, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will never reveal to anyone not a member of the —¹ by any intimation, sign, symbol, word or act, or in any other manner whatever, any of the secrets, signs, grips, pass-words, mysteries or purposes of the —, or that I am a member of the same, or that I know of anyone who is a member, and that I will abide by the prescript and edicts of the —. So help me God."

A different form of oath was given by one of the witnesses examined by the Congress Committee in 1871:²

¹ The name Ku Klux Klan was left blank in the constitutions, and never written.

² Report, Washington, 1872, from which this and other information is taken.

"I, A. B., before the Immaculate Judge of heaven and earth, and upon the Holy Evangelists of Almighty God, do of my own free will and accord subscribe to the following sacredly binding obligation: We are on the side of justice, humanity, and constitutional liberty, as bequeathed to us in its purity by our forefathers. We oppose and reject the principles of the Radical Party. We pledge mutual aid to each other in sickness, distress, and pecuniary embarrassment. Female friends, widows and their households, shall ever be special objects of our regard and protection. Any member divulging or causing to be divulged any of the foregoing obligations, shall meet the fearful penalty and traitor's doom, which is Death! Death! Death!"

It would seem from these widely differing oaths that no such thing as uniformity of ritual existed in the first Klan. It is even possible that as much divergence may have existed in the secret methods of recognition; these last were never to be written, but always communicated orally.

Other noteworthy rules of the order were:

"Any member may be expelled from the — by the majority vote of the officers and Ghouls of the den to which he belongs; and if after expulsion such member shall assume any of the duties, regalia, or insignia of the —, or in any way claim to be a member of the same, he shall be severely punished. His obligation of secrecy shall be as binding upon him after expulsion as before, and for any revelation made by him thereafter he shall be held accountable in the same manner as if he were then a member.

"Any member who shall reveal or betray the secrets or purposes of this — shall suffer the extreme penalty of the law.

"It shall be the duty of the Grand Ensign to take charge of the grand banner of the —, to preserve it sacredly, and protect it carefully, and to bear it on all occasions of parade or ceremony, and on such other occasions as the Grand Cyclops may direct it to be flung to the *night breeze*."

This last sentence is obviously in allusion to the usual custom of the Klan, which made its punitive expeditions by night in white, ghost-like costumes, on horseback, and by torch-light.

Thus the "Invisible Empire of the South," founded in 1867, had apparently served its purpose, been dissolved, and could envisage no future existence outside the covers of a historical novel or the mechanical posturing of a Hollywood super-film. Had, indeed, its history come to an end at that point, the condemnation with which all good citizens remembered it would have been tempered by that unreasoning admiration paid by the ordinary man to wild justice, executed in defiance of the law, when the law has not taken into proper account his natural feelings as a man. But the Ku Klux Klan was not to be allowed to rest in its grave.

In the year 1916 the corpse was disinterred. One night a band of thirty-four men set up a fiery cross on a mountain overlooking Atlanta, Georgia, and garbed in white robes and peaked hoods proceeded to enter into solemn obligations to restore the Ku Klux Klan to the glories of its former state. The leader of these crusaders was a former Methodist minister, William J. Simmons, who bore the courtesy title of colonel, and who was then and there elected as head of the newly resurrected Order under the high-sounding designation of Grand Wizard.

A legal charter for the Klan was at once sought and acquired from the supreme court of Fulton County, Georgia. In this application the purposes of the society were stated to be unexceptionable—"to inculcate the sacred principles of chivalry, the development of character, the protection of the home, the chastity of womanhood, and patriotism." Then, as a supplemental and innocent adjunct: "to maintain white supremacy."

With this programme the society began to attract members in Georgia, and spread rapidly into other southern States.

Its most phenomenal increase in strength did not begin, however, till after the termination of the Great War, when it enlarged its programme to include aims which made a greater appeal to men's passions and prejudices than the sacred principles of chivalry or the chastity of womanhood.

The disbandment of the southern negro soldier after 1918 is said to have given the first impetus to the new spirit of

the Ku Klux Klan. That coloured soldier had done his work in France as well and as bravely as his white countrymen and allies; and he had learnt overseas of other things besides war undreamt of in Dixie land, which sent him home the possessor of an increased self-respect and self-confidence, quite unsuited to a *milieu* where they were condemned and distrusted as outrageous self-assurance. The resulting unfortunate situation is capably summed up in the words of a well-informed eye-witness:¹

“Many of the negroes were sent to France, and their experience in that country was such as to make them discontented with their social inferiority in their American homes. The French, having a point of view towards black soldiers and the black races generally which is totally different from the American point of view, treated the negro soldiers on the same basis as everyone else, and gave them a feeling about their status in the world which, when they returned to their homes in the southern States, manifested itself in a disturbing way. There are places in the southern States where the negroes outnumber the whites sometimes by as many as three or four to one. It can be realized readily that negro soldiers, coming back from an experience in France where they were treated as equals, brought with them a spirit which disturbed the whites in those communities where the negro population is most dense.”

In such districts the newly-revived Ku Klux Klan was a ready and natural means of reinforcing white supremacy; and as such it was used. But the Klan had spread to other States, where by reason of his insignificant numbers the negro constitutes no problem; and in these the society proved itself easily adaptable to the ends of other racial and religious prejudices.

In the United States there exists, perhaps not unnaturally, a strong feeling against allowing any outside power to interfere in American concerns. This feeling it was that led to the agitation against the League of Nations in the electoral campaign of 1920, which is said to have encouraged

¹ *The Observer*, 9th July, 1922.

the revival of the Ku Klux Klan; and the same feeling is displayed in periodical, hysterical outbursts against the Roman-Catholic Church, the Jews and alien immigrants generally.

The Ku Klux Klan set itself to acquire merit by furthering suspicion of and agitation against all these dangers, so-called. In so acting it was pandering to popular prejudices and was sure of a large and sympathetic audience; anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic propaganda were rife; and the way was also being prepared for the law passed by Congress in 1921 which restricted the immigration of certain aliens; thus in coming forward as the champion of such policies the Klan was certain of finding a good recruiting-ground.

Nor did it fail in its object. Its numbers began to increase by hundreds daily. At one semi-public conclave of the Klan held at night, in January, 1921, within the State Fair grounds at Alabama, no fewer than 500 novices were admitted simultaneously. The grounds were filled with the white-robed and hooded figures of the Klansmen, illuminated by two huge searchlights for the edification of crowds of the uninitiated and newspaper correspondents, who thronged the neighbouring roofs at a distance that was out of earshot, but close enough to reveal the ceremony in all its solemn make-believe.

The attention which this piece of theatrical pageantry received in the world's Press was but the beginning of a wider and less desirable publicity for the "Supreme Knighthood of the Invisible Empire." Within a few months reports of wild doings from Texas displayed the Klan busied there in enforcing a code of morals of its own devising by such methods of persuasion as tarring and feathering, branding with acid, flogging, mutilation, and enforced banishment. In November, 1922, it was stated in the United States Senate that the number of such outrages perpetrated in the name of the Klan had, in Texas alone, during the past twelve months, amounted to over five hundred. Nor were other States left immune by this plague. In Maryland the Klan not only appointed itself the guardian

of morals by compelling unwed couples living together to submit to marriage or a whipping, but also declared open war against Jews and Roman Catholics. The city of New York itself was invaded. The Mayor ordered the Police Commissioner to expel all members of the Klan, which was obviously impossible of execution but indicates public disapprobation, yet within a few weeks of the issuing of this ukase of proscription a Klansman in full regalia appeared in one of the churches of a Sunday, and interrupted the service in order to read a declaration in the following terms:

“This Order was called into existence to meet one of the greatest needs of the times. Among its purposes is to see that the trade of the country is not controlled by Jews, and the educational institutions in the country not controlled by Catholicism. It is also the purpose of the Ku Klux Klan to revive the chivalry of the people, and to combat those who would tear down our institutions. We are opposed to the bootlegger, and we are organised to maintain supremacy of the white race, and to keep Protestantism in the ascendancy.”

By December, 1922, the membership of the Klan was stated by those high in its councils to be approaching one million.

That very month it received some further publicity from two separate directions. The first came from the “Imperial Giant,” Edward Young Clarke, who announced that he was about to invade Great Britain in order to establish the Klan there, after which he would proceed to France and Italy with a like purpose; he was careful to explain that, in order to facilitate this good work, the Klan had withdrawn its ban against Roman Catholics, and hoped that all the white races would unite together under its banner to combat the numerically superior coloured races. The touching naïveté with which this crusade was announced to an Empire whose coloured subjects considerably outnumber its white was happily not further emphasized by attempted action. The invasion never took place. That it would have been barren of results satisfactory to the Klan is certain, for just then attention was directed to its activities by an event now to be recorded.

This was a particularly gruesome murder that took place at Mer Rouge, Louisiana, when the two victims, a cotton-planter and a mechanic who had in some way made themselves obnoxious, were horribly tortured before being killed by a force of masked men clad in the regalia of the Klan. Though the governor of the State did all he could to bring the murderers to justice, his efforts were fruitless against the local feeling that supported the Klan. A federal inquiry was held, and proved equally ineffective. This ghastly crime that went unpunished gave added force and weight to that section of the American Press which already for months had been exposing the outrages committed by the "Invisible Empire" in the name of patriotism or morality.

The intensified attacks of the anti-Klan Press were accompanied by rumours that the society would defend its honour in the courts by an action for damages, and that the Imperial Wizard would claim one million dollars against a New York newspaper. Generally speaking, the Klan professed to be rejoicing at the free publicity that had become its portion.

It was soon to receive still more. Within the Klan itself dissensions had broken out, for the "sacred principles of chivalry" did not seem to apply when possession of the funds of the Order was at stake. Law proceedings had been threatened at the beginning of 1922 and went on rumbling for some time, after which a *coup d'état* or bloodless revolution in the Order deposed the Imperial Wizard Simmons, retired him, on pension, with the honorary and empty title of Emperor, and placed a new Imperial Wizard, one Evans, in control of the Klan and—its war-chest.

