

# CAGLIOSTRO AND HIS EGYPTIAN RITE OF FREEMASONRY

*By*

HENRY RIDGELY EVANS, Litt.D., 33° Hon.

*Grand Tiler of the Supreme Council, A.: A.: S.: R.:  
of Freemasonry for the Southern Jurisdiction  
of the United States.*

TOGETHER WITH AN  
EXPOSITION OF THE FIRST DEGREE OF THE EGYPTIAN RITE

*Translated from the French by*

HORACE PARKER MCINTOSH, 33° Hon.

*(Reprinted from the New Age Magazine.)*

---

WASHINGTON, D. C.

1919



COUNT CAGLIOSTRO

# CAGLIOSTRO AND HIS EGYPTIAN RITE OF FREEMASONRY

## INTRODUCTION

"Unparalleled Cagliostro! Looking at thy so attractively decorated private theater, wherein thou actedst and livedst, what hand but itches to draw aside thy curtain and, turning the whole inside out, find thee in the middle thereof?"—CARLYLE: *Miscellaneous Essays*.

IN the Rue de Beaune, Paris, a few doors from the house where Voltaire died, is a shabby genteel little hostelry, dating back to pre-revolutionary times; to the old régime of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. You ring the bell of the concierge's office, and the wrought-iron gates open with a clang. Mine host welcomes you at the portal and, with the airs and graces of an aristocrat of the eighteenth century, ushers you up to the state bedroom. Ah, that bedroom, so old and quaint, with its huge four-post bed, garnished with faded red curtains and mounted upon a raised dais. The chimney-piece is carved and bears the half-obliterated escutcheon of the builder of the mansion—a noble of the old régime. Over the mantle hangs a large oval mirror set in a tarnished gilt frame. Think, dear reader, of the hundreds of human faces that have peered into that ancient glass, and then passed forever into the land of shadows. From everyone, say the occultists, issues an aura, a subtle, magnetic force that attracts or repels other souls and exercises an influence on inanimate things. If this be so, then everything must be affected by it—and why not the sensitive surface of a mirror, just as the photographer's negative is affected? Think of the psychic impressions that must be stored up in an old looking-glass of the kind described above.

In the summer of 1893 I was in Paris on business and pleasure bent, and I found a lodging at the little hotel of the Rue de Beaune—an old street, once aristocratic, but now fallen into decay, and silent as the grave. The hum of Paris is but faintly heard here. By good fortune I was assigned to the state bedroom. A sultry evening was closing in. Storm clouds hung low in the heavens, presaging rain before morning. I had picked up on the Quai Voltaire a battered volume of Dumas' *Memoirs of a Physician*, and sat down to read it by the light of wax candles stuck into an antiquated candelabrum. The book is fascinating. I first read it when a boy, and implicitly believed every word of it. It is replete with magic and mystery. In rapid succession Dumas passes before you pictures of Louis XV, the Countess du Barry, the Dauphin and his beautiful consort, the unfortunate Antoinette; the brilliant prime minister, Choiseul; the Cardinal de Rohan; and towering above all, Cagliostro, the necromancer of the ancient régime.

I read Dumas's delightful novel until midnight and then retired to rest in the antique four-poster. The storm broke and the rain fell in torrents outside, splashing against the window panes like the dashing of the sea against the closed ports of an ocean liner. The thunder rolled over the house, and the lightning flashed vividly. Gradually the storm died away and nothing was heard but the soothing drip, drip, drip of the rain drops falling from the eaves of the house upon the flagged courtyard below, like the drip of the rain upon the Ghost's Walk of Chesney Wold—the haunted mansion of the Dedlock family of Charles Dickens' *Bleak House*. With my mind filled with strange fancies about Cagliostro and that old Paris of long ago, I dropped off to sleep and was soon in the land of dreams—that crepuscular country, midway between this mortal life of ours and the realm of spirit, where the soul revels amid such fantastic scenes.

I seemed to be standing before the mirror, gazing earnestly into its crystal depths. The reflection of my own face was no longer seen, but a strange phantasmagoria passed before my entranced gaze. Let me see if I can recall it.

It is night. The lanterns swung in the streets of old Paris glimmer fitfully. Silence broods over the city with shadowy wings. No sound is heard save the clank of the patrol on its rounds. The Rue Saint Claude, however, is all bustle and confusion. A grand *soirée magique* is being held at the house of Monsieur le Comte de Cagliostro. I can see heavy, old-fashioned carriages standing in front of the door, with coachmen lolling sleepily on the boxes, and linkboys playing rude games with each other in the kennel. A rumble in the street—ha, there, lackeys! out of the way! Here comes the coach of my Lord Cardinal, Prince Louis de Rohan. There is a flash of torches. Servants in gorgeous liveries of red and gold, with powdered wigs, open the door of the vehicle, and let down the steps with a crash. Monseigneur le Cardinal, celebrant of the mass in the royal palace at Versailles, a man of pleasure and alchemist, descends. He is enveloped in a dark cloak as if to court disguise, but it is only a polite pretense. He enters the mansion of his bosom friend, Cagliostro, the magician. Within, all is a blaze of light. Visitors are received in a handsomely furnished apartment on the second floor. Beyond that is the séance-room, a mysterious chamber hung with somber draperies. Wax candles in tall silver sconces, arranged about the place in mystic pentagons and triangles, illuminate the scene.

In the center of the room is a table with a black cloth, on which are embroidered in red the symbols of the highest degree of the Rosicrucians. Upon this strange shekinah is placed the cabalistic apparatus of the necromancer—odd little Egyptian figures of Isis and Osiris, vials of lustral waters, and a large globe full of clarified water. It is all very uncanny. Presently the guests are seated in a circle about the altar, and form a magnetic chain. Cagliostro, the Grand Kophta, enters. He is habited in gorgeous robes like the arch-hierophant of an ancient Egyptian temple. The clairvoyante is now brought in, a child of angelic purity, born under a certain constellation, of delicate nerves, great sensitiveness, and withal, blue eyes. She is bidden to kneel before the globe, and relate what she sees therein. Cagliostro makes passes over her, and commands the genii to enter the water. The very soul of the seeress is penetrated with the magnetic aura emanating from the magician. She becomes convulsed, and declares that she sees events taking place that very moment at the court of Versailles, at Vienna, at Rome.

## PART I.—A MASTER OF MAGIC

Enough ill has been said of Cagliostro. I intend to speak well of him, because I think his is always preferable, providing one can.—BARON DE GLEICHEN: *Souvenirs*.

CAGLIOSTRO!—the name is one to conjure with. It has a cabalistic sound. Who in reality was this incomparable master of mystery, this Rosicrucian and arch-necromancer of the eighteenth century, who suddenly emerged from profound obscurity, flashed like a meteor across the stage of life, and then vanished in darkness in the gloomy dungeons of the castle of San Leon, Italy, charged by the Church of Rome with magic, heresy, and Freemasonry? He hobnobbed with princes and potentates; he was the bosom friend of the Cardinal de Rohan, grand almoner of the court of France; and he was the founder of the Egyptian Rite of Freemasonry. He claimed to be able to evoke the spirits of the dead. In fact, he was the prototype of the modern spirit medium or psychic.

Was he a knave or a martyr?

The question is worthy of investigation.

One hundred and twenty-four years have passed away since his death. In drama, romance and history his personality has been exploited. Alexandre Dumas made him the hero of his novel, *The Memoirs of a Physician*. Grim old Carlyle penned an essay about him full of vituperation and condemnation. The great Goethe wrote a drama in five acts portraying his career, called *Der Gros-Cophta*. Perhaps there never was a character in modern history so denounced and vilified as Cagliostro. Were there no good points about him? Was he simply a charlatan preying on a credulous public, heartless and unscrupulous? Did he not have some redeeming traits, some ideals?

In the year 1910 a voluminous work was published in London, which treats the subject of the arch-hierophant of the mysteries in an impartial manner. It is entitled *Cagliostro, the Splendour and Misery of a Master of Magic*, by

W. R. H. Trowbridge. The author has, in my opinion, lifted the black pall of evil which has rested upon the character of the sorcerer for over a century, and has shown very clearly that Cagliostro was not guilty of the heinous crimes imputed to him, but, on the contrary, was in many respects a badly abused and slandered man. As all readers of history know, he was mixed up in the Diamond Necklace trial, which dragged the fair name of the beautiful and innocent Queen of France, Marie Antoinette, in the mire. But the necromancer was acquitted, after having been imprisoned for more than a year in the Bastille. He was afterwards banished from France by order of Louis XVI. He took refuge in England. At the time of the affair of the necklace the French police did their best to throw light on Cagliostro's past, but all their efforts were baffled. It was in September, 1786, that the assertion was first made by the *Courrier de l'Europe*, a French newspaper published in London, that he was Joseph Balsamo, a forger and swindler, who some years before the advent of Cagliostro in Paris had made a criminal record for himself in France and other countries, and then had mysteriously disappeared. The editor of the above-mentioned journal was Theveneau de Morande, a notorious blackmailer and spy in the pay of the French Government. His attempts to besmirch the character of Cagliostro were doubtless instigated by the French Minister of Police in order to discredit the alchemist and wonder-worker in the eyes of the English public, more especially the Freemasons. Cagliostro, in his famous *Letter to the French People* had attacked royalty in France in no uncertain terms, and the pamphlet had been widely circulated in Paris and throughout France.

The book published in Rome in 1791, under the auspices of the Apostolic

Chamber, purporting to be a life of Cagliostro, with an account of his trial by the Holy Inquisition, also identifies the necromancer with the criminal Balsamo, but no dates are given. It is special pleading from start to finish, full of bitter clerical invectives against Masonry, and, as a biography, totally unreliable. Upon the articles by Morande and the so-called biography published by the Inquisition, all subsequent authors have based their opinions that Cagliostro, the occultist, was Joseph Balsamo, blackmailer, forger, swindler and panderer for his own wife; a man "wanted" by the police of France, Italy, Spain and England. "But," says Mr. Trowbridge, "there is another reason for doubting the identity of the two men. It is the most powerful of all, and has hitherto apparently escaped the attention of those who have taken this singular theory of identification for granted. *Nobody that had known Balsamo ever saw Cagliostro.*

"Again, one wonders why nobody who had known Balsamo ever made the least attempt to identify Cagliostro with him either at the time of the Diamond Necklace trial or when the articles in the *Courier de l'Europe* brought him a second time prominently before the public. Now Balsamo was known to have lived in London in 1771, when his conduct was so suspicious to the police that he deemed it advisable to leave the country. He and his wife accordingly went to Paris, and it was here that, in 1773, the events occurred which brought both prominently under the notice of the authorities. Six years after Balsamo's disappearance from London, Count Cagliostro appeared in that city. . . . How is it, one asks, that the London police, who 'wanted' Joseph Balsamo, utterly failed to recognize him in the notorious Cagliostro?" And so with his identification in Paris. The Balsamo legend seems to be punctured. But, after all is said, who was Cagliostro? He admitted that the name was an alias. Balsamo was devoid of education, and even the appearance of respectability; grasping,

scheming and utterly disreputable. Count Cagliostro was a highly accomplished man; a chemist of no mean ability; an empiric, who made many remarkable cures of diseases that baffled the medicos of the period; a psychic and a mesmerizer. He was charitable and generous to a fault, and gave away immense sums of money to the poor. As Grand Master of the Egyptian Rite, he was fairly worshipped by his followers. How could Balsamo have transformed his character so completely from a common crook to a humanitarian. As Trowbridge says: "Whoever Cagliostro may have been, he could certainly never have been Joseph Balsamo." Now let us turn to the man whose impenetrable cognomen of Comte de Cagliostro puzzled all Europe.

