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Scarcely on Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry.
Contempt of an object or idea, ^{ought to} presuppose
~~the~~ ^{an} intimate knowledge of its nature, design
and tendency. When sweeping denunciations, and appro-
brious epithets are carelessly employed, with reference to
the acts or principles of any man, or set of men, we naturally
expect to find them sustained and justified, by the most in-
controvertible arguments. If, upon examination we find
that prejudice, interest, vanity, or a fondness for disputation
has influenced the mind, or biased the judgment, of the
author, or the arguments themselves, are discovered to be
fallacious, or trivial, the contempt which he would have
awakened for another, is turned upon himself, and we
at once conclude that he is a weak or dishonest man.
This principle has never been more forcibly illustrated
to my mind, than by James's essay on "Rosicrucian-
ism and Freemasonry". In his very introduction,
the author manifests that contemptuous dislike of
Freemasonry, which, undoubtedly, led to the publi-
cation of this theory. With the self-sacrificing tone of a
martyr, he says that he expects only abuse from free-
masons, "for showing that they are either deceivers or deceived,
and that their society sprang out of decayed Rosicru-
cianism, as a bottle is engendered of a milk-heap."
Now, for a man who professes to be about to enlight-
en the world on a very obscure and important subject,
this language seems to possess an acidity, entirely un-
called for. The society of Freemasons, even granting that
it had the origin which he assigns to it, has yet suffi-

erent age to demand reverence, and certainly, is one of sufficient extent and importance, to ~~command~~ ^{require} a candid and unprejudiced consideration. If it be the flimsiest of hours, it is one so widely extended, and ancient, that it must be allowed the presumption of worthiness, until the falsity of its pretensions has been fully and clearly demonstrated. The ancient institution, it is true, therefore, in saying, "as far as I know, there is not anything like a still and clear exposition, of this wide spread jiggle," and my object, if a patient investigation may entitle me to say so much, is to supply this deficiency."

It is condemning the criminal, before any proof of crime has been adduced.

The views which the author intends to sustain, may be gathered from the following extract. I feel no hesitation, in saying that the Freemasons have no secrets beyond a few transparent legends, and the attaching certain moral and religious meanings to a set of emblems, principally borrowed from the mechanic art of the builder. I affirm too, that all these symbols, with their interpretation, are of Pagan origin, and that the Freemasons, never belonged to working guilds."

In considering these, let it be remembered, as an admitted postulate, that the author had never been enlightened as to the secret symbols and principles of Masonry, ^{by any initiatory process} and is, therefore, supposed to have no more knowledge of their character, than any uninitiated person may obtain. In the first of these propositions he seems to forget that "the attaching moral and religious meanings to a set of emblems," may constitute a secret as worthy of consideration, as beautiful and useful, as

It may be well before proceeding to give the authors
views, or touching on the validity of his arguments, to give a
slight sketch of Rosicrucianism itself, its origin, history and
character. About the beginning of the sixteenth Century
there was issued from the press of Wittenberg a small
work in folio, whose German name, of wonderful length
and probably great obscurity, seemed to stride the little
book not pitying its weakness and disability to bear such
a monstrous burden. The little volume however was however
no pygmy in strength or powers of endurance, for in spite
of being crossed with so unmanageable a cognomen it
was bound to live, and gallantly surmounting its absurdity
soon ~~erred~~ it received the better and more euphonious
title *Lama Paternitatis*. The author of this work
is now unknown but it was at once attributed to
John Valentine Andreae, and, as it was never denied
by him, probably with justice. The substance of the nar-
rative is briefly this. About two hundred years before
the appearance of the *Lama*, Christian Rosenkreutz
of good family was compelled to enter a convent at an
early age. When he was 16 yrs old one of the brothers
took ~~him~~ ^{Christian} and started on a pilgrimage to the
Holy Sepulchre. The monk died at Cyprus, but Chris-
tian pushed on as far as Damascus, where hearing
of the wonders performed by Damascene Sages he re-
mained with them three years learning their mysteries.
Thence he returned to Germany by way of Fez, where
he attended a general council of sages from all lands.
In Germany Christian found so little favour

exhibited towards his proposed system of Reformation
in Morals and Science that he determined to form
a society of choice spirits and in part to them his love. He
chose for his first initiates three men from the com-
munity where he was situated. These were afterwards increas-
ed till the whole number including the founder was eight.
They reduced the knowledge of Christianity to writing in a
mystic dialect known only to the Brethren. They devoted
themselves to the gratuitous practice of Physic and ~~Opera-~~
rated, to meet again in one year, leaving but one
with Christianity, at home, at the House of the Holy Spirit.
After having lived one hundred years Christian died
and was buried by his comrades beneath the altar of the
House of the Holy Spirit. The Brotherhood continued for
another hundred years concealed from the world. Then
they opened the tomb of their founder and lo,