The new potentate's first act of Wizardry was to announce that he would rekindle Imperial Giant Clarke's fizzled-out torch, and carry the fiery cross of the Klan through Europe; but if this plan was ever intended seriously, it was interrupted by his having to fight a crusade nearer home in the Georgia Superior Court against his predecessor, Simmons, who wished to reassume the Wizardship with its attendant dignities, etc. The ensuing law proceedings

made a smiling public acquainted with the existence of hitherto unheard-of functionaries, such as the Grand Goblin. He, together with the Imperial Giant, the Emperor, and the Imperial Wizard, had a crow to pluck with the Klan, and each with one another, while a jeering audience of the uninitiated listened to unending allegations and revelations, which comprised such an odoriferous buck-basket as seldom can have been brought out for washing in public—embezzlements amounting to a million dollars, warrants issued for defaulting officials, comfortable salaries drawn by those who were for the time being chiefs supreme in the Invisible Empire, such were the manifest fruits of the Klan's efforts towards "development of character."

The subsequent history of the Klan is of little but local importance. Its invasion of Europe has not yet taken place, but it is said to have found a foothold in Canada as a political body.

It would not be unfitting to close this account of it with the fervent hope that, in the best interests of America herself, an association which attacks its fellow-citizens merely on account of their colour or religion should as speedily as possible be compelled by public opinion to live up to its title and become invisible.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE THUGS

Less than a century ago India was permeated by a secret society known as the Phansegars, or Thugs, who roamed about all over the country in bands, often amounting to several hundred persons, with the sole object of murdering unfortunate travellers for the sake of their property. The usual mode of assassination was strangling, but in an emergency other means were used. The profession was largely hereditary, but the children of victims were often educated to it. In most cases the Thug was incapable of earning a living by any other method than Thuggee, but he usually had some nominal, innocent employment, and his family might often not be aware of the dreadful trade he was plying during his frequent absences from home.

Other people, however, might not be so blind when it was to their advantage. A practising Thug who turned approver confessed: that after a return from a plundering expedition to his village he was always obliged to give the headman a present, "for the whole village knew that I was a Thug, and the Zemindar would have had me put in irons but for these presents. All Thugs thus propitiate their Zemindars. I never told my wife of these murders or of my being a Thug; we do not tell our wives lest they discover the secret to others."¹

That this criminal was telling no more than the truth is borne out by the report of a British officer made in 1838.²

"To conclude, there seems no doubt but that this horrid crime has been fostered by nearly all classes in the com-

¹ W. H. Sleeman, *Report on the Depredations committed by the Thug Gangs of Upper and Central India*. Calcutta, 1840.

² Sleeman, *ut sup.*

munity—the landholders, the native officers of our courts, the police and village authorities—all I think have been more or less guilty; my meaning is not, of course, that every member of these classes, but that individuals varying in number in each class were concerned. The petty police have in many instances been *practising Thugs*; and the chowkedars, or village watchmen, frequently so. It is much to be feared that men so respectable in position as to make it seem almost incredible that they should give protection to such criminals have in fact done so.”

The most extraordinary aspect of Thuggee was its ability to bind Hindu and Moslem together. To quote from a classic on the subject ¹:

“Strange, too, that Hindu and Moslem of every sect and denomination should join with one accord in the superstition from which this horrible trade has arisen. In the Hindu, perhaps, it is not to be wondered at, as the goddess who protects him is one whom all castes regard with reverence and hold in the utmost dread; but as for the Moslem, unless his conduct springs from that terrible doctrine of Fatalism, with which every true believer is thoroughly imbued from the first dawn of his reason, it is difficult to assign a reason for the horrible pursuit he has engaged in.”

Whatever the cause, the infamous profession of Thug made the Hindu and Moslem unite as brothers, and among this fraternity bad faith was seldom known. In their palmy days the Thugs had friends wherever they went; they bribed freely, and had agents everywhere disguised as fakirs or merchants. Some Zemindars feared them, others bullied or blackmailed them, but, on the whole, were faithful to their interests. In some districts so long as the Thugs paid a regular contribution to village and State officials they were not interfered with in practising their profession. This was particularly true of the Nizam of Hyderabad's country. Go where they might they found homes open to them, and a welcome from tribes of whose language even the Hindus

¹ Colonel Meadows Taylor, *Confessions of a Thug*, 1838.

were ignorant; this was because the signs of recognition of the sect were the same all through India.

These facts would seem to place Thuggee clearly within the pale of a true secret society.

The venerable assassin from whom Meadows Taylor obtained many of the Thug secrets asserted that by carefully examining the fireplaces in a deserted encampment it was possible for the initiated to tell whether these had been built by members of the society or not; and no doubt there must have been many other gipsy-like *paterans* to convey similar information; so that one band of followers of Kali might not trespass on the hunting-trail of another, and so forth.¹ There was also a definite form of greeting by which one Thug could make himself known to another all over India; it ran:

“Ali Khan Bhaee Salam!” Salutation to Ali Khan my Brother.

This was answered by: “Salam Aliekoum.”

It need hardly be said that the secrets of the sect were held sacrosanct, and the divulging of them to anyone not a Thug was punished with death by strangling.

They had their secret language or jargon incomprehensible to the uninitiated. Thus Sleeman quotes the evidence of a Thug who confessing to a murder told how the victim had become suspicious and said: “You are two suspicious persons! You look like Thugs. Do not come near me!” “Seeing that he had become suspicious, I said to the party in my secret Thug language: ‘Go aside. He suspects you!’”

Thuggee had its own peculiar legend of origin. In the beginning of the world, according to the Hindus, there existed a creating and a destroying Power, both of which were emanations from the Supreme Being; and these two Powers were at constant enmity. The creative Power peopled the earth so fast that the destructive Power could not keep pace by its own efforts, and was forced to resort to all kinds of additional means of accomplishing his object of

¹ Bands would frequently join up on meeting, to make murder easier.

destruction. To assist his efforts his consort Devi, Bhowanee or Kali constructed an image and inspired it with the breath of life. She then assembled a number of her votaries to whom she gave the name of Thugs, and instructed them in the art of Thuggee by destroying before them the image she had made, employing the manner used by Thugs from that day to this. She endowed the Thugs with intelligence and cunning superior to those of other men, and sent them forth to decoy and destroy human beings, dowering them as reward with the plunder from their victims. She bade them be of no concern about the disposal of the dead bodies, which she herself would bury. All things went well with the Thugs for a long time, until one day a gang having committed a murder hid in the bushes afterwards to watch how the goddess would dispose of the body of the victim. Kali thereupon upbraided them for their lack of faith, and declared that in future they should have to dispose of the corpses themselves, which would often lead to their detection and punishment. She gave them, however, in mitigation of the penalty information about certain omens whereby they should direct their operations for the future.

The observation of such omens henceforth formed an important part, if not the most important, of the Thuggee ceremonies.

There was a regular inauguration ceremony for the reception of a novice, which if at all possible took place on the festival of the Dusera, a day particularly sacred to Kali, and the only Hindu festival acknowledged by the Moslem Thugs.

The novice was bathed and dressed in clean clothes that had never been bleached, and then led by the gooroo, or spiritual director, into a room where the leaders of the band of Thugs were seated on a clean white cloth. The gooroo asked them if they were willing to receive the novice as a Thug and a Brother, and on their assenting he was escorted into the open air, when the gooroo raising his hands and eyes to heaven cried: "O Bhowanee, mother of the world, whose votaries we are, receive this thy servant;

vouchsafe to him thy protection; grant to us an omen that may assure us of thy consent!"

All then remained waiting in silence until some omen occurred. If it was a favourable one, all the company cried aloud: "Jey Bhowanee!" Victory to Bhowanee!

The novice was then led back into the room, and a pickaxe, as the holy symbol of his profession, was placed in his right hand on a white handkerchief. He was then directed to raise it as high as his breast and to repeat the words of an oath, raising his left hand in the air and invoking the goddess to whose service he was dedicating himself henceforth. If the candidate was a Moslem, he afterwards repeated the same oath on the Koran. Then a small piece of goor, or consecrated sugar, was given him to eat, and his initiation was complete.

In his oath the candidate Thug seems to have bound himself to be faithful, brave and secret in the exercise of the profession most ancient of all and most acceptable to the goddess; and to attempt to compass the destruction of every human being whom chance or his own ingenuity might cast into his power, with the exception of those who were forbidden to him by the laws or traditions of the sect, and whom he therefore was obliged to hold sacred.

These exceptions formed a very numerous and important series of persons, immune in theory if not in strict practice from the operation of Thuggee. Tradition said that in olden times women were always spared by the Thugs; and even parties of travellers containing women, although in other respects desirable *bunij* (victims), were left unmolested on their account. The patroness of the sect being a woman, the destruction of her sex was considered obnoxious to her and avoided—in theory at all events. Similar theoretical exemption attached to particular classes of mendicants, washermen, dancing-men, musicians, sweepers, oil-men, blacksmiths, carpenters, and maimed or leprous persons.

The Thugs were divided into certain classes, each having special duties. The province of a Sotha was to act as a decoy to induce travellers to join up with the band of Thugs, so that at the first convenient opportunity they might be

strangled and robbed in safety. To the Lūgha was entrusted the task of preparing the *bhil*, or grave, in which the victims were to be concealed after death. The usual procedure was for the Lūghas to go in advance of the party and prepare this grave at a suitable spot, so that the victims could be despatched and interred with the least possible delay and inconvenience. The Shumshea acted as executioner's assistant, and had to distract the attention of the victim at the proper moment, so that the Bhuttote could place the *roomal* (noose) round his neck without hindrance.