In July, 1776—the exact date is unknown—two foreigners arrived in London and engaged a suite of furnished rooms in Whitcombe Street, Leicester Fields. They called themselves Count and Countess Cagliostro. They were presumably of Italian origin, and possessed money and jewels in abundance. The Count turned one of the rooms he had rented into a chemical laboratory. It was soon noised about that he was an alchemist and a Rosicrucian. To please some people he had met he foretold the lucky numbers in a lottery by cabalistic means. Refusing to be mixed up any further in such matters, he was persecuted by a gang of swindlers, and spent some months in the King's Bench prison on various technical charges. To avoid any further trouble—and the evidence is conclusive that he was the innocent victim of sharpers, who wished to use him as a tool to obtain money for them by predicting lucky lottery numbers—he left England. But before doing so he was initiated into a Masonic lodge in London. It was known as Esperance Lodge, No. 369, and was composed mainly of French and Italian residents in London, holding its sessions at the King's Head Tavern, Gerard Street. It was attached to the Continental Masonic Order of

the Higher Observance, which was supposed to be a continuation and perfection of the ancient association of Knights Templar. The date of the initiation of the famous psychic was some time in April, 1777. Deeply immersed in the dreams of the Rosicrucians and mystics, Cagliostro determined to found an Egyptian Rite of Freemasonry upon the first three degrees of the fraternity, in which magical practices were to be perpetuated. According to the Inquisition biographer he borrowed his ideas for the ritual from an obscure spiritist, George Coston, whose manuscript he picked up in a bookshop in London.

In his magical séances, Cagliostro made use of a young boy (*pupille*) or young girl (*colombe*) in the state of virgin innocence, to whom power was given over the seven spirits that surround the throne of the divinity and preside over the seven planets. The boy or girl would kneel in front of a globe of clarified water placed upon a table, covered with a black cloth embroidered with Rosicrucian symbols, and Cagliostro, making strange mesmeric passes, would summon the angels of the spheres to enter the globe; whereupon the youthful clairvoyant would behold the visions presented to his or her view, and often describe events taking place at a distance. Many eminent persons testified to the genuineness of the feats performed. This is what is called "crystal vision" by students of psychical research, although the object employed is usually a ball of rock crystal and not a globe of water, such as Cagliostro used. The Society for Psychical Research has shown that persons in a state of partial or complete hypnosis frequently develop clairvoyant and telepathic powers. The crystal is used to promote hypnosis, also to visualize the images that appear in the mind. Undoubtedly Cagliostro was an accomplished mesmerizer. He possessed remarkable psychic powers which he confessed that he did not understand. But, like many mediums who have such gifts, he sometimes resorted (if his enemies are to be believed) to trickery

and sleight-of-hand to accomplish results when the real power was not forthcoming. We have seen this in the case of the extraordinary materializing medium, Eusapia Paladino, who died a few years ago in Naples, after a somewhat lurid career. But that is another story, as Kipling says. To return to Cagliostro.

From England the arch-enchanter went to The Hague. Throughout Holland he was received by the lodges with Masonic honors—"arches of steel," etc. He discoursed learnedly on magic and Masonry to enraptured thousands. He visited Mitau and St. Petersburg in 1779. In May, 1780, he turned up at Warsaw, where he "paraded himself in the white shoes and red heels of a noble." In September, 1780, he arrived at Strasbourg, where he founded one of his Egyptian lodges.

He lavished money right and left, cured the poor without pay, and treated the great with arrogance. The Cardinal de Rohan invited the sorcerer and his wife to live at the episcopal palace. Cagliostro presented the cardinal with a diamond worth 20,000 livres, which he claimed to have made. The churchman had a laboratory fitted up in the palace for the alchemist, where experiments in gold-making were undertaken. The cardinal, in fact, declared that he saw Cagliostro transmute baser metals into gold. Spiritualistic séances were held in the palace, with all the *mise-en-scène* with which Cagliostro knew how to invest such occult doings.

The skeptical Baroness d'Oberkirch, in her memoirs, says that while at Strasbourg, Cagliostro predicted the death of the Empress Maria Theresa of Austria. "He even foretold the hour at which she would expire," relates the baroness. "Cardinal de Rohan told it to me in the evening, and it was five days after that the news arrived." In the parlance of modern psychical research this feat savors of telepathy.

In the year 1785 we find the count at Lyons, France, where he founded the world-famous lodge of Triumphant Wisdom and converted hundreds to his mystical doctrines. But his greatest

triumph was achieved in Paris. A gay and frivolous aristocracy, mad after new sensations, welcomed the magician with open arms. The way had been paved for him by Mesmer and St. Martin. He made his appearance in the French capital on January 30, 1785. The Cardinal de Rohan selected and furnished a house for him. Houdon, the celebrated sculptor, executed his bust in marble, from which numerous replicas in bronze and plaster were made and sold. Engravings of him by Bartolozzi were to be had in the print shops, bearing the following inscription:

De l'ami des humains reconnaissez les traits ;  
Tous ses jours sont marqués par de nouveaux bien faits,  
Il prolonge la vie, il secourt l'indigence,  
Le plaisir d'être utile est seul sa récompense.

He was called "the divine Cagliostro." His house in the Rue Saint Claude was always thronged with noble guests who came to witness the strange séances where ghosts from "the vasty deep" were summoned. How were these phantoms evoked? Confederates, concave mirrors and images cast upon the smoke arising from burning incense may explain many of the materializations witnessed in the "Chambre Egyptienne."

I do not doubt the truth of the telepathic, hypnotic and clairvoyant feats, for I have seen enough to warrant the genuineness of such phenomena; but I must take the so-called materializations with a grain of salt. Says Trowbridge: "To enhance the effect of his phenomena he had recourse to artifices worthy of a mountebank. The room in which his séances were held contained statuettes of Isis, Anubis and the ox Apis. The walls were covered with hieroglyphics, and two lackeys, clothed like Egyptian slaves as they are represented on the monuments at Thebes, were in attendance to arrange the screen behind which the *pupilles* or *colombes* sat, the carafe or mirror into which they gazed, or to perform any other service that was required. To complete the *mise-en-scène*, Cagliostro wore a robe of black silk on which

hieroglyphics were embroidered in red. His head was covered with an Arab turban of cloth of gold ornamented with jewels. A chain of emeralds hung *en sautoir* upon his breast, to which scarabs and cabalistic symbols of all colors in metal were attached. A sword with a handle shaped like a cross was suspended from a belt of red silk."

Speaking of Cagliostro's career in Paris, Arthur Edward Waite says:

He assumed now the rôle of a practical magician, and astonished the city by the evocation of phantoms, which he caused to appear, at the wish of the inquirer, either in a mirror or in a vase of clear water. These phantoms equally represented dead and living beings, and as occasionally collusion appears to have been well-nigh impossible, and as the theory of coincidence is preposterous, there is reason to suppose that he produced results which must sometimes have astonished himself. All Paris, at any rate, was set wondering at his enchantments and prodigies, and it is seriously stated that Louis XVI was so infatuated with "le divin Cagliostro" that he declared that anyone who injured him should be considered guilty of treason. At Versailles, and in the presence of several distinguished nobles, he is said to have caused the apparition in mirrors and vases, not merely of the specters of absent or deceased persons, but animated and moving beings of a phantasmal description, including many dead men and women selected by the astonished spectators.

An interesting pen-portrait of the enchanter is contained in the memoirs of Count Beugnot, who met him at Madame de la Motte's house in Paris. Says Beugnot:

Cagliostro was of medium height, rather stout, with an olive complexion, a very short neck, round face, two large eyes on a level with the cheeks, and a broad, turned-up nose. . . . His hair was dressed in a way new to France, being divided into several small tresses that united behind the head, and were twisted up into what was then called a club.

He wore on that day an iron-gray coat of French make, with gold lace, a scarlet waistcoat trimmed with broad Spanish lace, red breeches, his sword looped to the skirt of his coat, and a laced hat with a white feather, the latter a decoration still required of mountebanks, tooth drawers, and other medical practitioners who proclaim and retail their drugs in the open air. Cagliostro set off his costume by lace ruffles, several valuable rings, and shoe-buckles which were, it is true, of antique design, but bright



enough to be taken for real diamonds. . . . The face, attire, and the whole man made an impression on me that I could not prevent. I listened to the talk. He spoke some sort of medley, half French and half Italian, and made many quotations which might be Arabic, but which he did not trouble himself to translate. I could not remember any more [of his conversation] than that the hero had spoken of heaven, of the stars, of the Great Secret, of Memphis, of the high priest, of transcendental chemistry, of giants and monstrous beasts, of a city ten times as large as Paris, in the middle of Africa, where he had correspondents.

On August 22, 1785, Cagliostro was arrested under a *lettre de cachet* and cast into the Bastille, charged with complicity in the affair of the Diamond Necklace, an intrigue that involved in its toils a queen, a cardinal, a courtesan and a conjurer. Cagliostro refuted with wonderful *sang froid* the charges brought against him. He appeared in court proud and triumphant in his coat of green silk embroidered with gold. "Who are you, and whence do you come?" asked the attorney for the Crown.

"I am an illustrious traveler," he answered bombastically. There was great laughter in court, in which the judges joined. He informed the judges that he was unacquainted with the place of his birth and the names of his parents, but that he had spent his infancy in Medina, Arabia, and had been brought up under the cognomen of Acharat. He had resided in the palace of the Great Muphti, and always had had the servants to attend to his wants, besides his tutor, named Althotas, who was very fond of him. Althotas had told him that his (Cagliostro's) father and mother were Christians and nobles, who died when he was three months old, leaving him in the care of the Muphti. On one occasion, he said, he had asked his preceptor to tell him the name of his parents. Althotas had replied that it would be dangerous for him to know; but some incautious expressions dropped by the tutor led him to believe that they were from Malta. When twelve years of age he began his travels, and learned the languages of the Orient. He remained three years in the sacred city of

Mecca. The sheriff or governor of that place showed him such unusual attention and kindness that he oftentimes thought that personage was his father. He quitted this good man, he said, with tears in his eyes, and never saw him again.

"Adieu, nature's unfortunate child, adieu!" cried the sheriff of Mecca to him as he took his departure.

Cagliostro declared that whenever he arrived in any city, either of Europe, Asia, or Africa, he always found an account opened for him at the leading banker's or merchant's; he had only to whisper the word "Acharat" and his wants were immediately supplied. He really believed, he said, that the sheriff was the friend to whom all was owing, and that this was the secret of his wealth. He denied all complicity in the necklace swindle, and scornfully refuted the charge of Madame de la Motte that he was "an empiric, a mean alchemist, a dreamer on the Philosopher's Stone, a false prophet, a profaner of true worship, the self-dubbed Count de Cagliostro."

