

THE STORY OF FREEMASONRY

by

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LEO TAXIL'S REMARKABLE BOOKS ABOUT MURDER, THE DEVIL, WOMEN, & THE BLACK MASS, IN THE HIGH DEGREES.

The most absurd of all the entanglements into which the Roman Catholic Church has been drawn by its detestation for the society - a tale of ludicrous credulity and blind fanaticism unparalleled in the closing decade of the last century, has been related with much particularity by several writers.

Gabriel Jogand-Pages was born at Marseilles, France, in 1854. Fortunate in educational advantages during youth, on arriving at manhood he adopted journalism as his avocation. Talented, audacious, and holding both religion and decency in contempt, his writings attracted so much attention that he sought a larger field in Paris, where he published an infidel daily paper and wrote many irreligious books that obtained a wide circulation. One of them was a scandalous work entitled "The Secret Amours of Pius IX," for the publication of which he was heavily fined.

In 1885 this reckless young man saw in Leo XIII's "Humanus genus" a field for both revenue and the humiliation of the Roman Catholic Church, which he most heartily despised. He pretended conversion, suppressed his sceptical books, and was absolved by the Papal Nuncio in Paris, Mgr. di

Rende, from a number of excommunications recorded against him. With ardor born of desire for money and ambition to dupe the church which had received him into its fold, he produced, under the pseudonym of Leo Taxil, a series of books called Complete Revelations of French Masonry, which attracted great attention in Europe, were translated into German, Italian and Spanish, and were read by hundreds of thousands of people. In 1881 he had been made an Entered Apprentice, but was soon after expelled from the fraternity because of indiscretions of which he was guilty. With reckless disregard for facts, and unrestrained by his ignorance of Masonry, he gave his extraordinary imaginative powers full play, and with a fecundity of detail and illustration truly remarkable, represented the rites of the craft to be a hideous form of Devil-Worship. One entire volume he devoted to Female Masons, on which impossible foundation he constructed a shameful edifice of fiction, full of shockingly scandalous and beastly fabrications that were received with delight by the papal authorities, who saw in them perfect justification for the attitude of their church toward Masonry.

Another one of his books, of which two hundred thousand copies were sold at 24 francs a copy, charged every Mason with being a murderer, in spirit if not in fact. The following translation of a passage from it explains the grounds upon which the charge was made:

"Before a man is admitted to the higher degrees he is blindfolded & taken into a room where a live sheep is lying on the floor. The animal's mouth and feet are

secured and it is clean shaven, so that its skin feels to the touch like that of a human being.

"Next to the animal a man is placed, who breathes heavily, feigning to struggle against imaginary enemies. The candidate is given to understand that the sheep's body is that of a disloyal Mason who gave away the secrets of the order and must die according to some ancient law, the candidate being made executioner, as a warning to him.

"Then he is given a big knife, and after some ceremonial is persuaded to 'kill the traitor,' that is, plunge the knife repeatedly into the body of the sheep, which he imagines to be that of an unknown human being, his brother.

"Thus every Mason is a murderer in spirit at least, if not actually, for sometimes treacherous Masons take the place of the animal."

This story drew forth denials from such distinguished Freemasons as Bismarck, the Prince of Wales, and Emperor William I which served greatly to stimulate the sale of the work.

Invigorated by the credulity of his victims, Taxil added Spiritualism to his schedule of Masonic practices and beliefs and told of tables floating in the air and turning into crocodiles at Masonic meetings, and for his supposed revelations was honoured by Pope Leo XIII with the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, a distinguished mark of the high favour of the Roman hierarchy.

High grade Masonry was the most fertile field of Taxil's grotesque falsifications. He made Charleston, South Carolina, the scene of his Luciferan Masonry because it was the home of Albert Pike, whose labours as grand commander of the southern supreme council, for the perfection of the rituals and ceremonials of the Scottish Rite, have been excelled by no man.

Taxil declared that in the solemn recesses of the consistory at Charleston, His Satanic Majesty exhibited himself without disguise - Hoof, Horns, Tail and All, in the exemplification of the high grades. A High Priestess of this Luciferan Masonry was needed and adroitly contrived for the consternation of the Pope and the Public, in the person of "Diana Vaughn." She was said to be the direct descendant of a man to whose embraces the lascivious Venus-Astarte submitted, and whose life had been extended thirty-three years for the propagation of demoniacal designs. As a girl she betrothed herself to the Demon Asmodeus, afterwards appeared before Satan in Charleston, and was by him consecrated as his Masonic high priestess in the presence of Albert Pike!

She possessed supernatural powers, such as the ability to turn herself into liquid and pass through a stone wall, and was a Very Terrible Personage indeed.

