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An Exposition of the Mysteries or Religious Dogmas and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians, Pythagoreans, and Druids. By John Fellows, A. M.. [The New-England magazine. / Volume 9, Issue 12, December 1835]

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fore stating concisely wherein lies the superior merit of The Magnolia, we beg leave of our good-natured cousins of the newspaper press to disclaim any prejudice or favoritism about the matter. XVe trust that eight thousand copies of the Token may be sold as usual. We wish its worthy publisher all success. We neverthe- less hold the literary talents of its editor in sovereign contempt; and shall take oc- casion to expose his empiricism in books still further. That our opinion of his an- nual, severe as it was, was perfectly fair, may be argued from our having plied the lash most lustily on the shoulders of an author, (.Mr. Thatcher) whom a high per- sonal esteem would prompt us to praise. The Gift, edited by Miss Leslie, we consider decidedly inferior to The Token ; but refrained from any expression of our opinion, from a willingness to extend towards a literary lady a courtesy and for- bearance which was not due to a gentleman.

The .Magnolia is the best annual that has appeared, because it has the best editor, the best papers, and the best pictures. When the same writers have con- tributed to the three, they are brightest in these pages. Witness Miss Sedg wicks story, Mr. Mellens poetry. Moreover, the articles by the author of A Year in Spain, of The Yemassee, of The Brothers, do honor even to these authors; and A Night on the Enchanted Mountains, by the author of a Winter in the West, is a sketch which would, of itself, entitle The Magnolia to a conspicuous place among the flowers of literature.

.JIn Exposition of the .Mysteries or Religious Dogmas and Cus- toms of the .Incient Egyptians, Pythagoreans, and Druids. also, an Inquiry into the Origin, flistory, and Purport of Feemasonry. By John Fellows, a. iii. JView- York: printed for the author, and sold by Banks, Gould and Co. 1835. I vol. 8vo., pp. 403.

If the title of this learned and curious work were not sufficiently explicative, the following clear exposition, afforded in the Introduction, would sufficiently declare its object: The intention of this work is to endeavor to unravel the intricate

web in which the mystery (of freemasonry) is involved, by tracing the order back to its source, and, by showing its intimate connection and similitude to institutions more ancient, put it beyond a doubt, that it sprang from and is a continuation of the rites and ceremonies observed in those establishments.

Indebted, as we feel, to the authors politeness for a present of his book, the narrow limits of this journal will not allow us to enter into a review of its subjects. Its general scope and tenor, however, may be gathered from a few observations; which we would premise with the remark that, the work will be found highly valuable, not only on account of the luminous ray which it sheds over the obscurity of the Masonic institution, but as a spacious depository of useful and recondite knowledge.

That the writer, as a freemason, is extremely liberal, may be judged from his own reprobation of the oaths imposed upon members. He considers a total abandonment of the oaths, at the present day, requisite. He says that the mysteries, from which the institution was derived, created, and that the custom of the times when it was established, sanctioned the most horrible oaths. The argument used,

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that these oaths are no longer necessary, is, we think, effectual against the existence of Masonry itself.

At a time when superstitious customs prevailed, the society, as a secret bond between individuals, might have been necessary and highly important ; but in the general intelligence of the age and under the light of liberal Christianity, there can hardly be any reason why individuals should hind themselves to mutual support. We do not mean to impugn their perfect and indefeasible right to do so; we simply question the necessity. As for this war of extermination which has been waged against Masonry, no reasonable observer of passing events can doubt for a moment that its object is political. There is no doubt that the antimasonic party would be as fiercely kept up, if every single Mason should renounce his creed, and the last crumbling fragment of this tremendous institution be swept from the earth.

Mr. Fellows displays the greatest liberality towards the opponents of Masonry, not doubting that many have been actuated by the purest motives. Wishing to teach and to convince, he does not set to work in the manner of a modern political editor, by calling those who differ with him, knaves, villains and unhauged scoundrels, and then politely request them to believe what he is about to say. He is, on the contrary, mild and persuasive ; and instead of knocking down his antagonist preliminary to dragging him forward, he takes him gently by the hand and tries to lead him in the path.

We have called the volume useful in other respects than as it teaches the origin of the mysteries and ceremonies of Masonry. A glance at the subjects, fully and satisfactorily treated in the first four chapters, which occupy more than half the work, will show this fact. The first chapter explains the Dogmas and Customs~ of the ancient Egyptians. Among the rare works cited, is the Abbe Pluches History of the Heavens. All the included topics comprising a full account of the worship of the Egyptians, their religious rites and observances, and the derivation from these of many customs descended to us are treated in the most interesting and instructive manner. We have next a dissertation on the origin, nature, and object of the ancient mysteries. Then follows an examination of Virgils Sixth Book of the Eneid, in which it is shown that the allegorical descent of Eneas into hell is no other than an enigmatical representation of his initiation into the mysteries. The importance of the next chapter lies in the sketch presented of the life

and doctrines of Pythagoras, the founder of the sect that bore his name ; and the doctrines and customs of the Druids, the priests of the ancient Britons.

It is truly anomalous in this utilitarian age in which the demand seems to be, that every work which does not treat on science, should simply contribute to amusement to witness the production of a voluminous treatise, like this, on subjects employing in their investigation indefatigable research, and, in their full demonstration, long assiduity and labor.

Legends of a Log- Cabin. By a Western Man. New- York:
George Dearborn. pp. 276.

These are among the most spirited and entertaining stories with which we are acquainted. There is a truth and freshness about them which inspire a lively interest. We cannot but imagine that the incidents recounted must have in reality