Before their eyes the wizard lay

As he had not been dead a day, and in his
hand was found a book of vellum with gold letters. This
was to the R.C. Brothers the most holy of books, save the Bible.
The most important secrets it contained was a "universal
polycrest" which lay hid in the great bosom of Nature, being
disclosed only to those favored lovers of the anonymous dame the Brethren
K~~new~~^{new} by animal also the power of making themselves invisible
of forming Gold from Lead, and all those alchemical mys-
teries that were so rare during the Middle Ages. They proclaimed
ed themselves Lutherans in Religion, and avowed philosophical
doctrines akin to those of Paracelsus. All worthy men, high or
low were in the Town invited to join this pseudo Brotherhood, for
the promotion of alchemic love,

"the hidden knowledge of Architecture," or "the recipe for making the philosopher's stone". Ixus was, to the Christians of the Catacombs, an emblem with a moral and religious meaning. It was, like the mystical bread of the communion, "the very body of our Lord." Yet, while beyond Rome ridiculed the mystery of the fish, the dove, and the X, these symbols kept alive, in the hearts of the persecuted dwellers in the tomb, "the truth which had been preached unto them." Heathen philosophers scoffed at the simple enigma, and, because the meaning of the emblem, was concealed from them declared that it had none; and, most emphatically, pronounced Christianity, a "juggle." For aught I know, even after reading Mr. Loew's "full and clear exposition of this wide spread juggle," the secrets of Freemasonry, may be as glorious and important, as those which lay for so many years, hidden in the sculptured fish, or the mystical word Ixus. Of this proposition, the author offers no direct proof, but proceeds to consider the second, which being proved, he considers the admission of the first, unavoidable. Let us look then, at the second, viz., All the symbols of Freemasonry, with their interpretations are of Rosicrucian origin. The universality of the proposition, makes its truth almost an impossibility. Granting that, in the main, Masonry was derived from Rosicrucianism, it is by no means probable, ^{that} the emblems of the Rosicrucians were adopted by the Masons, entirely without addition or alteration, and yet more improbable, that they should have remained so, until the present time, (or until the year 1847, when the essay under consideration was written).

In reference to the matter of this proposition, it is obvious, on the slightest consideration, that, if the author would establish it, he must show, 1st That Freemasonry did not exist previous to the decay of Rosicrucianism, and that it did spring from this institution. In other words he must ascertain the date, and attending circumstances, of the birth of Freemasonry; 2nd That each and every symbol, now employed by the Masonic brotherhood, was previously in use, among the brethren of the Rosy Cross. 3^d That to each of these symbols, the Freemasons of today, attach precisely the same significance, which they bore to the Rosicrucians of the 17th century. Unless the first of these positions be established, it is evident that however fully the others may be proved, the theory of the Rosicrucian origin of Masonry, is by no means sustained. The method by which Mr Soame makes the birth of Freemasonry contemporaneous with the downfall of Rosicrucianism, and thereby derives the former from the latter, is this, viz. Rosicrucianism having become unpopular among the scholars of Europe, the name was changed, & the Brothers R. C. were termed Sapientes. After a time this title was also dropped, and they assumed the name Freemasons. Mr Soame does not even hint at any thing like a reason for the assumption of this last alias. Indeed he does not seem to think any reason to have been necessary. Let us consider now, what the author regards as the true Masonic pedigree. The *Fama Fraternitatis* which the author affirms to have contained the first hint toward the formation of the organization, was first published in 1614. It purported to be an account of a society of eight persons, established, long before, by one Christian Rosenkreuz, and invited all the good and wise

of Europe to join with them, for the cultivation of learning, especially of alchemical and medicinal arts. This *Fama* gave rise to much discussion, among the learned, in regard to its source & reliability, being regarded by some, as a satire, by others as "a playful effusion of the fancy," and by others as a veritable account, of a really existing select and noble fraternity. Very many attempted to communicate with the mystic brothers R. C., both by publication and by letter. To such a pitch did the excitement rise, that another edition of the *Fama* was called for, and published in 1617. At length, the belief became very nearly, if not quite, universal, that the *Fama* was either a satire or a fable, and the name Rosicrucian, was adopted by the followers of Paracelsus, because the philosophic doctrines of the brothers R. C. agreed pretty nearly with their own. After a time, however, the doctrines of Paracelsus fell into disrepute, and the name Rosicrucian became opprobrious. It was, therefore, exchanged for the modest cognomen "Sapientes." The first, and almost the only, authority which we have, for the assumption of this name by the Rosicrucians, is that of Flood who wrote, in reply to Jassenti in 1633, as follows.