"As to my being a false prophet," he exclaimed grandiloquently, "I have not always been so; for I once prophesied to the Cardinal de Rohan that Madame de la Motte would prove a dangerous woman, and the result has verified my prediction."

Cagliostro was acquitted. He drove in triumph from the Bastille to his residence, after hearing of his order of discharge. His coach was preceded by a fantastic cripple, who distributed medicines and presents among the crowd. He found the Rue Saint Claude thronged with friends and sympathizers, anxious to welcome him home. At this period revolutionary sentiments were openly vented by the people of France. The throne was being undermined by the philosophers and the politicians. Any excuse was made to denounce Louis XVI and his queen. Scurrilous pamphlets were published, declaring that Marie Antoinette was equally guilty with the de la Mottes in the necklace swindle. Cagliostro consequently was regarded as a martyr to

the liberties of man. His arrest under the detested *lettre de cachet*, upon mere suspicion, and his long incarceration in the Bastille without trial, were indeed flagrant abuses of justice.

The day after his acquittal he was banished from France by order of the king. At St. Denis his carriage was driven between two dense and silent lines of sympathizers; and, as his vessel cleared the port of Boulogne, 5,000 persons knelt down on the shore to receive his blessing. He went directly to London.

On June 20, 1786, he addressed his *Letter to the French People*, in which, says the Inquisition biographer, "he seems clearly to predict the approaching revolution in France; for he prophesies that 'the Bastille shall be destroyed and become a public walk,' and announces that 'a prince shall reign in France who will abolish *lettres de cachet*, convoke the States-General and reestablish the true religion.'" But we have a different opinion expressed by W. R. H. Trowbridge:

"Nearly all who have written on Cagliostro have erred in stating that the letter contained the 'predictions that the Bastille would be destroyed, its site become a public promenade, and that a king would reign in France who would abolish *lettres de cachet* and convoke the States-General'—all of which actually occurred three years later, in 1789. The predictions are the invention of the Inquisition biographer, to whose shortcomings, to put it mildly, attention has been frequently called. Cagliostro merely says that if in the future he was permitted to return to France he would only do so 'provided the Bastille was destroyed and its site turned into a public promenade.' A copy of this letter, now become very rare, is to be seen in the French National Archives at Paris."

The letter nevertheless created a profound sensation. "It was," says Sax Rohmer, "the first tocsin heralding the Terror."

While in London Cagliostro was attacked by the editor Morande, as I have

previously stated. Disgusted with his treatment by the Freemasons and desirous of escaping from the harpies of the law, who threatened him with a debtor's prison, he fled to his old coign of vantage, the Continent, where his great successes had been achieved. But he was forbidden to practice his peculiar system of medicine and Masonry in Austria, Germany, Russia and Spain. Drawn like a needle to the lode-stone, he went to Rome. Foolish Grand Cophta! Freemasonry was a capital offense in the dominions of the Pope. Cagliostro made a feeble attempt to establish an Egyptian lodge, but was betrayed by one of its members, a spy in the pay of the Holy Office. Suddenly on the evening of December 27, 1789, he and his wife were arrested by the dreaded sbirri of the Holy Inquisition and incarcerated in the fortress of St. Angelo. His highly prized manuscript of Egyptian Masonry was seized, together with all his papers and correspondence.

Among his effects the Inquisition found a peculiar seal, upon which were engraved *a serpent pierced by an arrow, and holding an apple in its mouth*, and the mysterious letters, "L · P · D."

Eliphaz Lévi (*Alphonse Louis Constant*), the celebrated French occultist, in his *History of Magic*, has the following to say regarding the seal:

As explained by the Cabalistic letters of the names Acharat and Althotas, it expresses the chief characteristics of the Great Arcanum and the Great Work. It is a serpent pierced by an arrow, thus representing the letter *Aleph*, an image of the union between active and passive, spirit and life, will and light. The arrow is that of the antique Apollo, while the serpent is the python of fable, the green dragon of Hermetic philosophy. The letter *Aleph* represents equilibrated unity. This pantacle is reproduced under various forms in the talismans of old magic. . . . The arrow signifies the active principle, will, magical action, the coagulation of the dissolvent, the fixation of the volatile by projection and the penetration of earth by fire. The union of the two is the universal balance, the Great Arcanum, the Great Work, the equilibrium of *Jachin* and *Boaz*. The initials L. P. D., which accompany this figure, signify Liberty, Power, Duty, and also Light, Proportion, Density; Law, Principle and Right. The Freemasons

have changed the order of these initials, and in the form of L.·D.·P.· they render them as *Liberté de Penser*, Liberty of Thought, inscribing these on a symbolical bridge, but for those who are not initiated they substitute *Liberté de Passer*, Liberty of Passage. In the records of the prosecution of Cagliostro it is said that his examination elicited another meaning as follows: *Lilia destrue pedibus*: Trample the lilies under foot; and in support of this version may be cited a Masonic medal of the sixteenth or seventeenth century, depicting a branch of lilies severed by a sword, having these words on the exergue: *Talem dabit ultio messem*—Revenge shall give this harvest.

Cagliostro is supposed by some writers to have been an agent of the Illuminati, a secret order pledged to overturn the thrones of Europe and establish democracy. If this be true, the mystical letters L.·P.·D. have especial significance, as Lévi explains. The *fleur de lys* was the heraldic device of the Bourbon kings of France; hence this trampling upon the lilies alluded to the stamping out of the French monarchy by the Illuminati, which was an order grafted on Freemasonry.

Lévi contends that the name of Acharat, assumed by Cagliostro, when written cabalistically in Hebrew characters expresses the triple unity. "The name Althotas, or that of Cagliostro's master, is composed of the word *Thot*, with the syllables *Al* and *As*, which, if read cabalistically, are *Sala*, meaning messenger or envoy. The name as a whole therefore signifies: *Thot*, the messenger of the Egyptians; and such in effect was he whom Cagliostro recognized as his master above all others."

Some think that Althotas was identical with Kôlmer who gave instruction in magic to Weishaupt, the founder of the Illuminati.

Both the names, Cagliostro and Balsamo, have an occult significance, according to Alexander Wilder, who says (*Notes and Queries*, v. 25, p. 216): "The cognomen of Balsamo is itself but *Baal Samen*, the Phœnician name of

the sun. Cagliostro is made up of *Kalos*, beautiful, from *Kas*, to burn; and *Aster*, a star or sun."

After a long imprisonment and many examinations by the inquisitors of the Holy Office, Cagliostro was finally condemned to death as a *heretic, sorcerer* and *Freemason*, on March 21, 1791; but Pope Pius VI commuted the sentence to life imprisonment. At first he underwent his punishment in the castle of St. Angelo, but was subsequently transferred to the fortress of San Leon, in the Duchy of Urbino, where he fretted away his life in silence and darkness until August, 1795. The cause of his death and the place of his interment have never been revealed. The secret is buried in the archives of the Holy Office.

The Countess de Cagliostro died in a convent at Rome, where she had been forcibly detained.

Such, in brief, is the history of a remarkable man; a most sphinxlike character. That he believed in his mission to enlighten the world through his mystic doctrines admits of no doubt in my mind. Had he been a mere *charlatan* he would not have practiced his system of medicine and Masonry in such a humanitarian manner. That he made use of natural means, at times, to accomplish his wonders, such as the instruments of conjuring and phantasmagoria, with all the effective *mise-en-scène* of lights, draperies, Egyptian and Rosicrucian emblems, etc., may be admitted; but that does not detract from his undoubted gifts as a genuine psychic, as I have previously noted. Those who dabble in "psychic research and spiritism" (as I have done these many years) have learned to discriminate between what is false and what is true; and to make due allowance for the weakness of human nature. In the last analysis we are all enigmas to each other!

## PART II.—THE EGYPTIAN RITE

"If it be true that a man's works are the key to his character, nothing reveals that of Cagliostro more clearly than his system of Egyptian Masonry."—W. R. H. TROWBRIDGE: *The Splendour and Misery of a Master of Magic*.

TO UNDERSTAND Cagliostro and his Egyptian Rite of Freemasonry you must know the epoch in which he acted his strange world-drama, its philosophical, religious, and mystical background. You cannot dissociate an individual from the period in which he lives and judge him as an isolated phenomenon, naked and unadorned. You are compelled, if you wish to do him justice, to consider his environment. The arch-enchanter appeared on this mortal scene when the times were "out of joint." It was the latter part of that romantic eighteenth century of skepticism and credulity. The old world, like a huge Cheshire cheese, was being nibbled away from within, until little but the rind was left.

The rotten fabric of French society, in particular, was about to tumble down in the sulphurous flames of the Revolution, and the very people who were to suffer most in the calamity were doing their best to assist in the process of social and political disintegration. The dogmas of the Church were bitterly assailed by learned men. But the more skeptical the age the more credulity extant. Man begins by denying, and then doubts his doubts. Charles Kingsley says: "And so it befell, that this eighteenth century, which is usually held to be the most 'materialistic' of epochs, was in fact a most 'spiritualistic' one." When the *Zeitgeist* or Spirit of the Age, verges towards materialism, groups of men will detach themselves from the skepticism of the schools and form societies for the propagation of mystical and occult doctrines. Freemasonry played a no inconsiderable part in the eighteenth century in fostering such ideas. Says Una Birch, in her *Secret Societies and the French Revolution*:

The true history of the eighteenth century is the history of the aspiration of the

human race. In France it was epitomized. The spiritual life of that nation, which was to lift the weight of material oppression from the shoulders of multitudes, had been cherished through dark years by the preachers of Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood. From the Swedenborgian stronghold of Avignon, from Martinist Lyons, from Narbonne, from Munich, and many another citadel of freedom, there flashed on the grey night of feudalism, unseen but to the initiates, the watch-fires of great hope, tended by those priests of progress who, though unable to lift the veil that shrouds the destiny of man and the ends of worlds, by faith were empowered to dedicate the future to the Unknown God.

In all great transition periods when worn-out dogmas are relegated to the dust heap and old idols are broken, we find doctrinaires and honest enthusiasts promulgating their schemes for the moral and physical regeneration of mankind. We also find quacks, adventurers, and impostors preying upon the credulous masses, taking advantage of the loosening of old bonds of religious faith. Carlyle, with bitter pen, denounces this transition period of the eighteenth century as "the very age of impostors, cut-purses, swindlers, double-goers, enthusiasts, ambiguous persons; quacks simple, quacks compound; crack-brained or with deceit propense; quacks and quackeries of all colors and kinds. How many Mesmerists, Magicians, Cabalists, Swedenborgians, Illuminati, Crucified Nuns, and Devils of Loudon!" One cannot deny the rogueries and quackeries of the eighteenth century, and yet one must look deeper to find the truth. I should not mix up the Cabalists and Swedenborgians among doubtful people. But Carlyle, with his bilious temperament, could see nothing in occultism but sheer madness or imposture. He knew little or nothing about Freemasonry and its humanitarian aspirations, and denominated it "mumbo-jumbo" and va'n foolishness. Following the old, beaten track of the Inquisition biographer, and swallowing the lies of blackmailer Morande, he

penned a virulent diatribe against Cagliostro, in which he held him up to the scorn of the world as the Arch-Impostor and Quack. Strange, is it not, that the great majority of Masonic writers, among them being Albert G. Mackey in his encyclopedia of Freemasonry, should have blindly followed the Inquisition report on Cagliostro and his Egyptian Rite rather than take the trouble of delving into more reliable sources for information? The very fact that the Holy Inquisition at Rome had a hand in Cagliostro's condemnation should have made anything emanating from that terrible tribunal suspect. I know of but one Masonic encyclopedia that attempts in some measure to do justice to Cagliostro (the Masonic Martyr), and that is the *Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia* of Kenneth R. H. Mackenzie, New York, 1877.