The functions of this last class were of course the most important of all, and, before becoming a member of it a further ceremony was required. The young Thug who aspired to become a Bhuttote, or strangler, had to fast from all food but milk for four days, which were spent in making numerous sacrifices to the holy pickaxe, while every chance omen was carefully observed. On the morning of the fifth day a handkerchief was put in his hand; and after he had been bathed and anointed with sweet-smelling oils, he was marked on the forehead with vermilion as a votary of Bhowanee, and declared a Bhuttote. Before he was allowed to strike down his first victim, however, the omens had to be consulted again. If these were favourable, the knot of his handkerchief was untied, a piece of silver put in it, and then handed back to him as a sacred weapon. This handkerchief with a knot in it was used by the Thugs for committing their murders, and it is said that such was their dexterity that the deed never took more than a few seconds, once the knack of breaking a man's neck with the handkerchief had been acquired.

After the new Bhuttote had committed his first murder, at the ensuing religious ceremony of Tupounce, he took his seat on the blanket, untied the knot in the handkerchief, and presented the silver it contained, together with some additional rupees to his gooroo, the while touching his feet in reverence. This constituted the last act of the initiatory ceremonies.

The sacrifice of Tupounce was performed in this way. After a successful murder a quantity of goor, coarse sugar,

was purchased. The chief Thug sat himself on a blanket facing west, and on the blanket before him spread out the goor, the sacred pickaxe, and a piece of silver as an offering. A small hole was made in the ground, and Kali was invoked. A little of the goor was then put into the hole, and water sprinkled upon it and upon the pickaxe. Each of the Thugs present then consumed a piece of the goor and drank some of the water in solemn silence.

Mention has been made of the superstitions of the Thugs about omens. On setting out for an expedition these were always consulted in the following way. The leader took a lota filled with water and suspended it from a string which he held in his mouth, and followed by the rest of the band advanced some distance on the appointed route. Then turning his face in the direction they proposed to take, he placed his left hand on his breast, raised his eyes to heaven, and said: "Mother of the universe! Protectress and patroness of our order! If this expedition be pleasing to thee, vouchsafe us thy help, and give us an omen of thy approbation!" Then everyone waited in silence for the omen. The twittering of a tree-owl or the braying of an ass would be favourable signs; whereas a hare crossing the path was a very bad one. The bark of a jackal was, however, the worst of all omens, and an orthodox Thug would at once have abandoned any enterprise that was heralded by such a presage. To hear a crow call while flying was enough to make a band give up an expedition and return home.

Another class of taboo can be described in a Thug's own words:¹

"We fell in with a Hindu who had with him a cow and a calf. In Thuggee to murder a man with a cow is strictly forbidden, as an act from which no good can come. We had a consultation upon this head—the elder Thugs and the rest determined to thug in this case notwithstanding the cow, for we supposed there was much money to be obtained from him. . . . I strangled the traveller. . . . We all went home, and I fell sick of a fever, which confined me for ten months . . . The Thugs said it was on account of thugging

¹ Sleeman, *Op. cit.*

the man with the cow that I was so afflicted; but I did not entertain this opinion . . . though I do believe that evil will follow the murder of a man with a cow. If there be no cow, it does not signify."

Some Thugs, however, were quite free-thinking about such matters as omens and sacrifices. Sleeman tells of one gang in the Vizagapatam district who were the most "inveterate murderers, sparing neither sex nor age; nor did they pay any respect to those castes which other classes of Thugs thought it a heinous offence to murder. They seldom troubled themselves with omens, and the pickaxe was not held in any veneration; in fact, they were considered by the Arcottees an ill-omened set of Thugs."

Another case reported by Sleeman shows that superstition about omens and taboos could cut both ways. In this instance a gang of Thugs had murdered a party of religious mendicants who were returning home after a successful begging expedition, and were interrupted while burying them. "In great alarm they concealed themselves behind a mound of earth at some distance, leaving the bodies on the ground. The horsemen passed by without stopping, but when the Thugs returned to the grave they found that the dead bodies had disappeared! The approvers, who have been questioned on the subject of the disappearance of the bodies, are unable, or pretend to be so, to account for the circumstance. They admit that the goddess Bhowanee has long since left off disposing of the bodies of their murdered victims, but still desire it to be supposed that as the travellers were religious mendicants the deity to whom they were devoted had probably removed the bodies, adding: that though this interference on the part of the deity would argue a dereliction of duty on their parts, in having put such holy persons to death, yet as they had unlimited authority from Bhowanee herself to commit murder, and the mendicants had through their means obtained a speedy passage to paradise, no sin can possibly attach to them from the commission of the act."

The omens and sacrifices varied according to the actual religion of the Thugs; thus the Moslems killed a goat as a

sacrifice to Bhowanee before setting out on a plundering expedition.

It only remains to be added that the efforts of the British Government in India succeeded in putting an end to Thuggee as a society and as a profession. Though that country still contains many devotees of Bhowanee, they are now unable to pay their tribute to her in such a profitable way to themselves; which is yet another entry to the credit of the British Raj.

CHAPTER XXXVII

CHINESE SECRET SOCIETIES

THE first secret society in China is said to have been founded by three heroes of the period of the Three Kingdoms (A.D. 221-264) who in response to a call for volunteers from the last Han Emperor met on a certain day in a peach orchard, where they burnt incense, sacrificed a black ox and a white horse, and bound themselves by an oath to be faithful unto death. In the subsequent wars one of them, Kuan Yü, was slain, and thirteen centuries later he was deified, under the name of Kuan Kung, as the god of war, and the apotheosis of loyalty to a sworn brother, for which reasons he was adopted as the tutelary deity of all secret societies.¹

“Secret societies in China, as in other countries, have had their origin sometimes in political circumstances, and sometimes in the desire to maintain a craft, propagate a doctrine or to advance some object of philanthropy. In China however, they have long abounded.”²

From the seventeenth century on most of the Chinese secret societies have had political objects and been directed against the Manchu dynasty, which dethroned the Ming dynasty in 1644. The doctrines of a certain seventeenth-century philosopher named Huang Li-Chou gave them a bias against the accepted ideas of the Divine Right of the Emperor ; and the latter ritual of the Hung³ or Triad

¹ T'ang Leang-Li, *The Inner History of the Chinese Revolution*, London, 1930.

² John Kesson, *The Cross and the Dragon*, London, 1854.

³ T'ang says that the name Hung was applied to this society from the name of Chu Hung-Wu, the first Ming Emperor, a national hero. The society has borne many names at different times, San Ho Hui, Triad Society, Tien Ti Hui, Society of Heaven and Earth, and Ko Lao Hui, Society of Brothers and Elders.

Society certainly contained ideas which can only be described as communistic. The early secret societies consisted only of peasants, coolies, and bad characters. Propaganda was carried on by means of travelling troupes of actors who presented plays calculated to rouse the discontent of the masses. The better-class Chinese shunned these societies, and consequently remained for the most part cut off from the revolutionary movements which they later originated; they drew their strength from the people, and they provided their members with present help in time of trouble, irrespective of whether the need for it arose from the misfortune or fault or crime of the brother who claimed their help.

During the reign of the Emperor Khang-he (1669-1722) frequent insurrections took place that were due to secret societies formed with the object of overthrowing the Manchu dynasty, and these were not suppressed without trouble. The Emperor Kien-long (1735-1800) experienced revolts in the southern provinces due to a similar cause; for throughout the domination of the Manchu dynasty it was detested by the Chinese. Some of these political societies were known as the "Red Beards," "White Jackets," "Short Swords," "Society of the Water-lily," and the "Sea and Land Society;" but the most formidable of all was the Pe-lin-kiao or "White Lily Society." In 1774 the last-named organized a rebellion in the province of Chang-tong, the leaders being a certain Wang-lung and a priest named Fan-ui. A high Government official got wind of the plot and sent soldiers to arrest Wang-lung, but "one of the soldiers appointed to this duty happened also to be a Pe-lin-kiao, and gave timely warning to Wang-lung, his chief, of his danger." The conspirator took time by the forelock, attacked first, captured the city of Shoo-chang-hien, and slew its governor who had planned his arrest. Wang-lung then proclaimed himself Emperor, and cost the Emperor Kien-long a great deal of trouble and the expenditure of nearly 100,000 lives before the pretender was defeated and slain. In 1777 the Pe-lin-kiao broke out again, but we promptly put down by an active viceroy.

Under the Emperor Kia-king, who ascended the throne in 1800, a society called the Water-lilies attained a membership approaching a million in five great provinces; and another called the Wonderful Association was discovered in Peking itself. Yet another powerful society with aims hostile to the Manchu dynasty at this period was known as the Tsing-lien-kiao, which was supposed to be the Pe-lin-kiao under a new name. "This society, too, cursed the Emperor. The members of this sect are said to have refrained from animal food, wine, garlic and onions. They took fearful oaths to conceal their secrets from even their nearest relations. They met only at night, and in their meetings are said to have uttered fearful curses." ¹

It was in the time of the Emperor Kia-king (1800-20), too, that there arose in China a secret brotherhood under the name of Th'iën ² Hauw Hoi'h, which being interpreted means "The Family of the Queen of Heaven." It was a so-called triad society, composed of the disaffected of all classes, and aimed at a revolution. This society was rampant in the south of China, and extended its roots into Cochin-China, Siam, and Korea. In the year 1808 stern orders were issued to the magistrates to suppress it; but whatever steps they took were futile, for the society proceeded to become even more active under the new name of Th'iën Ti Hoi'h, meaning "The Brotherhood of Heaven and Earth," sigifying in Chinese the three powers of nature: Heaven, Earth, Family. "The new name was happily chosen, as it had attractions for the rich as for the poor, and also for the literati; and the society grew with inconceivable rapidity. Heaven, earth, and family are the bases of Chinese philosophy and metaphysics, and to the humbler classes the mysterious name signified the equal right of all to participate in whatever the common father Heaven sends down, and the common mother Earth brings forth for all her children." ³

¹ Kesson, *Op. cit.*

² Th'iën has often been written Tong in English, and the society and its successors have frequently been referred to by this name.

