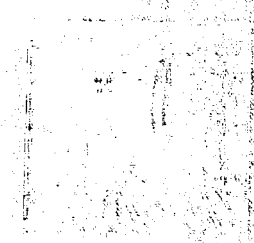


The Secret Societies



All Ages & Countries

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THE SECRET SOCIETIES OF ALL
AGES AND COUNTRIES

“ Dalla straordinarietà degli effetti certo può indursi la straordinarietà, la grandezza, l' insistenza delle cagioni ; ma l' intreccio e l' alterno prevalere di queste, l' attrazione che esercitano, sfuggono all' analisi. Il mistero precinge la notturna fecondazione. Dai più disparati sentimenti trae vigore la setta. Le materie più preziose ed insieme le meno elette concorrono a formare questo gigante, rifusione ciclopica e tetra di quanto s' agita, ribolle e schiuma nelle viscere sociali.”—G. DE CASTRO.

From the extraordinary nature of the effects we may infer the extraordinary nature, grandeur, and permanency of the causes ; but their connection, varying predominance, and mutual attraction, escape all analysis. Mystery surrounds the obscure fecundation. Sects draw vigour from the most opposite sentiments. The most exalted as well as the meanest elements concur in forming this giant, a cyclopean and black fusion of all that seethes, boils, and ferments in the social viscera.

THE
SECRET SOCIETIES
OF ALL AGES AND COUNTRIES

A Comprehensive Account of upwards of One Hundred
and Sixty Secret Organisations—Religious, Political,
and Social—from the most Remote Ages
down to the Present Time

Embracing the Mysteries of Ancient India, China, Japan, Egypt, Mexico,
Peru, Greece, and Scandinavia, the Cabbalists, Early Christians,
Heretics, Assassins, Thugs, Templars, the Vehm and
Inquisition, Mystics, Rosicrucians, Illuminati, Free-
masons, Skopzi, Camorristi, Carbonari, Nihilists,
Fenians, French, Spanish,

And other Mysterious Sects

BY

CHARLES WILLIAM HECKETHORN

IN TWO VOLUMES

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NEW EDITION

THOROUGHLY REVISED AND GREATLY ENLARGED

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PREFACE TO THE NEW EDITION

THIS is not so much a second edition of my book on Secret Societies published in 1875 as an almost entirely new work.

When the first edition was published, some of the societies had scarcely any history. Of the Nihilists, for instance, the account now given, recording their doings within the last eighteen years, fills many pages of this work. The story of other societies, active even then, such as the Fenians, had to be brought down to date, and yielded much new matter.

I have thought it desirable to give fuller particulars of certain societies than I had given in the first edition, such as the Jesuits, for instance—the new matter having either been kept back, or being the result of further research.

Accounts of societies not included in the first edition will be found here. I may instance “Crata Repoa,” “Rosheniah,” and “Skopzi.”

A few of the articles of the first edition have been reduced; such, for instance, as that on the Paris Commune, which has not now that immediate interest its then recent activity imparted to it.

Great changes have also been made in the arrangement of the matter.

Secret Societies may be arranged either chronologically, or locally, or topically. Each arrangement has its advantages and disadvantages; the former are obvious, the latter may be stated thus:—

By arranging societies according to chronology, those which are topically connected or identical will sometimes be placed at so great a distance as to impair the continuity of interest. By arranging them locally, the chronological connection must suffer; and by arranging them according to subjects or topics, the reader obtains no clear view of the sequence of events. I have therefore endeavoured to combine the three modes of representing the great drama of Secret Societies by making the topical arrangement its basis, and on that marshalling the societies first according to locality, and lastly according to time. Thus

in the first Book of the work the topic is Ancient Mysteries and Religious Societies; they are arranged according to localities, and the third consideration is the time. Therefore the Eastern Societies come first, in chronological order; then the Western, in the same order; so that the Magi of Persia form the first, and the Scandinavian Drottes of Europe the last in the list.

A full list of authorities consulted being given, it has not been considered necessary to encumber the pages with foot-notes; the general reader does not want them, and the student will know what work to refer to for verification.

The work, as now presented to the public, is the result of twenty-five years' study and research, involving the acquisition and collation of the English and foreign literature on the subject, and therefore claims to be a cyclopædia of Secret Societies, giving concise, but quintessential, details of all worth recording, and omitting only those whose duration was ephemeral, and action trivial.

