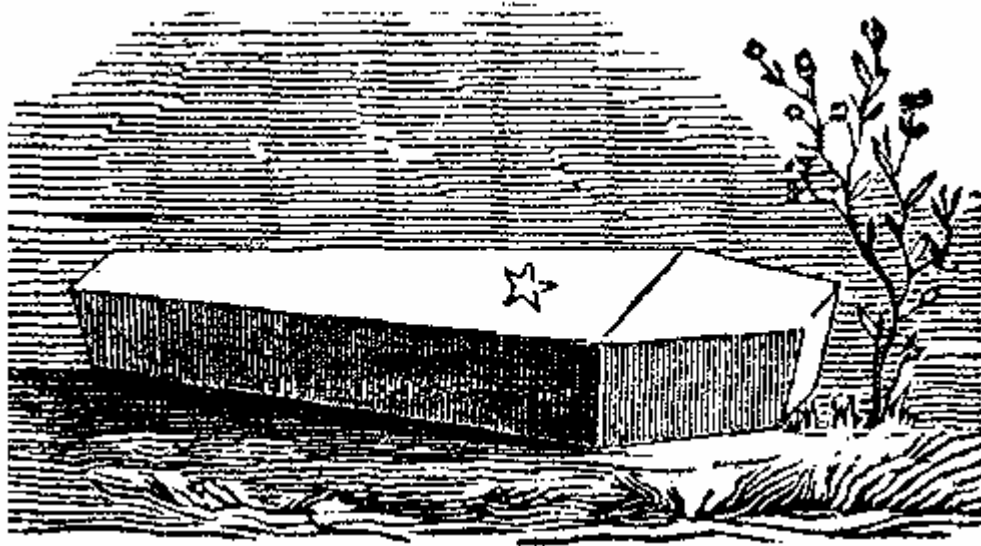


Coffin



In all the ancient mysteries, before an aspirant could claim to participate in the higher secrets of the institution, he was placed within the coffin, or in other words was subjected to a solitary confinement for a prescribed period of time, so that he might reflect seriously, in seclusion and darkness, on what he was about to undertake, and be reduced to a proper state of mind for the reception of great and important truths, by a course of fasting and mortification. This was the symbolical death of the mysteries, and his deliverance from confinement was the act of regeneration, or being born again; or as it was also termed, being raised from the dead.