Freemasonry on the Continent was deeply embued with occultism at the epoch of which I write. The Martinist Order in France was theosophical in the extreme, and so was the Swedenborgian Rite in other countries. Both of these rites were engrafted on Freemasonry proper. The old Rite of Perfection, which was the basis of our present Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, had within its system degrees that savored more or less of Rosicrucianism and Hermeticism. It was an age of magic and mystery, and the manufacture of higher degrees of Masonry of a Cabalistic nature. To my mind that fact makes the history of Continental Masonry more interesting than it otherwise would be. English Masonry, because of its rigid orthodoxy, played a very inconsiderable rôle in the eighteenth century. It was mostly given up to conviviality. When an attempt is made to stupefy the soul with the anodyne of materialism, we always see a great reaction. There was a tremendous recrudescence of the supernatural in the eighteenth century because of the skepticism and atheism openly advocated by scientists and metaphysicians. The occult assumed bizarre and fantastic forms. But we see the very same thing transpiring today

despite the materialism prevalent in the great institutions of learning. The fact is that mankind cannot live on negations. The soul turns instinctively towards its Divine Source like a flower to the sun. Says Trowbridge:

Never has the belief in the supernatural been more flourishing and more invincible than at present. Side by side with the positivism of modern science marches the mysticism of the occult, equally confident and undaunted, and equally victorious . . . To deride it is ridiculous. Occultism is not a menace to progress, but a spur. Its secrets are not to be ridiculed, but to be explained.

Today we do not invest the occult with the *mise-en-scène* of the theater, but we study it scientifically in the laboratory. Telepathy, clairvoyance, hypnotism, mediumism, and all the phenomena of the subliminal self are subjected to most careful tests. Some of our greatest investigators, like Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Barrett, and Professor Hyslop, have been convinced of the reality of spirit messages, and proclaim their belief in the Unseen Universe. The scientific men of the eighteenth century refused to study the phenomena, like many of our materialistic scientists of the present time, and left the matter entirely in the hands of those who posed as necromancers.

Cagliostro found the stage set for his appearance as the grand exponent of mysticism and Masonry of the latter years of the eighteenth century. The Illuminati, whose program was the liberation of mankind from the thrall-dom of Church and throne, was still an effective though expiring force. In Germany its members had been persecuted and imprisoned. Church and State were in league to repress by violent means the growth of free thought. It is claimed that Cagliostro was the secret agent of the Illuminati; which fact accounted for the great sums of money he had at his command. He rarely received fees for his medical services. If the Inquisition biographer is to be believed, Cagliostro confessed, at his trial, that he had been initiated into the Illuminati in an underground cave near Frankfort-on-the-Main. This seems probable. When the society was

suppressed in 1784, Cagliostro had no need of funds from that source, as he realized large fees from the Egyptian Rite.

John Yarker, in his *Arcane Schools* (Belfast, 1909), says: "The Rite of Cagliostro was clearly that of Pasqually, as evidenced by his complete ritual which has recently been printed in the Paris monthly, *Initiation*; it so closely follows the Theurgy [of Pasqually] that it need leave no doubt as to whence Cagliostro derived his system; and as he stated himself that it was founded on the manuscript of a George Cofton, which he had acquired in London, it is pretty certain that Pasqually had disciples in the metropolis."<sup>1</sup>

It was the late Dr. Encausse, Grand Master of the Martinists of France, who published the ritual of the Egyptian Rite in *L'Initiation* (Paris) some thirteen years ago. He positively asserted that it was authentic, having been copied from a transcript made by M. Morison of an original manuscript book on Egyptian Masonry which had been composed by Cagliostro, in the French language, for the use of the Egyptian lodges. M. Morison declared that there were three copies of the above-mentioned book, signed by Cagliostro and stamped with his peculiar seal, one of them having been the property of the Mother-Supreme Lodge of Lyons. The copy seen by M. Morison had passed through several hands ere it came to his notice. I see no reason for doubting the genuineness of the ritual published by Dr. Encausse. The Egyptian Rite was widely diffused in France, and copies of its ritual were in the possession of the masters of the various lodges in Lyons, Paris, and other cities.

Unfortunately I have not been able

to secure copies of *L'Initiation* containing the Fellowcraft and Master Mason degrees. To obtain further light on the tenets of the Egyptian Rite I shall have to seek for it in the brochures on Cagliostro published in France and Germany, and in the Inquisition biography. The Holy Office took possession of all Cagliostro's books and papers at the time of his arrest at Rome, among them being the manuscript of Egyptian Masonry.<sup>2</sup>

How far the Inquisition biography tells the truth is a matter of conjecture.<sup>3</sup> That the book was written to prove, among other things, that Freemasonry is the spawn of Satan no one will deny, but nevertheless it possesses a certain evidential value as regards the Egyptian system, although its statements have to be taken *cum grano salis*. The writer had an axe to grind and he ground it to the best of his ability.

A very good résumé of the Egyptian Rite is contained in Mackenzie's *Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia*. It is based to some extent on the Inquisition book. I quote as follows:<sup>3</sup>

Having acquired certain knowledge, according to his own statement, from the various occult students he met with in the East, Count Cagliostro resolved to communicate the results to persons properly fitted to receive them. Barruel (*Hist. Jac.*, vol. iii, p. 8) says that this Egyptian Masonry was introduced into Europe by a Jutland merchant, about 1771, who had been in Egypt—his name was said to be Ananiah. He remained some time in Malta, where Cagliostro may have seen him. His doctrines were those of Manes. Other statements aver that he bought certain manuscripts from one George Cofton in London leading up to the idea.<sup>4</sup> However acquired, upon this basis—like many others—he resolved to build. To himself he assigned the post of Grand Kophta, a title borrowed from that of the high priests of Egypt, and he would also seem to have been the initiator of his disciples. He proposed to conduct them to perfection by moral and physical regenera-

<sup>1</sup> Martines Pasqually founded a Masonic Rite in 1754. Its seventh degree was that of Rose-Croix. The ceremonies were of a theurgic or magical nature. Communications were supposed to be had with the spiritual world.

<sup>2</sup> Vie de Joseph Balsamo, connu sous le nom de Comte Cagliostro; extraite de la procédure instruite contre lui à Rome, en 1790, traduite d'après l'original italien imprimé à la Chambre Apostolique.

<sup>3</sup> Mackenzie, Kenneth R. H. *Royal Masonic cyclopaedia of history, rites, symbolism, and biography*. New York, 1877. Pp. 89-100.

<sup>4</sup> The statement regarding George Cofton is given in the Inquisition biography.

tion. He taught that the Philosopher's Stone was no fable, and that belief many before and since his time have shared; and he also promised to his followers to endow them with the pentagon, which restores man to a state of primitive innocence, forfeited by Adam at the fall. Egyptian Masonry he asserted to have been instituted by Enoch and Elijah, who taught its divine mysteries, and he reintroduced adoptive or androgynous Masonry. The Grand Kophta possessed the power of commanding the angels; and, in all cases, he was supposed to accomplish by the miraculous power with which he had been endowed by Divine power. All religions were tolerated under this system: a belief in God was the sole qualification, with the additional necessity of having been regularly initiated into the three degrees [of Symbolic Masonry]. Three additional degrees were added, and the initiates, if men, assumed the names of the ancient prophets, while the women took the names of the ancient Sybils. . . . In the admission to the Master's degree, great pomp and ceremony was used, and although it is undoubted that this Egyptian system of Masonry was spurious, we nowhere find the charges of blasphemy brought against it by the Roman Catholics justified. In this degree, a young girl (sometimes a boy), in a state of innocence, and called a pupil or dove (*colombe*), was introduced. The Master of the lodge then, with great ceremony, imparted to this child the power he possessed of communicating with pure spirits. These spirits were seven in number, governing the seven planets, and surrounding the throne of the Eternal, their names being Asael, Michael, Raphael, Gabriel, Uriel, Zobiachel, and Anachiel. The dove was then placed before the master, and the members offered up a prayer to heaven, in order that the power granted to the Grand Kophta might be exercised, in which prayer the dove joined. Being clothed in a long white robe, adorned with blue ribbons and a red scarf, she was inclosed in the tabernacle, which was hung with white. In the door of the tabernacle was a window, through which she gave her responses; and within the tabernacle was a seat with a small table, on which three tapers were burning. The Master then repeated the formulae by which the presence of the seven angels was invoked, and when they presented themselves to the eyes of the seer or dove, certain questions as to the fitness of the candidate were answered, and responses given, after which other ceremonies completed the advancement of the individual. The ceremony of admitting women to the degree of Mistress was somewhat similar. The lodges of Egyptian Masonry were dedicated to St. John the Evangelist, on account of the great affinity existing between the Apocalypse and the ceremonies of the ritual. The emblems used in the Rite were the septangle, the triangle, the trowel, the compass, the square, the gavel, the death's head, the cubical stone, the rude ashlar, the triangular stone, the wooden

bridge, Jacob's ladder, the phoenix, the globe, time, and others. It seems somewhat uncertain at what time Cagliostro perfected his system.

Eliphas Lévi, the celebrated French occultist, in his *History of Magic*, speaks of Cagliostro's scheme of moral regeneration as follows:

The precepts of moral regeneration according to the Grand Mopht were as follows: "You shall go up to Mount Sinai with Moses; you shall ascend Calvary; with Phaleg you shall climb Thabor, and shall stand on Carmel with Elias. You shall build your tabernacle on the summit of the mountain; it shall consist of three wings or divisions, but these shall be joined together and that in the center shall have three stories. The refectory shall be on the ground floor. Above it there shall be a circular chamber with twelve beds round the walls and one bed in the center: this shall be the place of sleep and dreams. The uppermost room shall be square, having four windows in each of the four quarters; and this shall be the room of light. There, and alone, you shall pray for forty days and sleep for forty nights in the dormitory of the Twelve Masters. Then you shall receive the signatures of the seven genii and the pentagram traced on a sheet of virgin parchment. It is the sign which no man knoweth, save him who receiveth it. It is the secret character inscribed on the white stone mentioned in the prophecy of the youngest of the Twelve Masters. Your spirit shall be illuminated by divine fire and your body shall become as pure as that of a child. Your penetration shall be without limits and great shall be also your power; you shall enter into that perfect repose which is the beginning of immortality; it shall be possible for you to say truly and apart from all pride: 'I am he who is.'"