³ Kesson, *ut sup.*

This society was also known by the name of San-ho-hoih, as the Hung¹ or Hong-Kia (Flood Family), and by other titles as well. Its headquarters were in the southern provinces of Canton and Fo-kien, whence it spread to Malacca, Java, and wherever the Chinese emigrant might penetrate. Its objects were political, the overthrow of the Manchu and restoration of the Ming dynasty. Its outward manifestations were the violation of the law, tampering with witnesses, and screening malefactors. Its esoteric doctrine was to destroy the fearful contrast between misery and excessive wealth, and to free the world from oppression and misery, ideals only to be achieved by unity, courage and enterprise. Members were therefore encouraged to win new recruits, and to bide their time for a revolt, until the hour when the majority of the people had become oath-bound to the society.

“The members of the Heaven and Earth Brotherhood have many advantages. The Hoi'h has some features in common with European freemasonry. It relieves distressed brethren; and the magical grip and pass-word instantly commend a hungry brother to the hospitality of his wealthier comrade. This enables the Hoi'h to spread itself abroad, and to strike its roots into the most distant provinces of the empire, and at the same time renders it more dangerous to all regular Governments; for the brotherhood makes itself known and felt beyond the bounds proper of China.”² As soon as Chinese immigrants arrived in a foreign territory, the Brotherhood sent envoys to invite them to join the order; if they declined, they were persecuted; but the advantages offered by the society were great enough to render much pressure unnecessary.

When Kesson described the society such as it was in 1854, its headquarters were supposed to be situated somewhere indefinite in southern China. The directing power centred in three persons, known as the *Koh*, *Hiong* and *Thi*, that is the Elder and Younger Brothers. These three chiefs were dictators, but the three leading members of each city or

¹ Chinese names are spelt by English writers in a variety of ways, and these phonetics differ again from the French or German.

² Kesson, *ut sup.*

province' assumed the same titles as marks 'of honour and local authority, though themselves responsible to the supreme heads of the order. The members were bound by oath, with death as the penalty of any breach of it. This oath was taken by the neophyte kneeling in front of an idol under three swords, held over his head by the Younger Brothers in the form of a triangle. The oath consisted of thirty-six clauses, the most important of which ran: "I swear that I shall know neither father nor mother, nor brother nor sister, nor wife nor child; but the brotherhood alone. Where the brotherhood leads or pursues, there I shall pursue or follow; its foe shall be my foe."

The neophyte after taking the oath cut his finger with a knife and allowed three drops of blood to fall into a cup filled with arrack; the same thing was done by the Elder and Younger Brothers; after which they with the neophyte each drank from the cup, and therewith the ceremony of initiation was complete.

An alternative method of ratifying the oath was for the neophyte to strike off the head of a white cock, which had the emblematic significance:

"As sure as a white (pure) soul dwells in this white cock, so sure shall it dwell in me; and as sure as I have ventured to hew off the head of the white cock with the white soul, so surely shall I lose my head if I prove untrue; and, as sure as this cock has lost his head, shall all those lose their heads who are untrue to the brotherhood or who are its active foes."

The rules of the society were thirty-six in number, many of them exhorting to brotherly love and practical benevolence, and each attended by a curse invoked on the head of him who failed to observe them. A few examples will illustrate the matter.

"If a brother be poor, you must help him; otherwise, may you die on the road."

"A brother must nourish another brother; if you have food, you must share it with him; if you do not, may a tiger devour you."

“He who commits adultery with a brother’s wife, let him be run through with a sword.”

“He who mentions the thirty-six oaths of the brotherhood must have two hundred and sixteen strokes of the red wood.”

There was also another series of thirty-six articles which the brotherhood had to observe. Members were in them admonished to beware of divulging the customs of the society; to be industrious; to avoid theft; to lend to the poor; to support the sick; to take care of a brother’s house in his absence; to restore property stolen from a brother; to entertain strange brethren; to assist to bury a poor brother; to give alms; not to despise a poor brother, nor to make his distress matter for gossip; and not to take a bribe to arrest a brother. These were very commendable; but not so the following: “If a brother commits murder or any great crime, you must not deliver him into arrest, but afford him the means of escape from the country. In case of the intended arrest of a brother, or any evil likely to befall him, give him timely warning, and discover not his place of retreat.”

The members were known to one another by certain signs, into which the number three invariably entered. Each brother was provided with a copy of the “Chop” or seal of the society, printed in coloured characters on silk or calico. “It is worn by many as a species of charm, and great care is taken to conceal the meaning of its characters from the uninitiated. . . . It is of a pentagonal form, partly representing the five cardinal virtues of the Chinese, as benevolence, justice, wisdom, faithfulness and richness; and partly signifying their astronomical science, whose basis is the five planets.”¹

A member of the Brotherhood of Heaven and Earth had to conceal the names of all connected with it, and to yield implicit obedience. He was supposed to endeavour to advance the interests of the society, with all his heart and soul and mind. Trusty brethren would be supplied with

¹ Kesson, *Op. cit.* Where also will be found an illustration of this “Chop” and a full explanation of its characters.

money, 'if it were needed to forward these objects; but "talkative, hare-brained, and suspected members were got rid of by poison."

The sinister activities of the Triad Society or Brotherhood of Heaven and Earth became matter of public knowledge during the Taiping rebellion in China (1850-65). The Taipings arose in the province of Kwangsi in Southern China about the year 1848. For a year or two previous a religious brotherhood known as the God-worshippers had been training a militia to cope with the local bandits. The God-worshippers had adopted an orientalized form of Christianity as their religion, and their founder claimed to receive divine revelations from on high; but in 1848 the leadership of the sect was seized by two men named Yang and Hsiao, and from that moment the aims of the society became openly revolutionary and directed against the Imperial Government. The movement was reinforced by all kinds of discontented elements, including the secret societies. While it was largely recruited in the beginning from the T'ien Ti Hui (the Triads), other brotherhoods with strange names also came to join it. The United Sons, the Red and Black Society, the One Pinch of Perfume Society, such were a few of the bodies who had formed large bands containing dangerous outlaws. Some of these had fraternal or religious motives, but in others plunder was the main objective; for in China it has not been uncommon for original robber bands to develop into a secret society in times of public unrest, as was the case with the famous White Lilies (1796-1804).¹

The Chinese historian T'ang Leang-Li relates² a curious story which illustrates the complications that might arise in those days, when most of the soldiers on both sides belonged to some secret society or other. The Imperial general Tso Tsung-T'ang was marching to capture a notorious bandit chief. One day he noticed his army falling in and forming a long line along the road for several miles, and on making enquiries learned that the troops

¹ William James Hail, *Ts'eng Kuo-Fan and the Taiping Rebellion*, New Haven, 1927. Richard Wilhelm, *The Soul of China*, 1928, confirms this statement.

² *The Chinese Revolution*.

were preparing to receive with full honours a visit from the very bandit he had come to arrest. In the army, he was told, everyone from private to highest officer was a member of the Ko Lao Hui, and the bandit happened to be chief or Great Dragon Head of the society in that district from which the troops had been drawn. The only way in which the general was able to retain command of his army was to hold a full council of the society in the open air and declare himself the new Great Dragon Head of the Order; the soldiers accepted him as such, and the business of the campaign was resumed.

As has been mentioned earlier, the Triad Society had a widely scattered membership, and was particularly strong in the south of China; it was but natural, therefore, that it should link up with any movement in that area directed against the Government. So it happened, and Lo Ta-Kang, a pirate and member of the Triad, was one of the leaders appointed to inaugurate the rebellion in 1851 in Kwangsi; while at first the whole strength of the society was employed to further the revolt. For the first couple of years the Triads were the sinews of the movement; but then they began to secede, and some even joined the Imperial forces. While the Taipings were in possession of Nanking, the Triads for three years, 1853 to 1856, commanded Shanghai, and prolonged negotiations took place with the object of linking up once more their power with that of the main body of the rebels; but owing to the intransigence of the religious fanatics who were in command at Nanking, the two bodies never became reunited.¹

As for the Taipings themselves, they seem to have been a religious and not a secret society. Their founder had evolved a weird kind of Protestantism, and he and successive leaders asserted that they received revelations from God the Father and Jesus Christ in moments of crisis. Hung, one of their chiefs, on being captured in April, 1852, by the Imperialists, made a full confession, which, if true, shows the extent to which the revolt had depended upon other than religious elements. He asserted that he had

¹ Hail, *Op. cit.*

concocted the story of how the "Heavenly Brother Jesus" came down to speak to him, so as to bind the members of the Triad Society still closer to him.¹ He added, that everyone who had joined the Triads in Kwang-tung had by that initiation become an adherent of the Taiping movement.²

There seems little doubt that the Triads, or similar secret societies, were responsible for a great deal of the trouble caused to the authorities of the United States by the Chinese resident there. Under the Burlingame Treaty of 1868 the Chinese obtained the right of free immigration to the States, and made such good use of it that by the year 1880 their numbers had become a menace to the white population. San Francisco was the usual port of entry, and in this city six flourishing Chinese corporations made immigration easy for the coolie and profitable for themselves. Their method was to secure advance contracts for the labourers, provide money for their passage to America, and when they had arrived there keep them in subjection until they had repaid the uttermost farthing with appropriate oriental interest. Needless to say, these corporations of slave-owners, for that was what they really amounted to, enforced their rights over the coolies not by means of the laws of the United States, but by more typically celestial methods copied from the customs of the Brotherhood of Heaven and Earth. These contract companies, corporations, or societies, whatever the name be that is given them, employed gangs of ruffians known as Highbinders to spy upon the immigrant Chinese and to persecute them in various ways if they did not fulfil their contracts to the letter. The result was that these scoundrels plied their trade merrily at San Francisco, and the State of California, where there were no fewer than 161,000 Chinese in subjection to the

¹ The so-called Christian adherents of the Taiping were, to put the matter mildly, unorthodox. Sun-Yat-Sen's father became a nominal Christian when he joined the Taiping rebels, and remained so throughout his life; but this profession of faith did not prevent him from paying due reverence to the heathen gods of his village.