All these, and scores of other absurdities were published month after month in Paris, and read with avidity in the Vatican. When the Roman ecclesiastical authorities had been sufficiently horrified by Diana Vaughn's devilry, Taxil caused her to be "converted" as he himself had been.

This astounding change in a heart familiar with wickedness was alleged to have been caused by Albert Pike ordering her to Spit Upon & Stab a Consecrated Host in one of the Masonic rites, and to utter repulsive blasphemies - deeds which would stir deep resentment in the Pope's breast. Diana refused to comply, repented, and wrote a book which was sent to Leo XIII in 1895, who, by his secretary Mgr. Vincenzo Sardi, wrote a letter thanking her and urging her to continue in her good work against Freemasonry!

One extract, in which Diana describes a Masonic "Black Mass" - one of scores of tales equally preposterous - maybe made from this volume;

"In a thick cloud of perfumes the priest ascends the altar of Satan's Synagogue. On the table is seen a goat with a human face already excited by some preliminary homages, intoxicated by perfumes and adoration.

"The priest opens a box and takes out some wafers.

"The rites performed and the words spoken during the continuance of the magical ceremony are blasphemous in character, and the sacred vessel and its contents are subjected to insult and mockery. The goat plays the infernal part, cursing and reviling, and lastly the following incantation is delivered: Master of the Esclandres, dispenser of the benefits of crime, intendant of sumptuous sins and great vices, sovereign of contempt, preserver of old hatreds and inspirer of vengeance and misdeeds.'

At this ceremony the children of the choir are clad in red and wear scarlet caps surmounted by two horns. They hold black candles in their hands."

Largely as a result of Leo Taxil's voluminous works, one of which has 2,000 pages, the Vatican and its priesthood throughout Europe were aroused to a sense of impending dangers from the fraternity, and an anti-Masonic Congress was called to meet at Trent in September, 1896, to which Leo XIII

telegraphed his blessing. Its purpose was "to make known to everybody the immense moral and material evil done by Freemasonry to the Church and to society, and to seek a remedy by way of a permanent, international organization against the craft." A thousand delegates from European countries attended, among them being thirty-six Roman Catholic bishops, who found a safe retreat in the marble cathedral of the Austrian city, where Masonic lodges are unknown owing to governmental prohibition, as is also the case in Russia and Poland. Gabriel Jogand-Pages, better known as Leo Taxil, was the hero of the occasion, but his presence did not completely satisfy the congress. Diana Vaughn, who for reasons obvious to Taxil alone, could not appear, was greatly desired, as a suspicion that she was a myth had developed in the public press. The congress, not entirely convinced by the plausible excuses of Taxil, entrusted an investigation of her genuineness to a commission of its members, which of course was unable to secure proof of her existence. The pressure on Monsieur Jogand-Pages finally became so strong that he announced she would appear in the hall of the Geographical Society in Paris on Easter Monday, April 19, 1897.

On that date and at that place the precious scamp who had so long revealed in the admiration and confidence of the princes and priests of Catholicism took the platform in the presence of a large audience that had assembled to see and hear Diana Vaughn, formerly the intimate associate of the Devil, now the repentant accuser of Masonry. He made a speech of superb audacity, in which he told his shocked hearers that his conversion twelve years before was a pretence, that Diana Vaughn was a Myth, and that his revelations of Freemasonry were all Deliberate Lies, put forth for the sole purpose of playing upon the credulity of the Roman Catholic Church and making its rulers ridiculous in the eyes of intelligent men.

He added that the Bishop of Charleston had long ago assured the Pope of the falsity of his stories about Albert Pike: and that the Apostolic Vicar of Gibraltar had informed Leo XIII that the alleged caves at that place in which he had represented the Masons as engaged in foul and atrocious rites, did not exist. In his chagrin, the Pope had since kept silence. This awakened the stunned audience, whose curses, howls and threats compelled Monsieur Jogand-Pages to seek security in another quarter under the protection of the police, where no doubt the results of his daring exploits afforded him profound satisfaction. That the abortive chase of twelve years under Taxil's guidance, after proofs of the iniquity of Freemasonry, filled the church authorities with deepest disgust, is pleasantly indicated by a remark attributed to the Canon Mustel, in which he is represented as declaring that when hell should swallow Gabriel Jogand-Pages as its filthy prey, the damned therein would bow their heads under a new degradation.

Later Taxil, in an interview, says:

"The public made me what I am, the arch-liar of the period, for when I first commenced to write against the Masons my object was amusement pure and simple. The crimes laid at their door were so grotesque, so impossible, so widely exaggerated, I thought everybody would see the joke and give me credit for originating a new line of humour. But my readers wouldn't have it so; they accepted my fables as gospel truth, and the more I lied for the purpose of showing that I lied, the more convinced became they that I was a paragon of veracity."

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