This enigma signifies that, in order to attain moral regeneration, the transcendent Cabala must be studied, understood and realized. The three chambers are the alliance of physical life, religious aspirations and philosophical light; the Twelve Masters are the great revealers whose symbols must be understood; the signatures of the seven spirits mean the knowledge of the Great Arcanum. The whole is therefore allegorical, and it is no more a question of building a house of three stories than a temple at Jerusalem in Masonry.

When questioned by the Inquisition regarding the occult sciences, Cagliostro "replied enigmatically, and when accused of being absurd and incomprehensible he told his examiners that they had no ground of judgment." They evidently knew nothing of the mystical philosophy of the Cabala, which takes years of patient study fully to appreciate and comprehend. The higher de-

degrees of Masonry are largely based on the Jewish Cabala, as all students know.

I have now given the reader some idea of the Egyptian Rite. It is but a mere outline—the shadow of a shade. That it was steeped in occultism admits of no doubt, but it was not peculiar in this respect, for it was only one among many of the occult societies of the eighteenth century that were engrafted on the original three degrees of Freemasonry. The fantastic ceremonial with the pupils and doves may seem absurd to many of my readers; but I have witnessed stranger doings in the séances-rooms of modern mediums, with their cabinets, magnetic chains, dim lights, and “materializations.” Some may doubt the truth about these clairvoyant scenes as set forth by the Inquisition biographer, but I see no reason for discrediting the reporter. Similar scenes were enacted by Cagliostro in his magical séances in Paris, when he alone assumed the rôle of magnetizer.

He was able “to transmit his powers,” as it was termed, to others; namely, to the Venerable Masters of his Egyptian lodges. As Trowbridge says:

In reality it was nothing more or less than the discovery of the *psychic*—the word must serve for want of a better—properties latent in every human being, and which in many are capable of a very high degree of development. This discovery, till then unimagined, was the secret of the veneration with which Cagliostro was regarded by his followers.

Cagliostro never completely understood the psychism which he possessed; there are many indications that “he regarded the phenomena he performed as direct manifestations of divine power.” Sometimes he shocked the orthodox by describing himself as “I am that I am”—the words used by Jehovah when revealing Himself to Moses in the Burning Bush. He used very bombastic language and could not brook criticism, if the Baroness d’Oberkirch and Count Beugnot are to be believed.<sup>1</sup>

“Cagliostro’s system of Masonry,” says Bröther Mackenzie, “was not founded upon shadows. Many of the

doctrines he enunciated may be found in the Book of the Dead and other important documents of ancient Egypt.” The Egyptian Rite must have contained many exalted ideas—ethical, humanitarian, and theosophical—otherwise the intense enthusiasm of its initiates cannot be accounted for. Many eminent men in France were members of this Order. Cagliostro always insisted on the moral and religious implications of his system of Masonry. Says Trowbridge:

In 1785 a religious element was calculated to repel rather than to attract. It was the wonder-man, and not the idealist, in whom Paris was interested. But instead of taking the line of least resistance, so to speak, Cagliostro deliberately adopted a course that could not fail to make enemies rather than friends.

Far from dropping the religious and moral character of the Egyptian Rite, he laid greater stress on it than ever, and claimed for his sect a superiority over all the others of Freemasonry, on the ground that it was based on the mysteries of Isis and Anubis which he had brought from the East. As no one ever ventured to regard him as a fool as well as a knave, it is impossible to question his sincerity in the matter. At once the seventy-two Masonic lodges of Paris rose in arms against him. He managed, however, to triumph over all opposition. At a meeting held for the purpose of expounding the dogmas of Egyptian Masonry “his eloquence was so persuasive,” says Figuier, “that he completely converted to his views the large and distinguished audience he addressed.”

The controversy between Cagliostro and the Lodge of Philalèthes (or Lovers of Truth) is an interesting episode in Masonic history. On February 15, 1785, the members of the Philalèthes, with Savalette de Langes at their head, met in solemn convention in Paris to discuss questions of importance regarding Freemasonry, such as its origin, essential nature, relations with the occult sciences, etc. Thory, in his *Acta Latomorum*, Vol. II, gives a list of those who composed the conclave, among them being French and Austrian princes, councillors, financiers, barons, ambassadors, officers of the army, doctors, theosophists, farmers-general, and last but not least two professors of magic. M. de Langes was a royal banker, who

<sup>1</sup>See their Mémoires.



had been prominent in the old Illuminati.

A summons had been sent to Cagliostro to attend the convention, and he had assured the messenger that he would take part in its deliberations. But he changed his mind and demanded that the Philalèthes adopt the constitutions of the Egyptian Rite, burn their archives, and be initiated into the Mother Lodge at Lyons ("Triumphant Wisdom"), intimating that they were not in possession of the true Masonry. He deigned, as he said, to extend his hand over them, and consented "to send a ray of light into the darkness of their temple." The Baron von Gleichen was deputed to see Cagliostro and ask for more detailed information, and at the same time to request the presence of the members of the Mother Lodge at the convention. Renewed correspondence took place, but Cagliostro would not recede from his position. Finally three delegates from the Philalèthes, among them the Marquis de Marnezia, of Franché Comté, repaired to Lyons, and were initiated into Egyptian Masonry. In their report to the convention occur the following significant words: "His [Cagliostro's] doctrine ought to be regarded as sublime and pure; and without having a perfect acquaintance with our language, he employs it as did the prophets of old." The negotiations, however, fell through, and Cagliostro shook off the Philalèthes altogether. Shortly after the above event came the Affair of the Diamond Necklace, and Cagliostro sought refuge in England. Never again did he set foot on the soil of *la belle France*, the scene of his greatest exploits.

Cagliostro, assisted by a number of adepts from Paris and Lyons, endeavored to found an Egyptian lodge in London, but the attacks of the *Courrier de l'Europe* effectually put a quietus on his efforts. He was continually harassed by trumped-up charges preferred by the myrmidons of Morande. Says Trowbridge:

The Freemasons, who had welcomed him to their lodges with open arms, as the victim of a degenerate and despicable despotism,

influenced by the scathing attacks of Morande, who was himself a Mason, now gave him the cold shoulder. At a convivial gathering at the Lodge of Antiquity which he attended about this time (November 1, 1786), instead of the sympathy he expected he was so ridiculed by one Brother Mash, an optician, who gave a burlesque imitation of the Grand Cophta of Egyptian Masonry as a quack doctor vending a spurious balsam to cure every malady, that the victim of his ridicule was compelled to withdraw. The mortification which this incident occasioned Cagliostro was further intensified by the wide notoriety that it was given by Gillray in a caricature entitled "A Masonic Anecdote."

Some scurrilous verses were appended to this cartoon rehearsing the libels of Morande and his tribe of blackmailers.

Cagliostro endeavored to interest the Swedenborgians in his system of occultism. With this object in view he advertised in the *Morning Herald*, calling upon all true Masons, in the name of Jehovah, to meet him at O'Reilly's Tavern, in Great Queen Street, on November 3, 1786, to formulate plans for the construction of the New Temple at Jerusalem. But the Swedenborgians did not respond to his appeal. "It is a curious circumstance," says Brother Mackenzie, "that Cagliostro's manifestoes while in London were issued from the Hercules Pillars, a tavern still in existence, immediately opposite Freemason's Hall, in Great Queen Street."

The condemnation of Cagliostro by the Inquisition, on March 21, 1791, was based principally on the fact that he was a heretic and a *Freemason*. The sentence caused a revulsion of feeling in his favor throughout Europe among those who had been convinced that he was a charlatan. His numerous followers in France were heartbroken over the affair. But the Revolution was at its height. The lodges were disrupted and the archives were destroyed in many instances. Most of the members of the Fraternity were of the nobility or the bourgeoisie, and they had to flee for their lives or go into hiding to escape the "Red Widow"—the guillotine. They were powerless to aid their old chief. I quote the sentence of the Inquisition in full:

Giuseppe Balsamo, attainted and convicted of many crimes, and of having incurred the censures and penalties pronounced against heretics, dogmatics, heresiarchs, and propagators of magic and superstition, has been found guilty and condemned to the said censures and penalties as decreed by the apostolic laws of Clement XII and Benedict XIV against all persons who in any manner whatever favor or form societies and conventicles of Freemasonry, as well as by the edict of the Council of State against all persons convicted of this crime in Rome or in any other place in the dominions of the Pope.

Notwithstanding, by special grace and favor, the sentence of death by which this crime is expiated is hereby commuted into perpetual imprisonment in a fortress, where the culprit is to be strictly guarded without any hope of pardon whatever. Furthermore, after he shall have abjured his offenses as a heretic in the place of his imprisonment he shall receive absolution, and certain salutary penances will then be prescribed for him to which he is hereby ordered to submit.

Likewise, the manuscript book which has for its title *Egyptian Masonry* is solemnly condemned as containing rites, propositions, doctrines, and a system which, being superstitious, impious, heretical, and altogether blasphemous, opens a road to sedition and the destruction of the Christian religion. This book, therefore, shall be burnt by the executioner, together with all the other documents relating to this sect.

By a new apostolic law we shall confirm and renew not only the laws of the preceding pontiffs which prohibit the societies and conventicles of Freemasonry, making particular mention of the Egyptian sect and of another vulgarly known as the *Illuminés*, but we shall decree that the most *grievous corporal punishments* reserved for heretics shall be inflicted on all who shall associate, hold communion with, or protect these societies.

Truly was Cagliostro a Masonic martyr!

Charlatan or no charlatan, he was the most fascinating personage of his time. I confess to a great liking for him. His sad fate ought to enlist the sympathies of the brethren. It is high time for Masonic writers to change their views regarding him. They will find in the pages of Trowbridge a wealth of bibliographic data throwing light on Cagliostro's career—excerpts from the secret archives of the Parisian police, old memoir writers of the eighteenth century too numerous to mention, Masonic authorities, etc.<sup>1</sup>

In conclusion, let me say with the Sherif of Mecca: "Nature's unfortunate child, adieu!"

### PART III.—A VISIT TO THE HOUSE OF CAGLIOSTRO

CAGLIOSTRO'S house possesses a perfect fascination for me. If the walls of that ancient mansion could but speak, what tales of magic, mystery and Masonry they might unfold. But, alas, though walls are reputed to have ears, they are not credited with possessing tongues. Scientists claim that the ultimate basis of matter is the imponderable ether. Occultists call it the *astral light*. "It is," says Eliphas Lévi, in his *History of Magic*, "a common receptacle for vibrations of movement and images of form, a fluid and a force which may be called, in a sense at least, the imagination of Nature." According to the occultists this ultra-

refined, jelly-like substance receives and preserves the impressions of all thoughts and ideas and the simulchra of all forms that have existed on this earth-plane. Therefore the walls of a house, in a certain sense, are like photographic plates upon which are impressed the good and the evil thoughts of those who have lived in the mansion. If we are psychic enough to get *en rapport* with these thoughts, we may evoke them as apparitions or hallucinations. There is a measure of truth in the belief in haunted houses, if psychical investigators are to be credited. My visit to the house of Cagliostro was not productive of any phantasmal appearances, and yet the

<sup>1</sup>A superb bibliography of Cagliostro is to be found in "*Börsenblatt für den deutschen Buchhandel*," 1904, Nos. 210-212, and 214, September 9-12, 14, pp. 7488-92, 7524-75.

gloomy old mansion of the Rue St. Claude affected me strangely. Perhaps it was my imagination. I was able to conjure up in my mind the visions of an old dead past and to behold a pageant of magic and Masonry that was highly enjoyable, to say the least.