C. W. H.

October, 1896.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

FOR many years the fascinating subject of Secret Societies had engaged my attention, and it had long been my intention to collect in a comprehensive work all the information that could be gathered from numerous, often remote, and sometimes almost inaccessible, sources concerning one of the most curious phases of the history of mankind—those secret organisations, religious, political, and social, which have existed from the most remote ages down to the present time. Before, however, I had arranged and digested my materials, a review in the *Athenæum* (No. 2196) directed my attention to the Italian work, “*Il Mondo Segreto*,” by Signor De Castro, whom I have since then had the pleasure of meeting at Milan. I procured the book, and intended at first to give a translation of it; but though I began as a translator, my labours speedily assumed a more independent form. Much, I found, had to be omitted from an original coloured by a certain political bias, and somewhat too indulgent to various Italian political sects, who, in many instances, were scarcely more than hordes of brigands. Much, on the other hand, had to be added from sources, chiefly English and German, unknown to the Italian author; much had to be placed on a different basis and in another light; and again, many societies not mentioned by Signor De Castro had to be introduced to the reader, such as the Garduna, the Chauffeurs, Fenians, International, O-Kee-Pa, Ku-Klux, Inquisition, Wahábees; so that, with these additions, and the amplifications of sections in the original Italian, forming frequently entirely new articles, the work, as it now is presented to the English public, though in its framework retaining much of its foreign prototype, may yet claim the merit of being not only essentially original, but the most comprehensive account of Secret Societies extant in English, French, German, or Italian, the leading languages of Europe; for whatever has been written on the subject in any one of them has been consulted and put under contribution. In English there is no work that can at all compete with it, for the small book

published in 1836 by Charles Knight, and entitled, "Secret Societies of the Middle Ages," embraces four societies only.

The student who wishes for more ample information will have to consult the lists of authorities given at the head of each Book, as it was thought best not to encumber the text with foot-notes, which would have swelled the work to at least twice its present extent. The reader may rest satisfied that few statements are made which could not be supported by numerous and weighty authorities; though dealing as we do here with societies whose very existence depended on secrecy, and which, therefore, as a matter of policy, left behind them as little documentary evidence as possible, the old distich applies with peculiar force:—

"What is hits is history,
And what is mist is mystery."

Again, bearing in mind that the imperative compass of the work exacted a concise setting forth of facts—ranging as the subject does over a surface so vast—I have been careful to interrupt the narrative only by such comments and reflections as would seem almost indispensable for clearing up obscurities or supplying missing historical links.

It may at first appear as if some societies had improperly been inserted in this work as "secret" societies; the Freemasons, for instance. Members of secret associations, it might be objected, are not in the habit of proclaiming their membership to the world, but no Freemason is ashamed or afraid of avowing himself such; nay, he is rather proud of the fact, and given to proclaim it somewhat obtrusively; yet the most rabid Celt, who wishes to have a hand in the regeneration of his native land by joining the Fenian brotherhood, has sense enough to keep his affiliation a profound secret from the uninitiated. But the rule I have followed in adopting societies as "secret" was to include in my collection all such as had or have "secret rites and ceremonies" kept from the outer world, though the existence of the society itself be no secret at all. In fact, no association of men can for any length of time remain a secret, since however anxious the members may be to shroud themselves in darkness, and remain personally unknown, the purpose for which they band together must always betray itself by some overt acts; and wherever there is an act, the world surmises an agent; and if none that is visible can be found, a secret one is suspected. The Thugs, for instance, had every desire to remain un-

known; yet the fact of the existence of such a society was suspected long before any of its members were discovered. On the principle also of their being the propounders of secret doctrines, or doctrines clothed in language understood by the adepts alone, Alchemists and Mystics have found places in this work; and the Inquisition, though a state tribunal, had its secret agents and secret procedure, and may therefore justly be included in the category of Secret Societies.

Secret Societies, religious and political, are again springing up on many sides: the religious may be dismissed without comment, as they are generally without any novelty or significance, but those that have political objects ought not to be disregarded as without importance. The International, Fenians, Communists, Nihilists, Wahábees, are secretly aiming at the overthrow of existing governments and the present order of things. The murders of Englishmen perpetrated by native Indians point to the machinations of secret societies in British India. Before the outbreak of the great Indian mutiny English newspaper correspondents spoke rather contemptuously of some religious ceremony observed throughout British India of carrying small loaves from village to village, but this ceremony was the summons to the people to prepare for the general rising; hence the proceedings of the natives should be closely watched.

November, 1874.

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