² Hail, *Op. cit.* As for the origin of the name Taiping, it arose when Hung-Siu-Tsuen, sometime leader of the rebels, assumed the name of King Taiping, signifying Great Peace.

sinister Six. Every Chinese in all these thousands, whether labourer, artizan, or prostitute, for the Big Six imported any whose craft promised profit, was certain to be black-mailed periodically by their police, the Highbinders, and as certain to be murdered by them if they proved too vocal in the process of being squeezed.¹

The scandal of this traffic has been removed by subsequent legislation affecting the immigration laws of the United States, but the name Highbinder is still a word of ill-omen in that country.

The Hung or Hong or Triad Society was established in many districts of the United States by these Chinese immigrants. When Sun-Yat-Sen visited these Hung Societies in America in 1896² he was greatly disappointed to find that they had forgotten their original revolutionary and communistic principles and had largely degenerated into mutual benefit societies, because living in a free country they had naturally lost their original political colour. Their avowed object was still to restore the Ming dynasty in China, but few, if any, had the remotest idea what this portion of the ritual meant. Some years later a protracted revolutionary propaganda was carried on among these Hung Societies in America by emissaries from Sun-Yat-Sen's various organizations, and after several years of this kind of work they were at last brought to realize that they existed for the purpose of revolution.

Some of their members, indeed, seem to have relearnt their lesson only too well. A French eye-witness of the scenes that took place in Canton after the establishment of the Republic in 1911 has described³ how a society known as the Black Hand and consisting of Chinese who had lived in the United States conducted a house-to-house search, accompanied by much looting, for reactionaries, and acted as detectives, police, judges and executioners. The particular objects of their pursuit were members of an Imperialistic secret society; and to be found in possession of

¹ *Vide The Chinese in California*. San Francisco, 1880. Published anonymously. Name of author in B.M. Catalogue given as G. B. Densmore.

² *Memoirs of a Chinese Revolutionary*.

³ Jean Rodes, *Scènes de la vie révolutionnaire en Chine*. Paris, 1917.

its medal with the inscription "Protection of the Monarchy" entailed instant execution by the Black Hand.

The beggars of China, while not a secret society in the strict sense of the term, have yet in some aspects such a resemblance to the Camorra of Naples as to be worth a short description. In every city they constitute a regular gild to which only the men may belong. According to Richard Wilhelm,¹ they used to have a beggar king who was recognized by the municipality, and to this potentate the ordinary beggars had to pay tithes into a common fund, which he redistributed at regular intervals among the whole fraternity. To this day shop-keepers are periodically canvassed for alms, a form of blackmail which is invariably paid, lest worse should befall in the form of arson or forcible entry. The larger shops pay a fixed sum to some specified agent of the beggars in order to save their customers the annoyance of seeing Lazarus displaying his sores in their vicinity; but other merchants prefer to distribute the largesse personally to the beggar after having kept him waiting in the street for a length of time suited to the occasion. The notice "May you have great joy and happiness" placarded on a shop is not a polite wish addressed to the passer-by or customer, but a sign that the shop-keeper is a regular subscriber to the Beggars' Gild, and as such is not to be importuned by the needy.²

Even as in the days of Louis XI a harumscarum French scholar might, and in one notable instance did, become a henchman of the Roi des Thunes, so the son of an influential Chinese family having failed in his exams may become one of the Flowery Ones, the beggars, and be seen by his respectable acquaintances wandering round the shops to collect the regular dole of cash paid on the 1st and 15th of each month, the beggars' levy on the merchants, ready to pay it for the sake of peace.³

Of all recent Chinese secret societies the one named by the Western races the Boxers is the most famous, because it

¹ *Soul of China*, English translation, 1928.

² A. S. Roe, *Chance and Change in China*, 1920.

³ *Ibid.*

came into prominence at the siege of the Legations in Peking in the summer of 1900.

It was a product of the northern provinces, where in many places societies existed for self-protection against the depredations of robbers who terrorized the surrounding countryside. These institutions for self-help called themselves I Ho T'uan, Union for the Protection of Public Peace, which title was later changed to I Ho Ch'uan, The Fist for the Protection of Public Peace.¹ The Chinese characters were wrongly translated by the word Boxer. A Chinese historian² states that the Boxers for the greater part belonged to the Ta Tao Hui, Big Knife Society, and the Pai Lien Chiao, White Lily Society, whose original war cry was "Blot out the Manchus and all foreign things." The Imperial Government, however, cleverly utilized the presence of the foreigners in China as a lightning-conductor to divert the fury of the revolutionaries from the ruling dynasty; so that for some time before the siege of the Legations took place (June-August, 1900), Peking was filled with rumours of approaching massacres, and became the centre of a propaganda of hate, with the watchword, "Death to the Foreigners!"

The Boxers were largely a youth movement. An eyewitness noted during the attacks on the Legations that the fanatics leading the advancing columns to the assault were always individuals of from twelve to fifteen years of age, and that even young women were included in their ranks.³

The meetings for initiation took place in the temples in an atmosphere of mystery and darkness visible; the avowed aim of the ceremonial proceedings was to endow the neophyte with insensibility to pain and invulnerability. Fasting, incantations, and cabalistic gestures were superimposed on the recitation of invocations, incomprehensible even to

¹ Richard Wilhelm, *The Soul of China*. J. J. Matignon, *Superstition, Crime et Misère en Chine*, Paris, 1902, translated the words as the League of Tied Fists, or The League of Concord and Harmony, and suggests that the initiates were known as Boxers because they devoted themselves to courses of gymnastics and physical culture.

² T'ang Leang-Li, *The Inner History of the Chinese Revolution*, London, 1930. For convenience' sake this author will henceforth be referred to as T'ang.

³ Matignon, *Op. cit.*

the inflated. The candidates were made to swallow drugs supposed to be universal panaceas, and charms written on red or orange paper were burnt to ashes, mixed with tea, and administered as a potion to render bullets harmless. The result of all this shamanism was to induce a state of hysteria which drove the patients temporarily out of their minds. Such hysteria is contagious, and the spread of it proved particularly favourable to the rapid recruiting of the Boxers and the development of this anti-foreign movement.¹

The account given by another eye-witness of the movement tallies to a great extent with the foregoing. Richard Wilhelm² states that the society was enveloped in a superstitious atmosphere that incited to fanaticism. The votaries met at night in the temples under the mysterious sign of the god of all magic Chen Wu, ruler over all demons and spirits, and further invoked the protective god Kuantı, with his armed band of satellites, all of which deities addressed those present by the voices of spiritualistic mediums. During the mystical ceremony of initiation the young men would fall as if dead, to rise up again filled with a savage courage, accepted members of the Union of the Great Knife, Ta Tao Hui, and, as they believed and a great many of their countrymen believed too, invulnerable against bullets or blows of the sword. This mass psychosis spread like an epidemic; and since the movement had been diverted from its original goal of revolution, the Chinese Government gave it free scope against the foreigners, with results that are a milestone in Chinese history, but do not need to be retold here.

Though the Boxer movement took place in the north, it had repercussions in the South of China. In 1900 Sun-Yat-Sen, from his exile in Japan, had brought about the amalgamation of his secret society for the Regeneration of China with other secret societies existing in Kwantung and the Yangtse Valley, and thus had provided himself with a weapon. Accordingly, when news came of the progress

¹ *Ibid.* Matignon saw the matter from the point of view of a psychiatrist.

² *The Soul of China.*

of the outbreak in Northern China, he hastened to co-operate in the revolt by directing insurrections at Huchow and Canton. These, however, achieved no success.¹

The history of the most recent secret societies in China is closely bound up with that of this great revolutionary leader Sun-Yat-Sen (1866-1925). This is not the place to tell how the son of a poor peasant rose to become President of the Chinese Republic, nor of the novel structures composed of Western ideas which he attempted to erect on the ruins of the Celestial Empire; his work was cut short by death, nor has it been completed since then by his successors; what concerns us now is that throughout his life as a professional revolutionist he had dealings with secret societies of all kinds.²

During the latter half of the nineteenth century a change had taken place in the membership of the secret societies, which were now being joined by high officials and scholars, so it was natural that Sun, while a student at Canton Medical College in 1886, should become a member of the Ko Lao Hui, Society of Brothers and Elders. With friends acquired in this society he began to lay the foundations of his Hsin Chung Hui, Society for the Regeneration of China, whose watchword was, "Divine right does not last for ever." This body was not actually launched till 1894, and its avowed aim then was, strangely enough, the establishment of a constitutional monarchy; yet this end was in itself an actual advance towards democracy from the traditional purpose of all former Chinese secret societies, the mere exchange of one absolute dynasty for another.

Sun was disappointed with the results of his new society, for it failed to attract the class of recruit he desired, so from Tokio he arranged, in the year 1899, a conference between the Hsin Chung Hui and the older Hung societies established in Kwantung, Kwangsi, Fukien and the Yangtse valley, the result of which was the federation of all these societies with Sun as leader of the group. Mention

¹ Sun-Yat-Sen, *Memoirs of a Chinese Revolutionary*. London, 1927.

² Those in search of more knowledge cannot do better than go to T'ang's book, published by Routledge and Sons, 1930.

has already been made of their first attempt at revolution which was to support the Boxer rising, and proved abortive.

The revolutionary movement spread rapidly in China after 1900, and Shanghai became the centre of very active propaganda. A group of well educated Chinese established themselves in the international settlement, and secure from interference by the Imperial Government deluged the country with inflammatory pamphlets, and this society of revolutionaries was known as the Ai-Kuo Hsüeh-Shih. The importance of such societies was waning in Sun's estimation, and in the year 1904 he published a manifesto declaring his aim to be a Chinese Republic, and followed this declaration by the establishment in 1905 of a new organization designed to control them as a political weapon. He had devised no new idea, but consciously or unconsciously set himself to copy the example of numberless conspirators who have aimed at centralizing the directive power of a rebellion.