One of my favorite novels is Alexander Dumas' *Memoirs of a Physician*, which has for its hero the renowned Cagliostro, the arch-necromancer of the eighteenth century. Dumas, in this novel, describes the conjurer's mansion in the Rue St. Claude with considerable accuracy, but says nothing about its history. It was my ambition when a young man to find this house of mystery, using Dumas' description as a guide, and to give its story to the world. But Baron Haussman, the builder of boulevards in the Second Empire, had demolished so much of historical Paris that I did not feel quite certain that Cagliostro's house was still in existence. In the summer of 1899, however, the *Courrier des Etats-Unis*, of New York, contained the following interesting article on the mansion:

Cagliostro's house still stands in Paris. Few alterations have been made in it since the days of its glories and mysteries; and one may easily imagine the effect which it produced in the night upon those who gazed upon its strange pavilions and wide terraces when the lurid lights of the alchemist's furnaces streamed through the outer window blinds. The building preserves its noble lines in spite of modern additions and at the same time has a weird appearance which produces an almost depressing effect. But this doubtless comes from the imagination, because the house was not built by Cagliostro; he simply rented it. When he took up his quarters in it, it was the property of the Marquise d'Orvillers. Cagliostro made no changes in it, except perhaps a few temporary interior additions for the machines which he used in his séances in magic.

The plan of the building may well be said to be abnormal. The outer gate opens upon the Rue Saint Claude at the angle of the Boulevard Beaumarchais. The courtyard has a morose and solemn aspect. At the end under a flagged porch there is a stone staircase worn by time, but it still preserves its old iron railing. On looking at that staircase, one cannot help thinking of the hosts of beautiful women, attracted by curiosity to the den of the sorcerer, and terrified at what they imagined they were about to see, who placed their trembling hands upon that old railing. Here we can evoke the shade of Mme. de la Motte running up the steps, with her head covered with a cloak, and the ghosts of the valets of Cardinal de Rohan

sleeping in the driver's seat of the carriage with a lantern at their feet, while their master, in company with the Great Kophtha, is occupied with necromancy, metallurgy, cabala, or oneirocritics, which, as everybody knows, constitute the four elementary divisions of Cagliostro's art.

A secret stairway now walled up ran near the large one to the second story, where its traces are found; and a third stairway, narrow and tortuous, still exists at the other end of the building on the boulevard side. It is in the center of the wall, in complete darkness, and leads to the old salons now cut into apartments, the windows of which look out upon a terrace.

Below, with their mouldering doors, are the carriage house and the stable—the stable of Djerid, the splendid black horse of Lorenza Feliciani.

To verify the above statement, I wrote to M. Alfred de Ricaudy, editor of *L'Echo du Public*, Paris, and an authority on archaeological matters, who responded as follows, January 13, 1900:

The house [the exterior] still exists just as it was in the time of Cagliostro. Upon the boulevard, contiguous to the mansion, there was formerly the shop of one Camerlingue, a bookseller, now occupied by an upholsterer. On January 30, 1785, Cagliostro took up his residence in this quaint old house. It was then No. 30 Rue St. Claude, at the corner of the Boulevard Saint Antoine, afterwards the Boulevard Beaumarchais. The Marquise d'Orvillers was the owner of the premises occupied by the thaumaturgist of the eighteenth century. Her father, M. de Chavigny, captain in the royal navy, had built this house on ground acquired in 1719 from Mme. de Harlay, who had inherited it from her father, le Chevalier Boucherat. (See Lefeuvre, *Old Houses of Paris*, Vol. iv, issue 51, page 24, published by Achille Faure, Paris, 1863.)

Cagliostro's house is now Number 1, the numbering of the street having been altered in the reign of the citizen-king, Louis Philippe, of inglorious memory. Says M. de Ricaudy:

The numbering originally began at the Rue Saint Louis, now Rue de Turenne, in which is situated the church of Saint Denis du Sacrement. When the houses were renumbered with reference to the direction of the current of the Seine (under Louis Philippe), the numbers of the Rue St. Claude, which is parallel to the river, began at the corner of the boulevard, and in that way the former number 30 became Number 1.

The weird old mansion has had a peculiar history. Cagliostro locked the doors of the laboratories and séance room some time in June, 1786, on the

occasion of his exile from France. All during the great Revolution the house remained closed and intact. Twenty-four years of undisturbed repose ensued. The dust settled thick upon everything; spiders built their webs upon the gilded ceilings of the salons and the *Chambre Egyptienne* where the magical séances were held. Finally, in the Napoleonic year 1810, the doors of the temple of magic and mystery were unfastened, and the furniture and rare curios, the retorts and crucibles belonging to the dead alchemist of the ancient régime, were auctioned off by order of the municipal government. An idle crowd of quid nuncs gathered to witness the sale and pry about the building.<sup>1</sup> M. Y. Lenotre, in his *Paris révolutionnaire, vieilles maisons, vieux papiers, série*, says: "Since the auctioning of Cagliostro's effects the gloomy house of the Rue St. Claude has had no history. Ah, but I am mistaken. In 1855 some repairs were made. The old carriage door was removed, and the one that took its place was taken from the ruins of the Temple. There it stands today with its great bolts and immense locks. The door of the prison of Louis XVI closes the house of Cagliostro." Life has, indeed, its little ironies!

My friend, Brother Félicien Trewey of Asnières, France, who visited the place in the summer of 1901 at my request, wrote to me that it had been converted into a commercial establishment. The salons were cut up into small apartments. The *Chambre Egyptienne* was no more. A grocer, a feather curler, and a manufacturer of cardboard boxes occupied the building, oblivious to the fact that the world-renowned Cagliostro once lived there. Alas, the history of these old houses! They have their days of splendid prosperity, followed by shabby gentility and finally by sordid decay—battered and repulsive looking.

Yes, in this ancient house, dating back to pre-Revolutionary Paris, to the picturesque old régime, the great arch-hierophant of the Egyptian Rite

of Freemasonry lived in the zenith of his fame. In those golden years of his life, was he never haunted by disturbing visions of the dungeons of the Holy Inquisition, yawning to receive him? Ah, who can tell!

Accompanied by Félicien Trewey, I made a pilgrimage, in the summer of 1908 to the house of Cagliostro. Leaving Trewey to talk with the concierge, I crossed the courtyard with its cordons of large stones blackened by time, passed through the somber portal, and up the great stone staircase with its wrought-iron railing, and peeped into what was formerly the *Chambre Egyptienne*, on the second floor. There I saw a young French workman upholstering a chair. To what base uses do rooms, as well as people, come at last! One hundred and thirty-three years ago that old apartment saw a different sight. It was ablaze with lights; the aristocracy of Paris were there to be amused or frightened, according to the temperaments of the individuals. I climbed to the very attic of the ancient mansion, and looked down into the gloomy courtyard, expecting every minute, in my excited imagination, to see the gilded coach of the Cardinal de Rohan come rolling up to the doorway, and the Cardinal, in his splendid court costume, alight. Ah, those were the days of romance! It was something to be a nobleman and a prelate then.

I slowly descended the ghost-haunted, time-worn staircase, feeling my way carefully along in the semi-darkness, and holding on to the forged-iron balustrade, thinking all the while of the high-born seigneurs and ladies who once passed up and down that winding way. I could almost hear the *frou-frou* of their silken coats and dresses, and the tap, tap of their red-heeled shoes on the steps. How anxious they must have been, full of emotion and curious to peer into the future. What visions did Cagliostro evoke for them in his magic glass? How many of those powdered, perfumed heads were destined to fall under the sharp blade of La

<sup>1</sup> See *Dictionnaire de la France*, by A. G. de St. Fargeau, Vol. 3, page 245. Paris, 1851.

Guillotine—the “Red Widow,” as it was called by the *sans culottes*!

And then I thought of Cagliostro in the dungeon of the Castle of San Leon in rags and chains, lying upon a pile of mouldy straw, the wretched victim of the Inquisition.

A door on the landing below me opened slowly and noiselessly. I stopped scarcely breathing, in anticipation of some mystic revelation. Was the phantom of the arch-necromancer coming out to greet me? No; it was but the wind! I closed the door softly behind me and hastily descended the steps. I was soon out in the sunshine. Dese-

cration of desecrations!—an enterprising Gaul was occupying one of the rooms on the ground floor of the mansion as a *brasserie*, and the name of the establishment was the “Bar de Cagliostro.” Workmen in blouses were leaning against a galvanized iron counter, sipping brandy of doubtful quality.

I asked the pleasant-faced concierge if she knew the history of the old house.

“Yes, monsieur,” she replied, “it was once inhabited by le Comte de Cagliostro, the celebrated sorcerer. Alexandre Dumas tells all about him in one of his novels.”

## PART IV. RECEPTION OF AN APPRENTICE IN AN EGYPTIAN LODGE

(Translated from *L'Initiation*, of August, 1906, by Horace Parker McIntosh, 33° Hon.)

### PREPARATION OF THE LODGE

**T**HE lodge shall be decorated by a canopy of sky blue and white, without gilding.

Above the head of the Venerable Master is a triangle containing the name JEHOVA, with radiations therefrom; the whole to be embroidered in blue silk.

The throne of the Master stands upon three steps.

The Altar stands before the throne.

Upon the altar, a brasier containing a sponge saturated with alcohol.

At the right of the throne is represented the sun; at the left, the moon.

The Treasurer shall be provided with a robe and girdle of white, and with two pairs of gloves, one for a man, the other for a woman.

### TRACING BOARD OF THE LODGE

Upon this there shall be painted the door of a temple, with seven steps; in the door shall appear a curtain; at the right an inscription composed of the words, *arcanum magnum*; at the left, the words, *gemma secretorum*.

Before the door shall be represented a Master, with the red cordon, the green dress coat, vest, breeches and spotted stockings, and hussar boots.

This Master shall be shown standing erect at the right of the temple; he shall have the forefinger of the left hand upon the lips, and in the right shall hold a sword with which he threatens a sleeping Mercury reclining at the left of the door. Above the head of the Mercury shall appear the words, *rough ashlar*. This tracing board shall be lighted by seven candles, three of which shall be on one side, three on the other, and one in the middle.

### DRESS OF THE VENERABLE MASTER

The Venerable Master shall be clothed in a white robe girded with a girdle of watered silk sky blue in color. He shall wear also a stole of watered blue silk bordered by a narrow strip of gold lace, and with the monogram of the founder embroidered in gold spangles at each end. The ends of this stole shall be fringed with gold. The ends shall be fastened together and the Master shall wear it over the right shoulder and under the left arm. Over all he shall wear the Master's red cordon. In his hand he shall carry a sword.

### THE CHAMBER OF REFLECTION

This chamber shall have the form and decoration of a grotto, and shall be lighted by a single lamp suspended from the middle.