"*Frater, inquam, R. C. olim sic dicti, quos hodie Sapientes vocamus, omisso illo nomine tanquam odioso, miseris mortalibus vel ignorantiae obductis, et in oblivione ^{hominum} penitus sepultis.*"

Up to this point in the discussion, the term "Brothers R. C." had been constantly employed, by Harde, Valentine, Meisner & Jassenti, and duly acknowledged, by Flood, the two Brotons and other leading Paracelsists. The word "oblivione", in the above extract has, therefore, in all probability, the force of "ignorantia", a meaning by no means unusual to it, in those days of corrupt Latinity. Mr Loane, however admits, as indeed no one could refuse to do, the current history of Masonry, back to the

year 1630 Up to this point, whatever it may be beyond it, the history of the Order is clear, coherent and indisputable. But, according to this authority, which the author himself admits, Masonic Lodges, answering in almost every respect, to those of modern times, were established all over Central & Southern Europe & Great Britain; and answered indifferently to the name Mason or Freemason, with the exception, that about this time, the adjective free, began to be more generally applied to the members of the brotherhood, to distinguish them from the mechanized laborer. What then, becomes of Mr Soane's theory? How could the Freemasons be the Sapientia, alias Rosicrucians, under the disguise of another name? Freemasonry was a widely spread and flourishing institution in 1630. The first intimation we have of the Rosicrucians being called Sapientia was in 1639. This reminds us, of the Irishman's inquiry in regard to James, First, "Where an' was the Prince an' could anan within his father ~~was~~ a boy?" There is, evidently, a flaw in the line of descent, as traced by Mr Soane. The child was either illegitimate, surreptitious or awonderfully precocious.

Though it would seem unnecessary, to show the futility of the author's hypothesis, let us go farther and see how he established the absolute identity of the Rosicrucian and Masonic symbols. On this point, the author has given us but one sentence, which is little more than a repetition of his former assertion, but which we give entire to show its insufficiency. ^{and} "The emblems of the two brotherhoods are the same in every respect, - the plummet, the level, the compass, the cross, the rose" - (When was the rose a symbol, among Freemasons? Mr Soane would enlighten some members of the craft, if he would name a single instance in which it is used as such.) - and all the rest of their symbolic trappings which the Rosicrucians named, as the insignia of their imaginary

associations, and which they also would have persuaded a credulous world concealed ^{truths} ~~by~~ ^{un}guessable by mere language." If this assertion could be allowed as proof, it would avail nothing, in regard to the question at issue, so far as the symbols which he has mentioned are concerned, for these were also employed in the religious mysteries of the ancients with the exception of the rose, and are said to be all of them found among the religious symbols of Central America.

As to identity of interpretation in two brotherhoods, the author very prudently does not attempt to establish anything of the kind. Not being a Mason he cannot of course be supposed to know anything of the interpretation which they give certain symbols, for that is he admits their secret and known only to brethren of the craft. He cannot ascertain the interpretation which the brothers R. C. gave to the same or similar symbols, for they claimed this to be their secret, and no Rosicrucian has ever professedly revealed it. How then could Mr. Searce institute any sort of a comparison between these two systems of interpretation? He evidently could not and we never should have expected him to do anything of the kind had he not affirmed them to be identical. If more were required to show the utter absurdity of this theory it to be found in the rules given in the Formula for the regulation of the members of the Fraternity. These are six, and are as unlike in every ^{almost} respect to those which govern a Lodge or Chapter of Masons as can be imagined. They are, — 1st That none should devote themselves to any occupation except physic, and should practice it gratuitously. 2nd That none should be compelled, on account of the brother

hood, to wear a particular habit, but should in this, conform to the custom of the land in which they happen to be.

3^d That each should present himself on a certain day in the year at the house of the "Spiritus Sanctus," or send a reason for his absence. 4th That each should look out for a brother to succeed him in case of his death. 5th The letters R.C. were to be their seal and watchword and title. 6th The Brotherhood should be kept a secret for one hundred years." We think it must require a mind, both acute and credulous, and an imagination of great fertility, to see in these the germ of Masonry. We cannot doubt the learning, ability, or honesty of Mr Loane, and can only account for his adoption of this theory, by supposing that from a bibliomane, he has become a monomaniac.

Read at the Y
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A. W. Torgue.

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