The full name of the new organization founded by Sun at Tokio in September, 1905, was the Chung-Kuo Ko-Ming Tung-Meng Hui, The United Revolutionary Party of China, but the term Ko-Ming, revolutionary, was at first discreetly omitted in public. As the title implied, the new body was a federation of several revolutionary societies, the Hsing Chung Hui, the Hua Hsin Hui, Association for the Modernization of China, and the Kuan Fu Hui, the Restoration Society. The first two had great influence with the secret societies in the south of China, which carried out the instructions passed on by these more intellectually controlled bodies. It is at once obvious what power for revolution would be wielded by any group of individuals directing the Tung Meng Hui, which guided all the subordinate groups.

The Tung Meng Hui had at first all the features of an ordinary secret society. Secrecy was enjoined, and penalties, ranging from censure to capital punishment, prescribed for breaches of the code of laws. The initiate took an oath to work for the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty, the establishment of a Republic, and the redistribution of the

land in China: The headquarters were in Tokio and branches were founded in every district of China and every Chinese settlement in foreign lands, the functions of the latter branches being to carry on propaganda and collect funds for the League. It began to flourish exceedingly, both in funds and numbers; between 1907 and 1911 membership increased from 10,000 to 300,000.

It is needless to recount the futile attempts at revolution directed by the Tung Meng Hui up to 1911. Then came success, the establishment of a Republic, and the assumption by Sun-Yat-Sen of its provisional Presidency on the 1st January, 1912, at Nanking, a post he held only till the following February, when he was succeeded by Yuan Shih-K'ai.

Sun saw that the continuance of the Tung Meng Hui as a secret revolutionary organization was incompatible with its exercising any political influence as a parliamentary party, so in March, 1912, he converted it into an open association and re-christened it the Kuo-Min Tang, the National People's Party. Parliamentary success, however, was not destined to be the lot of its leader, and in November, 1913, Sun and his followers were expelled from the Legislative Assembly by the President Yuan, who had become a virtual dictator.

Sun thereupon set himself to found a new association, called the Chung-Hua Ko-Min Tang, Chinese Revolutionary Party, in which every member was required to take an oath of loyalty to Sun personally. It was a failure, and had ceased to exist in 1916.

In the autumn of 1920 he established yet another secret society to take its place. The new creation was known as the Chung-Kuo Kuo-Min Tang, National People's Party of China, and in it the personal oath of loyalty to Sun was abolished. This society still exists. It was joined by many members of the Communist Party, which was formed by Mahlin, Lenin's secretary, during a mission in China in 1921, and though these new recruits found it advisable at first to keep their political principles secret, this precaution became unnecessary when in January, 1923, an entente

was reached between the Kuo-Min Tang and Soviet Russia. This entente came to an end in December, 1927.

In 1923 the Kuo-Min Tang was again reorganized, at the suggestion of Borodin, the Russian envoy, but the changes then devised belong solely to the history of Chinese politics. The party or society, whatever one pleases to call it, has survived its founder, and may for centuries to come exercise an influence over the destinies of China, whether as an open political movement or, in a not unnatural reversion to type, as a secret lever used for undermining the Government of the moment.

Since Sun-Yat-Sen's, death new secret societies have arisen in China with the traditional object of organizing opposition to rulers or their methods. Thus in 1925 there was founded at Canton a body known as the Wen Hua Tang of the usual esoteric kind which set out to become the opponent of the Kuo-Min Tang. The subsequent assassination of Liao Chung-Kai, a prominent leader in the latter society, was popularly ascribed to the action of the new secret association. Whether this be true or false, the mere appearance on the political horizon of such a sodality as the Wen Hua Tang will be warning to the weather-wise in statecraft of much more stormy weather yet to come.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE DRUSES

ONE branch of the Ismaelis has developed along quite different lines from the others growing from the same parent stock. In the mountainous districts of Syria south-west of Damascus dwell the Druses, a people with curious customs and a religion peculiar to themselves. They number from 200,000 to 300,000. Their only employments are agriculture and the manufacture of silk. They are a fierce, warlike and virile race; fine horsemen, and splendid fighters. One of their war chiefs, Hussein Pasha Atrash, Lord of Anz, helped to raise three regiments of Arab cavalry for Lord Allenby in the Great War, and was created a colonel of native forces in the British Army.

They were formerly nominally subject to the Ottoman Empire as they now are to the French mandate in Syria; but neither control has been accepted willingly, and the Druses are ever inclined to revolt. In a recent outbreak in 1925 Druse cavalry actually attacked and captured a French tank, a feat worthy of the people whose war-song runs:

“ We are the children of the Maruf.
Among our rocks is sanctuary.
When our spears grow rusty
We make them bright
With the blood of our enemies.”¹

Old established custom with almost the force of a moral obligation decrees that the Druse must always carry arms, so as to be able to help his brother in time of need.

¹ W. B. Seabrook, *Adventures in Arabia*, 1928.

This and other precepts of their religion have caused the Druses to be regarded as bound together in one national secret society, derived at the taste of the reporter from the Templars or Freemasonry or heaven knows what else, and for this reason a synopsis of what is known concerning their rites will not be out of place.

The Ismaeli sect produced some unamiable scions in the Karmathians, Ansars, and Assassins; but the original Druses were also of this sect, and have evolved for the better. The peculiar Druse religion was established in the eleventh century A.D. ¹ At that time there was reigning in Egypt the sixth Fatimite Caliph Hakim Biamr Allah. He became ruler at a very early age, and his reign was distinguished for cruelty, persecution of the Jews and Christians, and conflicting decrees declaring the orthodoxy of this or that tenet of the Mohammedan religion. Encouraged by two men, Darazi, a Turkish mulatto, and Hamsa, a Persian, in the year 1029 Hakim made a public declaration of his own divinity. This was too much for his monotheistic subjects to accept, and within a short time he was assassinated, his own sister being the instigator of the murder. She feared for her own life, for Hakim was a puritan where women were concerned, and had forbidden them to put a foot outside their houses on penalty of death; and Sitt Almouc, the sister in question, had overstepped many other moral limits besides her own threshold.

The Arab writer Nowairi said of Hakim: "He was a man of corrupted beliefs, continually changing his conduct and manner of being. At the beginning of his reign he displayed great luxury, at its close a simplicity carried to extremes. He was seized with the mania of passing himself off as God, of professing the doctrine of metempsychosis publicly, and of urging people to accept these dogmas."

The population had arisen and tried to massacre the favourites who were encouraging their ruler in his madness, and to save his life Darazi was sent into the Lebanon district, where he converted the tribe of the Druses to the new

¹ In the following account, where authorities differ, I have usually followed Silvestre de Sacy.

doctrine which they have held ever since then. His work was completed by Hamsa (or Hanitsa) the Persian mystic who composed the Druse Scriptures, *Kitab-el-Hikmet*, or the "Book of Wisdom," supposed to have been in the first instance dictated by God to Hakim.¹ The Druses venerate Hamsa as the actual founder of their faith.

To sum up that religion in a condensed form: God is unity; He has manifested himself to men several times in a human incarnation, the last occasion being in the form of Hakim Biamr Allah; and Hakim did not die, but disappeared to test the faith of believers, and will reappear in glory and majesty, and extend his empire all over the earth. The Druses further hold that the Universal Intelligence is the first creation of God, and that it has always revealed itself on earth at the time of one of His manifestations; and that in the time of Hakim it appeared in the form of Hamsa. Further, that Hamsa is the first minister of true religion, which he communicates directly or indirectly to all true believers, together with the knowledge and grace which he receives directly from God.

As for reincarnation, the number of men is always the same, and their souls pass consecutively into different bodies, in an ascending or descending scale as they have observed or neglected the tenets of the true religion, and the practice of its seven commandments.

These seven commandments are:

To be true in their words.

To watch over their reciprocal security.

To renounce any former religion.

To have no connection with anyone professing another faith.

To confess that the Lord (Hakim) has existed in every epoch.

To be content with his will, whatever it may be.

To resign themselves without reserve to his orders, whether in happiness or adversity.

¹A copy of this book was stolen by a Syrian Christian doctor in the seventeenth century and presented to Louis XIV. It is still to be found in the Bibliothèque Royale, and there is a French translation in the Vatican.

In fulfilment of these commandments, a Druse is not bound to tell the truth to a person of another religion. Special laws exist relating to marriage and conduct, so that a woman will be put to death for unfaithfulness or for marrying an unbeliever. Converts and renegades are practically unknown.

In the administration of their laws they are just and impartial. It is a point of honour with them to do justice and make restitution to all, whether Druse, Mohammedan or Christian. A Druse chief has been known to kill his own brother for dishonouring a Christian woman. Guests are held sacred, and a familiar proverb runs: "A house that cannot protect its guests is unworthy to stand."

Their towns, even as everything else about them, have distinct characteristics. A recent traveller¹ has likened one of them, Souieda the capital, to a hill-town of Brittany—massive grey stone walls, square parapets, and solid, closely set buildings intersected by narrow streets. No domes or minarets as are usual in Mohammedan cities appear in the Druse country.

In such fastnesses the feudal Druse aristocracy maintain the old customs and traditions, though influenced nowadays by their contact with the coastal cities. In the interior, however, the peasants are absolutely untouched by civilization, and remain dominated by their own faith. In such parts superstition (i.e. belief in Black Magic and in possession by evil spirits) holds sway. The local wizards have tremendous influence over the peasantry. Many of these seers are said to display strange occult powers, which are probably the result of mesmeric phenomena.

As has been said, the Druses are pure Unitarians. One of their legends runs that the prophets (Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed) were all sent in turn, and converted the whole world save the small Druse tribe. The Angel Gabriel was subsequently despatched to inquire why the Druses alone remained obdurate, and the message he took back to Heaven ran: "God is enough for us." The story cannot of course be accepted literally, for the Druses

were actually Moslems till the eleventh century; but it does illustrate the stern monotheistic creed of the people.

