

Corydon Press, and Anti-Masonic Democrat.

Other evidences of malice against the printer have been manifested. On one occasion, large numbers of masonic ruffians, armed with clubs, assembled under different leaders, in the night time, in the vicinity of the printing office, with declared purpose of obtaining the intended publication, by violence; from which they were prevented only, by the formidable preparations to defend it, made by the printer. On another occasion, a masonic constable accompanied and abetted by a crowd of his brethren, under a false pretence of having a criminal process, for that purpose, arrested him—carried him to a neighboring village—there illegally confined him in a lodge room—assaulted him, and threatened him with the fate of Morgan. By the assistance of friends, and the exertion of his own active intrepidity, the printer at length escaped. It is a remarkable circumstance evincing extensive concert and premeditation, that on the day of this arrest, all the magistrates of the town, where it took place, were summoned into another town as witnesses, and could not be applied to, for any interposition of the civil authority, to preserve the public peace, or to protect the rights of the intended victim. For these offences the constable and several others were indicted and convicted.

The scene of these occurrences was the western part of the State of New York.

Where the people are intelligent and free, such enormities as those, to which we have referred, could not be committed without producing excitement. Every unperverted feeling, and every upright voice, anxiously claimed the impartial and prompt application to them, of the appointed powers of our criminal jurisprudence.—Then began to draw on, that dark eclipse, upon the vaulted lights of Free Masonry, which, to the public eye, is rapidly becoming total, and through the eternal shadows of which, nothing will be discernable hereafter, but blood.

In this alarming emergency, the agents of government seemed paralyzed. Our public institutions and provisions for the preservation of tranquility, and the repression of crime, seemed nugatory. And without the use of other means than the law, and its official ministers, the most daring and brutal inroads, upon our dearest rights, would have passed off, without effort to understand their origin, punish their instruments, or provide against their recurrence. No arts were left untried by Free Masons to baffle the pursuit of truth and defeat the administration of justice. The lion's grip of the order was upon our courts, and loyalty to that, displaced fealty to the State.

A large proportion of the constables, justices of the peace, lawyers, judges, sheriffs, and jurymen, of the counties where these acts were performed, were members of the society, and had taken oaths binding them, in terms to conceal each other's crimes. The high sheriffs were all masons, and at that time, summoned as grand jurors, at their discretion, any such men as had the common qualifications. In the counties of Genesee and Niagara, where the fraternity were afraid of criminal prosecutions, majorities of Free Ma-

sons are known to have been corruptly returned as grand jurors. And these sheriffs of the counties were both indicted, subsequently, as parties to the conspiracy for the abduction of Morgan.—One of them was tried and convicted, and the trial of the other has not yet taken place.

Perceiving that the public functionaries, whose duty it is to institute proceedings in criminal cases, were totally inactive through cowardice or corruption, the people, who are both the proprietors and beneficiaries of every department of government, undertook to inquire and present for themselves, in relation to these offences; with the determination, however, to use, as far as possible, the constituted authorities, and in no case, to overstep the rights reserved to them. They proceeded, in the generous spirit of men, to whose enlightened views, the general safety affords enough of motive and reward, for the most arduous exertion. They called public meetings, at which honest and intelligent committees were raised, to ascertain facts, and aid the public functionaries.—And these committees entered with patriotic alacrity, upon the performance of some of the most difficult and responsible duties of freemen. Without any emolument, at great expense of time and money, in defiance of the most malignant, persevering, and ingenious counteraction of Free Masons, they suspended their private concerns, and gave themselves up to all the labours of a complicated investigation. In these proceedings they could obtain no testimony, which was not voluntary, they derived no assistance from office, their motives were most venomously slandered, their conduct belied, and their lives endangered. Still they went on fearlessly, disinterestedly, sagaciously, and successfully. The outrages had extended over six counties. It was a singular spectacle, indicative of the safety, and prophetic of the perpetuity, of our free institutions, to see private citizens traversing these counties, inquiring anxiously and cautiously, but severally, impartially, and persistingly, into all the circumstances of crimes the most revolting, for the sole purpose of opening the way, most likely to be effectual, for their judicial exposure and punishment.

Whatever could be done by good and wise men, without special lawful authority, was performed by these committees. They ascertained the principal facts respecting the kidnapping and murder, both as to the persons directly concerned in them, and their motives and principles of action; and thus laid a sure foundation, not for the lawful conviction and condemnation of those who are most guilty; that has hitherto been rendered impossible, by the felon sympathies and powerful interposition of Free Masonry—but for the universal and endless execration of their crimes and of the institution in which they originated.

Bills of indictment have been found for several of the minor offences; and convictions have followed in a few cases—upon the confession of the culprits in some, and after protracted trials, in others. But most of those who have been indicted have been acquitted. In the conduct of these trials, the influence of Free Masonry has been

J. W. Lawrence