The tracing board (*tableau*) of this chamber shall be translucent; on it shall appear in the center a great pyramid, at the base of which will be shown a cavern. Before the cavern will be a figure of Time under the form of an old man having an hour-glass on his head, a scythe in his left hand and two large wings upon his shoulders. His gaze, expressing terror, is fixed upon the entrance to the cavern. At his right shall be painted a horn of plenty, and at his left, chains, a serpent, and some philosophical instruments.

The candidate shall be shut up in this chamber during an hour or thereabouts. When the time shall come for admitting him to the lodge, the Inspector of the lodge with two apprentices shall enter the chamber to prepare him. The Inspector, without speaking, shall begin to unbind the hair of the candidate and to remove his clothing. He shall order him to take off his shoes and

to divest himself of all metals. Afterwards he shall deliver to him a lecture appropriate to the occasion and concerning the tracing board of the chamber. After the candidate has been made to understand how painful is the path of philosophy and how crowded with dangers and troubles, he shall be asked if he is well decided to be initiated into these mysteries, and to prefer the labor, the perils of the study of nature to the romance, the ease and the wealth of the world. If he persists, the Inspector shall take him by the hand and conduct him to the door of the lodge, where he shall give seven knocks. To the demand that will be made of him he shall reply: "It is a Mason, who, having passed through all the degrees of the ordinary Masonry, presents himself for initiation into the true Egyptian Masonry." The door shall then be closed.

The Master shall direct the *brother terrible* to demand of the Inspector the paper containing the age, the place of birth, the name, surnames and qualities of the candidate and those of his vouchers. The *brother terrible*, opening the door again, shall take the paper from the hand of the Inspector and brusquely close the door, which shall not be opened again until the Master orders the candidate to be admitted. The *brother terrible* shall deliver the paper to the Master.

#### OPENING THE LODGE

The Master having taken his station, the strictest silence shall be observed. It is forbidden even to blow one's nose or clear one's throat, even more strongly so, to speak.

When the Master rises, all shall rise at the same time. In his right hand he shall carry his sword, which shall not leave his hand while he is speaking. He shall say to the assembly: "My brethren, in the name of the Great God, let us open this lodge according to the rite and constitutions of the Great Chief, our founder."

He shall descend from his throne, and at seven paces from the lowest step he shall turn about and face the triangle and shall say: "My brethren, prostrate yourselves with me, and let us supplicate the Divinity to protect and assist me in the labors in which we are about to engage."

Having finished the silent prayer, the Master shall strike upon the floor with his right hand as a signal to the brethren that they may rise. The Master, being seated upon his throne, shall announce to the brethren present that the candidate (naming him), who has passed through all the degrees of ordinary Masonry, begs the grace of being received and admitted into the true Egyptian Masonry.

If any of the brethren have anything to allege against the candidate, they must, upon honor and conscience, state it at this time. This complaint or reason shall be discussed, and the Master shall decide whether the candidate shall be admitted or rejected; but in case all give their consent to his reception, the Master shall direct the Inspector and two brethren to prepare and conduct the candidate.

#### ENTRANCE OF THE CANDIDATE

The Master having ordered the candidate to be admitted, the Inspector shall conduct him before the throne where he shall cause him to kneel. The Master shall rise to his feet and shall say: "Man, you have already been warned that the object of our labors is as far removed from frivolity as those of ordinary Masonry are from true philosophical knowledge. All our operations, all our mysteries, all our proceedings have no other aims than to glorify God and to penetrate into the sanctuary of nature; and one achieves this only by much toil. But with resignation, with patience, and the time fixed by our founder for these precepts, you may have the hope of seeing your arduous trials crowned with the happiest success. Before being clothed with the sacred habit of our Order, and before being recognized as one of our members, repeat after me, word for word, the oath that I require of you in the presence of God and of all the brethren."

The alcohol sponge which is upon the altar shall now be lighted, and the candidate, placing his right hand above the flame, shall repeat the following oath:

"I promise, I engage, and I swear, that I will never reveal the secrets which shall be communicated to me in this temple, and that I will blindly obey my superiors."

The Master shall cause the candidate to be clothed with the robe and girded with the white cord, and will give to him two pairs of gloves, one of them for a man, the other for a woman. He shall deliver to him a lecture concerning each of these things and shall instruct him in the signs and passwords contained in the catechism of this degree. He will cause the candidate again to kneel, and, striking him three strokes upon the shoulder with his sword, he shall say:

"By the grace of God, and by the power which I hold from the Great Chief, the founder of our Order, I confer upon you the degree of Apprentice of the true Egyptian Masonry, and I constitute you guardian of the philosophical knowledge which I shall communicate to you."

The Master shall then direct the Inspector to conduct the new brother to the place destined for him; he shall give the sign to the brethren to be seated and give to the orator the catechism and charge him to deliver the lecture concerning it. As soon as the lecture is delivered, the catechism must be returned to him, as it must never leave his hands or pass out of his sight.

The Master shall rise from his throne, and together with all the brethren shall prostrate himself before the sacred name of the Divinity to return thanks to Him. He shall then close the Lodge.

#### THE CATECHISM OF AN APPRENTICE OF THE EGYPTIAN LODGE

Q. Are you an Egyptian Mason?

A. Yes, I am, with strength and singleness of purpose.

Q. Whence come you?

A. From the depth of the East.

Q. What have you observed there?

A. The very great power of our founder.

Q. What did he teach you?

A. The knowledge of God and of myself.

Q. What did he recommend to you before your departure?

A. To take two routes: natural philosophy and supernatural philosophy.

Q. What does natural philosophy signify?

A. The marriage of the sun and the moon, and the knowledge of the seven metals.

Q. Did he indicate to you a sure route for arriving at that philosophy?

A. After having given me to know the power of the seven metals, he said to me: "*Qui agnoscit martem, cognoscit artem.*"

I agree, but I will never give you my sign until first you have given me yours.

#### GIVING THE SIGN

This is done by bending back the body, raising the head, opening wide the eyes, and with a strong exhalation, pronouncing the word *Deloym*.

The answer to this sign is made by standing on the point of the left foot, the right thrown back and raised, having the body bent backward, the head raised majestically and the two arms extended, the left toward the ground and the right elevated, throwing the right hand forward with the fingers open wide and separated. Both being thus mutually recognized, they should kiss each other on the forehead and continue the catechism.

Q. I beg you, my brother, to begin giving me instruction concerning natural philosophy.

A. Willingly, but on condition that you cast from your mind every worldly and profane idea, that you have no faith in any writer, living or dead, and that you be persuaded, as I am, that all men who deny the divinity and the immortality of the soul, are in our eyes not only profane, but unprincipled.

Q. Having often heard of the philosopher's stone, I earnestly desire to know if its existence is real or imaginary.

A. Then you did not comprehend when I spoke to you concerning the marriage of the sun and the moon?

Q. I admit that I did not, and that, my mind not being sufficiently enlightened to enable me to know by my own reflections what this marriage may mean, I have need of your aid and your light.

A. Hear then with attention, and strive to comprehend.

By the wisdom given me by the founder of our Order, I know that primal matter was created by God before creating man, and that he only created man to be immortal; but man having abused the goodness of the Divinity, He determined to accord this gift no longer except to a very small number: *pauci sunt electi*. In effect, by the knowledge that we have, Moses, Enoch, Elias, David, Solomon, the King of Tyre, and other great ones, all beloved by the Divinity, came to know and enjoy the primal matter, as well as supernatural philosophy.

Q. But, tell me more particularly, I beseech you, what this precious primal matter can be, and what are its effects?

A. Know that this primal matter always exists in the hands of the elect of God and that, in order to obtain it, it does not suffice to be great, rich or powerful; but, as I have already told you it is absolutely necessary to be loved and protected of God. I assure you further, by all that is most sacred, that, by means of the light communicated to me by my Master, I can assert to you positively that a grain of this precious matter becomes a projection to infinity. Open wide your eyes and ears.

Seven are the transitions for perfecting the matter.

Seven are the colors.

Seven are the effects which should complete the philosophical operations.

1st. *Ad sanitatem et ad homines morbis.*

2nd. *Ad metallorum.*

3rd. To rejuvenate and repair the lost forces, and to increase the radical heat and humidity.

4th. To soften and liquefy the solid part.

5th. To congeal and harden the liquid part.

6th. To render the possible impossible, and the impossible possible.

7th. To procure all the means of doing good, taking at the same time the greatest precautions against working, speaking, acting, or doing anything in this connection, except in the most reserved and occult manner.

Q. The confidence you inspire in me does not permit the slightest doubt of the truth of your opinions; nevertheless, let me unburden my mind to you. Our language is so different from that of all the writers who have written concerning the philosopher's stone that I find it most difficult to reconcile your discourse with theirs. I have not forgotten your caution to have no faith in these writers, but it seems to me that I may make an exception in favor of those who enjoy the highest reputation, and who have always been considered by the most enlightened and instructed men of modern times as true philosophers; such as Hermes Trismegistus, Bazile Valentin, Tréviseau, Armand de Villeneuve, Raymond Lully, etc.

A. You are neither so well instructed in the principles of our Master, nor so long a member of our school, that your perplexities can cause me surprise; but a few reflections will suffice to disabuse your mind and fix unshakably your ideas upon this subject. There has never been, nor will there ever be, any man possessing and enjoying this precious matter, except those who have been admitted and initiated into the religion of the children of the great founder of our sublime lodge.

Q. May I hope to be able to be fortunate enough to acquire all the light that you possess?

A. Yes, but one must have a right, just and beneficent heart; one must renounce every motive of vanity and of curiosity; one must crush vice and confound incredulity.

Q. Are these virtues sufficient for arriving at this sublime knowledge?

A. No, one must furthermore be loved and particularly protected of God; one must be submissive and respectful toward one's sovereign; one must love his neighbor, and must seclude himself for meditation at least three hours every day.

Q. How should one employ these three hours devoted to meditation?

A. In penetrating into the grandeur, the wisdom and the omnipotence of the Divinity, in drawing near to Him with fervor, in so intimately uniting our physical and moral being that we may come into possession of this natural and supernatural philosophy.

But before continuing our conversation, I require you to give me a proof and a sign whereby I may know if you are really joined to our society, and to know as you ought to know that the first, the most important and the most severe of our obligations consists in a sacred engagement never to write or divulge any of our mysteries. You should by this be convinced that all the writers that you have cited to me either were not true philosophers, or that, if they were, all their writings, whether manuscript or printed, that are attributed to them are entirely false and apocryphal, and that they are but the fruit of the cupidity of those who invented them to feed the cupidity of those who believe in them. Moreover, repeat with great exactitude all the operations taught in these books, and see if any of them will ever prosper you. Confine yourself, then, as I do, to having pity for and compassion upon these simple and prejudiced ones who believe in, and work according to, these writers, since they will all positively end by losing their credit, their fortune, by ruining their health and, perhaps, unfortunately, becoming insane.

Q. Is it, then, necessary to have recourse to a true philosopher in order to come into possession of these secrets?

A. Yes, but you will obtain no aid from him except the Divinity inspire him in your favor.

Q. What means must be employed to obtain this grace of God?

A. To adore Him, to respect one's sovereign, and above all to consecrate oneself to the relief and well-being of one's neighbor, charity being the first duty of a philosopher and the work most agreeable to the Eternal. To this conduct there must be joined fervent prayer to deserve of His goodness that He may incite one of His elect to unveil to you the arcana of nature.