A sharp cleavage in dress and customs exists between the religious Druses, known as *Akils* or elders, and the warrior class or *Jakils*. All Druses take part in the religious services, but only the *Akils* have been admitted to the inner mysteries. These are probably symbolic rituals with secret words and litanies, whereby initiates recognize one another, although this is not actually known to be a fact.

Akils are men of upright life who have assumed special vows and obligations. They are sworn to monogamy, and are required to give advice and material help at the request of any member of their race. Neither smoking nor drinking is permitted to them, and they are forbidden to show signs of anger, excitement, pride, hunger or thirst. They are obliged to walk in a stately, dignified manner and must never break into a run, and they are not allowed to fight in tribal raids or family feuds, but only in *defence* of the whole tribe.

A candidate for Akilship must go through three very severe tests.

He fasts for three days and two nights. Then on the third night he attends a feast of the *Akils*, but no food must touch his lips. When the banquet is over he is left with some of the best dishes untasted before him for the remainder of the night. No spies are employed, but it is left to the candidate's honour to confess if he succumbs to the frailties of the flesh and tastes food. If he withstands the temptation, he enters upon the second stage.

Here he rides for three days under the desert sun without water, and on the third night sits holding a goblet in his hands while the other *Akils* drink refreshing sherbets, etc. Again he remains alone all night with water within reach. Should he again emerge undefeated, he rests and regains his strength for a week, and then attempts the third and last test.

He attends a sumptuous banquet, and then enters a room where a beautiful naked girl is reclining on a divan. She is trained in every erotic art, and may use all her wiles and

allurements in the struggle to arouse his physical desires during that one night. If by morning he has vanquished the temptations of lust as he has previously withstood the temptations of hunger and thirst, he is created an *Akil*, and the inner mysteries are revealed to him. About them nothing certain is known; they are popularly supposed to contain elements of Black Magic.

Should any novice fail in one of the tests, he is not subjected to ridicule or reproach. The *Akils* merely say: "It is no small thing to be a *Jakil*," and the candidate is then sent to join the ranks of the less ascetic warriors.

Probably the best-known and most curious article attributed to the Druse religion by its opponents is that of the golden calf. Venture wrote in 1786: "The common opinion is that this golden calf is the object of adoration by the Adepts; but I feel myself authorized to give the assurance that, far from being the object of their creed, it is only exposed to view as the emblem of other dominating religions, which are on the point of being overthrown by the legislator of the Druses."

With this opinion De Sacy agrees.¹ He suspects that the calf is the emblem of Iblis, the enemy or rival of Hakim; whereas the commonly received opinion was that Hakim was worshipped in the shape of a calf.

Both these authorities therefore accept the calf as an integral part of the Druse religious ceremonial, but a recent observant traveller² states that many of the people deny its existence, and that he could find no authentic evidence to suggest a hiding-place for this image. His theory is that if it does exist, probably Hakim (that is, Hamsa) incorporated into his teaching the symbol of the calf (already familiar to many of the ancient religions) but intended it as an *emblem* only. Later it was idolatrously worshipped, and though the practice was condemned by many of the Druse sages the image may have been retained

¹ Silvestre de Sacy, *Exposé de la religion des Druzes*, 1838.

² Seabrook, *ut. sup.*

secretly, merely as the original symbol of Hakim's doctrine, and may still be worshipped by some of the unenlightened, who confuse the emblem with the spirit behind it. All this is pure supposition, and when he elaborated his theory to an old and highly educated Druse, the only answer he received was the enigmatic: "Well, it's an ingenious theory."

The Druse belief in Reincarnation was probably derived *and adapted* from the Indian theory of the transmigration of souls. The Druses hold that each Druse soul returns immediately after death into the body of new-born baby, a habitation which may be better or worse than its previous abode.¹ Ultimately, they maintain, all will have had an equal chance, and on the Judgment Day the Druses will have Heaven or Hell decided for them on their averages. There have been, it is said, certain curious cases of the survival of personal memory, but these are exceptional.

In war, when deaths outnumber births, the warriors' souls are supposed to fly to a mountainous region in Western China and are born again in Chinese babies—thus recruiting a race that will one day help the Druses to conquer Arabia and the world.

Seabrook was privileged to attend a service in the Druse Temple—a big, one-storeyed stone structure with a vaulted roof, completely devoid of interior decorations, save for rugs on the floor and high stools where the Scriptures are laid. Heavy black curtains in the centre screen the Druse women from inquisitive eyes. He considers it probable that the most secret and closely guarded mysteries are celebrated in the crypts of the Temples.

No priest presides at these public services. Several *Akils* read passages from *Kitab-el-Hikmet* relating to precepts of morality and general conduct, and later the congregation join in prayers which in their form are akin to litanies: they are generally couched in terms of formal praise and thanksgiving and seldom take the form of petitions, since specific requests are regarded as unbecoming when addressed

¹ It will be noted that the belief recorded in this form by Mr. Seabrook varies from the doctrine attributed by De Sacy to the orthodox Druses, that the souls pass consecutively into different bodies in an ascending or descending scale as they have observed or neglected the tenets of the true religion.

to the Omnipotent. The extracts from the "Book of Wisdom" often have striking parallels in the Bible and the Koran.

In the matter of religious tolerance, the Druses combat the Moslem sects of the Sunnites, attached to the letter of the Koran, and the Ismaelis partizans of the allegorical interpretation; but towards Christians and Jews they are not so bitter, and hold that the Gospels preach unitarianism symbolically, and were inspired by Hamsa.

A general survey of all the available evidence points to the conclusion that they comprise what is undoubtedly a religious sect and no secret society. Whatever the mysteries of that religion may be, or whatever the reasons for concealing them from the profane, it has certainly succeeded in forming a brave and moral people, worthy in many respects of our admiration and esteem.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE ANSARS

THE Ansars, more correctly known as the Nossairians, though for convenience the former name will be employed, are an Arab sect that inhabit the Ansariyeh Mountains north of the Lebanon district in Syria. Arab writers refer to them as the Ibn-Nusaireeyeh; Walpole,¹ who lived among them and knew them well, anglicized their name as the Ansayrii; while they call themselves the Fellaheen or peasantry, and also the Khasebeeh, from the title of a certain Hossein who spread the cult in its beginning. Their founder is said to have been one Nusair, whose son Abu-Shuaib was the first apostle of the new creed.

Together with the Druses and the Assassins,² the Ansars have sprung from the heretical Islamic sect of the Ismaeleeh or Ismaelis. The latter was founded in the year 863 in Syria by Abdullah son of Maimoon who had to fly from Persia after a vain attempt to establish his new doctrine by force of arms. The main exoteric tenet of his belief was to exalt Ismael the son of Djaafar as the seventh Imam, and to break the line of Imams with his decease; whereas the orthodox Persians consider Ismael's brother Moosa as the seventh Imam, and close the Imamate with Mohammed, the twelfth and last.³

Abdullah's object was to gain political power, and to effect by secret propaganda what had not been accomplished by force; and he therefore divided his system into seven

¹ F. Walpole, *The Ansayrii and Assassins*, 1851.

² Arab writers refer to the Druses as the Western and to the Assassins as the Eastern Ismaelis.

³ The Imamate was an office which possessed the spiritual jurisdiction over Islam, a kind of Moslem papacy.

degrees. According to Von Hammer,¹ the first was designed to inspire the neophyte with complete confidence in his teacher and to induce him to take an oath of implicit obedience and blind faith in the secret doctrine. The second degree inculcated belief in divinely appointed Imams who were the source of all knowledge. The third degree taught that the number of these Imams could not exceed seven. The fourth degree, that since the beginning of the world there had been seven divine law-givers or apostles of God, each of whom had altered the law given by his predecessors; and that each of these had been helped by seven coadjutors, who, as they were not manifested as Imams, were known as Mutes (*Sanit*).² The seven speaking prophets were Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, and Ismael, son of Djaafar, who, as the last, was known as the "Lord of the Time," or "Chief of the Age." Of the Mutes, only one of each seven was named, that is, Seth, Shem, Ishmael, Aaron, Simon Peter, Ali, and Mohammed son of Ismael; thus, as the last had been dead only a hundred years, the teacher was at liberty to name whom he pleased as one of the mute prophets of the current age.

The fifth degree explained that each of the seven mute prophets had twelve apostles. In the sixth, the candidate was taught that all positive legislation must be subordinate to the general and philosophical; needless to say, instruction in this grade lasted for a very long time. In the seventh, philosophy gave place to mysticism.

Two additional degrees were subsequently added by the Western Ismaelis in the time of the Fatimite Caliphs of Egypt.

"In the eighth, the positive precepts of religion were again brought forward . . . then was the pupil fully enlightened as to the superfluity of all apostles and prophets, the non-existence of heaven and hell, the futility of all actions, for which there is neither reward nor punishment,

¹ *History of the Assassins.*

² From the veneration paid by the Ismaelis to the number seven they were known as "Sevensers."

either in this world or the next; and thus was he matured for the ninth and last degree, to become the blind instrument of all the passions of unbridled thirst of power. To believe nothing and to dare all formed the sum of this system . . .”¹

The Ismaelis only proceeded to advance proselytes through these degrees with great caution; for the sect had political ends and ambitious views, and its interest was to enlist a large number of partizans in all classes of society. Provided the neophyte would accept the legitimate succession of seven Imams and no more, and his teachers as the mouth-piece of the Imamate, they were in no hurry to reveal further mysteries.²

Where such doctrines would lead when carried to their logical consequences was shown by the conduct of the Keramitah or Karmathians, a branch of the early Ismaelis. They adopted open violence instead of secret propaganda, rebelled against all authority, took to plundering caravans of pilgrims bound for Mecca, and in the tenth century captured the holy city itself by storm, massacred the inhabitants, and carried off the sacred black stone, which was only restored some time later on the petition of one of the Fatimite Caliphs. Here it may be noted that this dynasty had become Ismaelis; the sixth Caliph was Hakim, the founder of the Druse religion.