Q. What do you mean by the arcana of nature?

A. The knowledge of that beautiful natural and supernatural philosophy of which I have spoken to you before; and you will find the principles concealed in the emblems presented by the Order of Masonry and by the tracing board placed before your eyes in all the lodges.

Q. Can ordinary Masonry possibly furnish any idea of these sublime mysteries? I have been a Mason for thirty-three years and have passed through all the degrees, and during that long time I have never even suspected what you have the goodness to tell me. I have never looked upon that Masonry as anything but a society of people who assemble in order to amuse themselves, and who, in order to be more closely united, have adopted signs and a particular language. Deign, by your luminous interpretations, to uncover to me the true and firm goal of which you speak.

A. God inspires me, and I am going to raise a corner of the veil which conceals the truth from you. I will begin by instructing you as to the origin of Masonry, I will give you the philosophical explanation of the Masonic tracing board, and I will finish by acquainting you with full extent of the sublime and victorious aims of true Masonry.

Q. Your goodness, increasing your enlightenments and my gratitude, will permit me hereafter to render you more complete justice by substituting, in my conferences with you, the name of Master for that of brother. I beseech you, then, my dear Master, to follow out your program and begin my instruction concerning the origin of true Masonry.

A. Masonry has among its brethren Enoch and Elias. These, after having been clothed with the supreme power which was accorded them by the Divinity, implored His goodness and mercy in behalf of their neighbors, so that it was permitted them to communicate to other mortals His greatness, and the power that He had accorded to man to all the beings that surround His throne. Having obtained that permission, they chose twelve (12) dependents whom they called Elect of God. One of these, known to you, was called Solomon. This philosopher king sought to imitate and walk in the footsteps of his two masters by forming a company of men fitted to preserve and propagate the sublime wisdom they had acquired. Counselling with the other élus it was agreed that each of them should choose two dependents, making in all 24 companions, the first of whom was Boaz. Each of these 24 companions had afterwards the liberty to choose three (3), making in all two (2) supreme chiefs, 12 Masters or élus of God, 24 companions and 72 apprentices; from these last are descended the Templars, and from one of the Templars, who took refuge in Scotland, follow the Freemasons to the number of 13, afterward 33, etc.

Such is the origin and affiliation of Masonry.

Q. This relation leaving me nothing to desire, pass on, I beg of you, to the explanation of the Masonic ceremonies and tracing board. On entering the lodge for the first time, why was I blindfolded?



A. In order to give you to understand that every man who does not possess this high wisdom, in which I am instructing you, is a man blind and circumscribed; but, having a Mason for Master, he will pass out of the darkness and know the truth.

Q. Why were my hands bound?

A. To acquaint you with the full extent of the submission and subordination necessary for you to render to the orders of your Master.

Q. Why was I divested of part of my clothing and of all the metals in my possession?

A. To teach you that every man who desires to become a good Mason or true Élu must renounce all sorts of honors, riches and glory, and that to obtain that favor it is not necessary to be great or rich or powerful.

Q. What is the purpose of the gloves?

A. To give you to know that every true Mason must always have clean hands; that he must never stain them with blood, and above all, that it is strictly prohibited ever to touch the primal matter with bare hands.

Q. What does the apron mean?

A. To teach you that the apron is the first garment used by man to cover his nakedness when he had lost his innocence.

Q. Let us now come, I beg of you, to the explanation of the tracing board. What means the trowel?

A. It was the first instrument used by man and was necessary to enable him to successfully begin his labors on the natural as well as the supernatural.

Q. Of what use is the compass?

A. To teach every good Mason that he must neither do nor undertake anything without having the compass in his hand.

Q. What is meant by the plumb?

A. That before communicating to a profane the knowledge of the arcana of nature, it is necessary to have the exact measure of all his walks and doings.

Q. What is meant by the mosaic union?

A. That in order to avoid all sorts of schism and disunion among Masons their hearts must be drawn to each other by an attachment, a confidence and a boundless fraternal devotion.

Q. What is the object of the triangle?

A. To teach you that *Omne trinum est perfectum*.

Q. What is the meaning of the two columns?

A. These two columns, called J and B, are not really columns, but stand for men who made close study of our philosophy. Solomon did not find in the first of these the qualities and disposition necessary to a true Mason. He was accordingly set aside and placed in an inferior class; but the second, B, having been fortunate enough to recognize the significance of the acacia, by the pleasure of God and with the aid of Solomon, he not only succeeded in ridding the rough ashlar of all its impurities, but also in rendering it cubical and finally in causing it to become triangular or more than perfect.

Q. I beseech you to explain clearly to me the significance of the different stones: I know that on the tracing board there is a rough ashlar, a cubical stone and a triangular stone; but all this being an enigma to me, I beg you to favor me by giving me the key.

A. Hearken: The acacia is the primal matter and the rough ashlar the mercurial part; and when this rough ashlar or mercurial part has been thoroughly purified, it becomes cubical. Operating, then, with this primal matter, this poniard in hand, you must assassinate this Master—this rough ashlar that has become cubical. This operation being finished, and the body enshrouded, it is now a question of purifying it by following out the seven philosophical transitions which are symbolized by the seven steps placed before the door of the temple; the first five are the primitive colors, the sixth is black, and the seventh is that of purple or of fire or of fresh blood. It is thus that you may bring about the marriage of the sun and the moon, thus you may come by the triangular stone and bring about the perfect progeny. *Quantum sufficit, et quantum appetit.*

Q. But you have not told me concerning Adoniram who, according to ordinary Masonry, was assassinated, and what is the significance of the poniard and the black cordon in the degree of Élu.

A. Masonry has caused you to err on this point. It was not Adoniram who was assassinated, but rather the liquid part which it is necessary to slay with this poniard. In the last analysis it is, as I have already told you, the volatile or mercurial part which it is absolutely indispensable to solidify. In regard to Adoniram, desiring to convince you of my good faith, my sincerity and my affection for you, I will tell you all the history.

Adoniram was the son of *Urabis Rahim* and was called Jokim. Raham, who worked in the superstitious part of Masonry, had imparted some information to his son; but he, protected and favored by God, having come to a knowledge of the superior power possessed by Solomon, as well in natural as in supernatural philosophy, left the North and came to the South where the great king resided, and in the hope of attracting notice to himself he stationed himself at the door of the temple. Solomon, having noticed him, demanded what he sought, to which he replied: *Adonai*. The king, inspired and touched by the respect and veneration evidenced by this mortal being in thus using with confidence the name *Adonai*, which is the chosen name of the Divinity, not only welcomed him with kindness and benevolence, but caused him to enter with him into the temple and, knowing that he was instructed in the metallic part, he confided to him the primal matter and

changed his name from *Jokim* to *Adoniram*, which, in the Arabic language, signifies son of God, also son of Raham or worker in metals. Adoniram, proud of this flattering distinction, had not sufficient command over himself to refrain from communicating the fact to J——, informing him of the matter and making use of him in his operations. J—— becoming very jealous of the preference which Solomon had accorded to Adoniram, there resulted much discontent and inconvenience.

Solomon fearing the consequences that this might bring upon his favorite Adoniram, in order to protect him from the baleful effects of jealousy, determined to initiate him into the spiritual and supernatural wisdom. Consequently he caused him to enter into the sanctuary of the temple and revealed to him all the mysteries connected with the sacred and perfect triangle. It was then that he was given the name B——, under which, as you know to be a fact, he paid the wages of all the companions and apprentices. The temple being finished, Solomon gave him as a reward the kingdom of Tyre.

Q. I am enchanted with the sublime interpretation which you have just given me concerning the Masonic ceremonies and tracing board; it seems to me that nothing could be more evident or more magnificent, and I see that it was not possible more completely and more seriously to abuse the worshipful establishment which has made actual Masons of us pretenders. Of its most sacred and instructive purposes they have made the most ridiculous mummery, and of the most interesting truth a vain and puerile illusion. But permit me to say that, among the details you have just confided to me, you have said nothing concerning the blazing star.

A. This star is the emblem of the great mysteries revealed in supernatural philosophy, and is a new proof of the blindness and ignorance of modern Masons; because it ought to be terminated by seven points or angles, and you never see it represented in any lodge except by 3, 5 or 6. Besides, these poor children of the widow have never discovered any other merit for it than that of containing in its middle the letter G, which they spiritually explain by the word geometry. Such is the fruit of an hundred years of reflection and the marvelous interpretation that their brilliant genius has suggested to them. The seven points or angles are the representation of the seven angels which surround the throne of the Divinity, and the letter G is the first of the sacred name of the great God called *Géhova*, or *Jehova Adonai*, etc.

Q. Confide to me, I beseech you, a more profound knowledge of these seven primitive angels.

A. These seven angels are intermediary beings between us and the Divinity: they are the seven planets, or, more correctly speaking, they direct and govern the seven planets. As they have a fixed and particular influence over each of the realms necessary for the perfection of the primal matter, the existence of these seven angels is as certain as that man has the power to control these same beings.

Q. My astonishment and my eagerness for instruction increase! But how can it be possible for man to command and be obeyed by these angelic creatures? A. God having created man in his own image and likeness, he is the most perfect of all His works; and so long as the first man preserved his innocence and purity, he was, after the Divinity, the highest and most powerful of all created beings; for God had not only given him the knowledge of these intermediary beings, but He had also conferred on him the power to rule and govern them next to Himself. Man having degenerated by abusing this great power, God deprived him of that superiority and denied him communication with these celestial beings.

Q. Were the Elect of God made exceptions in this general proscription?

A. Yes, and these are they to whom alone God has accorded the grace to enjoy His wisdom and all the power that He had conferred upon the first man.

Q. Every good and true Mason, such as I glory in being, may then hope to be regenerated and to become one of the Elect of God?

A. Yes, without doubt; but, beside the necessity of practicing all the virtues in the highest degree, such as charity and benevolence, it is further necessary that God, sensible of your adoration, your respect, your submission and your fervent prayers, should move and determine one of His Elect to aid you, to instruct you and render you worthy of this supreme happiness; for, one of the twelve Élus, being *in repose*, or being called nearer to the Divinity, the most virtuous of the twenty-four companions succeeds him, likewise the wisest of the seventy-two apprentices takes the place left vacant by the advanced companion.

Q. Deign, I beg of you, to give me greater enlightenment concerning this natural philosophy.

A. It is necessary that this philosophy be divided into three classes:

The first is called superior, primitive or direct.

The second is acquired or communicated.

The third is endless, inferior or superstitious.

The first is exercised by the man who, in purifying his individual physical and moral parts, succeeds in recovering his primitive innocence, and who, after having attained that perfection with the aid of the great name of God and the attributes in the right hand, has arrived at the point of using the name and exercising the sublime and original functions of *man*, and of knowing the entire extent of the power of God and the means of enabling every innocent child of God to enjoy the power to which his estate entitles him.

NOTE.—Here ends the article as printed in *L'Initiation*. It is ended with the announcement "*a suivre*" (to be continued), from which, it is evident that we have not here the whole of the lecture.