The foregoing account has been necessary, because the Ansars spring from the original Ismaelis, greatly as their present customs differ from those of their progenitors.

The Ansars are a hardy and brave race of mountaineers, who have often defended their freedom successfully against the Turk; but they are said to be quarrelsome, ungrateful, greedy and untrustworthy.³

It is hard to form an estimate of their numbers, which may approach 100,000 more or less.

Their peculiar form of religion has been in existence since 1021 at least, when it was referred to by Hamza, the apostle of the Druses. They now acknowledge Moosa

¹ Von Hammer, *Op cit.*, Wood's translation.

² Silvestre de Sacy, *Mémoire sur la dynastie des Assassins*, 1818.

³ Samuel Lyde, *The Asian Mystery*, 1861.

and the twelve Imams as opposed to Ismael and the seven Imams of their originators; and in other respects they have drifted even farther away. As a race they seem to have the faculty of assimilating the customs of those with whom they come in contact, and they have had ample opportunity of studying a variety of sects. Since the eleventh century their home in Syria has come under the domination of the Seljuke Turks 1075, the Crusaders 1099, the Tartars 1258 and soon after the Egyptian Caliphs, Tamerlane in 1401, and in 1518 the Osmanlee Turks; to say nothing at all of more recent influences since the Great War.

An early traveller, Maundrell,¹ gives an amusing account of their characteristics in the year 1697.

“In that part of the mountains . . . there dwelt a people called by the Turks *Neceres*, of a very strange and singular character, for it is their principle to adhere to no certain religion, but chameleon like, to put on the colour of religion, whatever it be, which is reflected upon them from the persons with whom they happen to converse. With Christians they profess themselves Christians; with Turks they are good Mussulmans, with Jews they pass for Jews, being such Proteuses in religion that nobody was ever to discover what shape or standard their consciences are surely of; all that is certain concerning them is, that they make very much and good wine, and are great drinkers.”

Richard Pococke reported of them in 1738: “Their religion seems to be some remnants of paganism; they are much despised by the Turks, and seem rather fond of the Christians.” The Jesuit missionaries rather earlier discovered: “They have made to themselves a religion, which is a monstrous compound of Mohammedanism and Christianity, and which gives them an extravagant idea of our holy mysteries.” While Burckhardt, in 1812, spoke of them as “divided into different sects of which nothing is known but the names.”

Since so little could be learnt of their rites, the worst reason was of course attributed for such secrecy. They

¹ Quoted by Lyde, *Op. cit.*

were accused of licentiousness, obscenity and incest. Volney was informed that "they hold nocturnal assemblies, in which after certain discourses they extinguish the lights, and indulge promiscuous lust, as has been reported of the ancient Gnostics." An earlier opponent, Hamza, the apostle of the Druses, makes even graver charges. "The first thing this wicked Nusairee advances," says he, "is that all things which have been forbidden to men, murder, theft, lying, calumny, fornication, sodomy, are permitted to him or to her who knows our Lord."

Whatever may have happened in former times, the reports of more modern investigators have not only succeeded in lifting part of the veil from the mysteries of the Ansars, but have also cleared them of the worst of these charges of immorality.

The Ansars believe in one God, self-existent and eternal, and are so far Unitarians. They go on to say, however, that this God manifested himself seven times in human form as Abel, Seth, Joseph, Joshua, Asaph, Simon (Cephas), and Ali. At each of these manifestations the Deity made use of two other Persons; the first created out of the light of His essence, and by Himself, and the second created by the first. These with the Deity form an inseparable Trinity, called Maana, Ism, Bab. It will be enough here to say that the first Ism was Adam, succeeded by Noah, Jacob, Moses, Solomon, Jesus, Mohammed; the first Bab was Gabriel, succeeded by other angels.

The first, the Maana, *meaning*, is the designation of the Deity, as the meaning, sense or reality of all things. The second, the Ism, *name*, is also called the *Hedjah* or veil, because under it the Maana conceals its glory, while by it it reveals itself to men. The third, the Bab, *door*, is so called because through it is the entrance to the knowledge of the two former.

The secret of this Trinity is represented by a sign, token or mark to the true believers, by the three initial letters of the names Ali, Mohammed, Solomon.

The Deity conceals himself in light, but manifests himself in the "servant of light," which is wine; this wine being

consecrated and drunk by the true believers, the initiated, in the *Kuddâs* or sacrament.

After a certain number of transmigrations, the souls of true believers become stars in the great world of light.

The last Imam Mohammed is still dwelling concealed on the earth, and will return to ensure the triumph of the true religion in the destruction of its enemies. Such are their main doctrines.

The Ansar doctrine of metempsychosis apparently contemplated in the early days of the sect the transmigration of the soul into that of a lower animal; but the modern doctrine seems to be that while the soul of the just will have to pass through only a few more human bodies, that of the unjust may have to pass through as many as eighty before entering paradise, and that some of these will be "dreadful forms," which may mean a loss of human shape.

When an Ansar attains the age of manhood he is initiated into the mysteries of his religion, becomes a participator in its rites, with its secret signs, prayers, and watchwords, whereby the initiated are bound up into a body of *Ukhwân* or brethren.

Whereas with the Druses, according to Lyde, some women are initiated into the highest secrets, while most are excluded from them, with the Ansars women are completely excluded, because they are considered unclean as well as unreliable. To be reborn as a woman is one of the penalties for sin in a man; to be reborn as a man, one of the rewards of virtue in a woman.

The outward observances of the religion entail visits to holy shrines, reputed sepulchres of saints; feasts held on certain fixed days of the year, and borrowed from Christian, Persian or Moslem sources indiscriminately; the practice of circumcision; shaving the hair from the body; and the absence from certain kinds of food, such as the camel, hare and eel.

At the feasts anyone, women or unbelievers, may be present and partake of the food; but at a fixed moment the sheikhs withdrew with the initiated men, and in some private place or the open air perform their religious rites,

participation in the sacrament. This custom probably gave rise to the charges of gross immorality brought against the sect in former times.

"This great secret of the Mass," says Lyde, "is only administered in the presence of the initiated. . . . Great precautions are taken against the possibility of this their religious service being seen; and it is probable that if a stranger were known to have been a witness to it, he would be made away with, if possible. But such are the precautions taken, by placing watchmen and choosing times and places, where there is little chance of interruption, that scarcely ever has anyone been an absolute witness of their rites."

Lyde, however, managed to get possession of rituals which explain this celebration. The Mass was a ceremony borrowed from the Christians, in which wine mixed with water was consecrated and administered to all present as a sacrament. As has been said above, the Ansars hold that the Deity hides himself in light and manifests himself in wine, which is hence called *Abd-in-Noor*, servant of light. The service of consecration and administration is a very lengthy one, and secrecy is enjoined in it over and over again: "We have drunk the secret of our masters of the habitation, and thou has drunk our secret, and we have drunk thy secret; may God render the knowledge of the Lord easy to thy heart!" This repetition interspersed with chapters from the Koran and moral discourses make up the ceremony, which need not be described at greater length.

Initiation into the mysteries takes place at the age of eighteen to twenty, or in the case of sons of sheikhs at sixteen. The neophyte provides a kid as sacrifice, and on a fixed evening the sheikhs partake of this at a meal. The boy's instructor, known as his *ana* or uncle, leads him into a circle formed by the initiated, where he is taught some words and cuffed till he remembers them. The neophyte and his *ana* then covenant the one to teach and the other to obey. A period of thirty days' instruction follows, after which at the first convenient feast the initiation is completed.

The neophyte is told that he is about to learn an important

secret and that if he reveals it to those who are debarred from sharing it, he will become the brother of devils and have merited "being changed into horrid forms, and being made to walk in vile envelopes"—an allusion to the belief in metempsychosis. He is told that his duty will be to take care of his brethren, and devote a fifth of his property to them, to observe prayers, and give alms; to abstain from injuring his brethren, and from all forbidden acts. The neophyte then takes an oath, the most important clause in which is: "I will not sell the secret of God [that is, of the Ansars], nor divulge it, nor contend about it with the uninitiated, nor with respect to it make myself known to anyone except to a brother who makes himself known to me and I to him [by signs, etc.]—and may God be party and witness to what I say." After this the sacrament of the Mass is administered, and the initiation is complete.

Walpole gives a different account of the first or preliminary part of the initiation ceremony. He says that the lower classes of the Ansars are instructed in the principles of their religion, but not its more mystical or higher tenets. They are taught, above all, to die a thousand deaths sooner than reveal the secrets of their faith.

"When a candidate is pronounced ready for initiation, his tarboosh is removed, and a white cloth wrapped round his head. He is then conducted in to the presence of the Sheikhs of religion. The chief proceeds to deliver a lecture, cautioning him against ever divulging their great and solemn secret. 'If you are under the sword, the rope, or the torture, die and smile, you are blessed.' He then kisses the earth three times before the chief, who continues reciting to him the articles of their faith. On rising, he teaches him a sign, and delivers three words to him. This completes the first lesson."¹

"The Ansayrii have signs and questions. By the one they salute each other, by the other they commence an examination as to whether a man is one of them or not, whom they do not know personally. But these signs are little used, and are known only to a few; as the dress, etc, clearly indicates them to each other."²

¹ Walpole, *The Ansayrii and Assassins*, 1851.

² Walpole., *Op. cit.*

Unfortunately all the excellent precepts taught to the Ansars at their initiation do not apply to their dealings with outsiders, and have been known on many occasions to become a dead letter among the brethren themselves. Lyde found that brother would draw sword against brother or curse father and mother without fear or shame; and that envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness were just as rampant among the Ansars as in other communities not bound like them by a solemn obligation to love one's neighbour as oneself.

All of which would go to show that the making of a secret society all-powerful in a State is not an infallible way of achieving the millennium.

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